

BATTLEFIELD BAND

quotes from recent album & concert reviews



image: John Slavin www.designfolk.com

'...musicianship of the highest level, confirming Battlefield Band among the top ten folk bands in the world. A fantastic concert...Kiel's folk concert of the year.'

Kieler Nachrichten, Kiel, Germany, Feb 2012

'These stalwarts of the Scottish traditional music scene pull off their umpteenth album with panache'

The Scotsman, April 2013

'...new album 'Room Enough for All' continues their commitment to giving the world some of the best music from their homeland'

San Diego Troubadour, USA, March 2013

'...as fresh as new mown hay...

...their live show was a revelation, their new album is a keeper'

Irish Music Magazine, May/June 2013

'...another inspirational recording from the flagship Scottish band, which may well be counted as their finest hour in the studio'

Fatea, May 2013

'...still at the cutting edge of modern Scottish folk music...

...technically flawless and fabulously entertaining'

Piping Today, Feb/March 2013

'Battlefield Band never stand still'

Folking, April 2013

'...a world class musical tour de force... ...I've never seen so many smiling faces'

Meander Valley View, Tasmania, April 2012

'As players they're all on top of their game...

...when all four take the chocks away for a blast of tunes they're unstoppable'

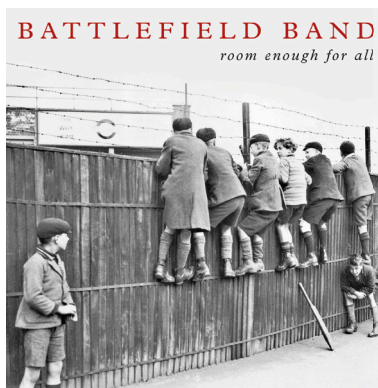
Chronicle Herald, Nova Scotia, October 2012

BATTLEFIELD BAND

room enough for all



Recorded at Temple Records Studio, Scotland
Engineered: Robin Morton and Ewan MacGregor
Produced by Robin Morton • Design: John Slavin



- 01: Bagpipe Music 3:33
- 02: Major George Morrison DSO... 4:31
- 03: Farewell To Indiana 3:53
- 04: The Garron Trotting... 4:53
- 05: Nic Coiseam 4:08
- 06: The Hairy Angler Fish... 3:49
- 07: Ceann Loch an Dùin... 4:22
- 08: Duanag an t-Seòladair 4:05
- 09: The Eight Men of Moidart... 3:06
- 10: In Contempt 3:37
- 11: Tynes In Overtime! 3:24

Battlefield Band are: MIKE KATZ; ALASDAIR WHITE; SEAN O'DONNELL; EWEN HENDERSON

01: BAGPIPE MUSIC

Words Louis MacNeice; Music Trad. Arr. Battlefield Band, Pub. Kinnmor Music

This is Sean's setting of a popular poem written in the 1930s by Irish born poet Louis MacNeice (1907-1963) who had written it after a visit to the Hebrides: Scotland's Western Isles. Who better to introduce the poem than the man himself: "...on the surface it is a nonsense poem but it does have a nucleus of truth...it is dealing with the cultural decline of the highlands and islands in the 1930's and the clash of the indigenous folk culture and the new, slick, urbane culture which is bound to supercede it."

Perhaps we can apply MacNeice's misgivings to society in general and maybe they are as relevant today as they were in the 1930s. Sean made the point, while we were in the studio recording, when he came up with this, off-the-cuff, couplet: "...all we want is an I-phone and an internet connection."

The rhythm of the poem was meant to reflect the music of that Scottish cultural icon, the Great Highland Bagpipe. Others have put these words to music but this is the first time it has been twinned with actual 'bagpipe music'. We like to think that Louis MacNeice would have approved. The melody is an old 6/8 tune found in various collections and is best known as *The Maids of Kintail*.

The words of Bagpipe Music are used by permission of the estate of Louis MacNeice.

Sean: Lead vocals

Mike: Bass, Bouzouki, Scottish Smallpipes

Ewen: Fiddle, additional vocals

Alasdair: Tenor Guitar

02: MAJOR GEORGE MORRISON DSO

P/M Calum A. Campbell, Pub. Copyright Control

NIGHEAN NA CAILLICHE

Trad. Arr. Battlefield Band, Pub. Kinnmor Music

THE PNEUMATIC DRILLS

Ewen Henderson, Pub. Kinnmor Music

The first tune, a 4/4 march, was composed by Callum Campbell, a native of Point on the Island of Lewis. At one time Pipe Major of the Gordon Highlanders, he was a notable piper and composer of many fine tunes as well as a top soldier. You will find this march in "The Gordon Highlanders Pipe Music Collection - VOL 1" where it is noted that Major Morrison was ...

"A very gallant and popular officer, this tune was composed for him when he left the 1st Battalion in 1960".

Our Alasdair, himself a Lewis man, learned this tune from James Mackenzie, a great young piper from the same island. So Lewis rules on this one.

Nighean na Cailliche is a jig and here Ewen sings a bit of the puirt a beul (mouth music) which uses the same tune. If there were no instruments available, the mouth music would be enough to dance to.

The Pneumatic Drills is a jig Ewen composed to honour the Glasgow based band in which he played with his friends when he was not travelling.

Alasdair: Low Whistle, Fiddle

Ewen: Fiddle, Vocals, Pipes

Mike: Pipes, Bass

Sean: Guitar

03: FAREWELL TO INDIANA

Composed Andy Mitchell, Pub. Kinnmor Music

Emigration has greatly affected not only the thousands (millions?) of Scots who have left their own land over the years; but equally, their considerable impact has been felt by all of these places to which they have gone. From the Americas to Australasia, China, India, Africa and indeed even England.

This song was written by Andy Mitchell who was inspired by the journey of a couple of his friends who had left Ullapool in the north west Highlands to settle in Indiana. They set up home and happily brought up a family in that far off land. Life was good but in the end the call of home was too great and they returned to Scotland, not as disappointed emigrants but having had a great experience. Not a song of failure but of fulfillment. Mike Whellans added his mouthorgan on this track, to good effect.

Sean: Vocals, Guitar / Alasdair: Fiddle / Ewen: Scottish Smallpipes, Fiddle

Mike: Tenor Guitar, Whistle, Bass, additional Guitar,

and our welcome guest Mike Whellans on harmonica

04: THE GARRON TROTTING

GLENGARRY

CAWDOR FAIR

THE MERRY LADS OF AIR

THE CUCKOO

All four tunes Trad. Arr. Battlefield Band, Pub. Kinnmor Music

A fiddle-led set here. The first three tunes are strathspeys: a dance peculiar to Scotland. Ewen and Alasdair learned the first from Glenfinnan fiddle player Iain MacFarlane. 'Garron' is a Scots word for a small, sturdy pony: important attributes in the Highlands. *Glengarry* appears in the the venerable, and well trawled, Simon Fraser collection of 1816. *Cawdor Fair* has several titles but is perhaps most recognisable, to the modern ear, as a version of the nursery rhyme *Sing a Song of Sixpence*. *The Merry Lads of Air (Ayr)* comes from Robert Bremner's 1757 collection, where it is written down as a reel but we thought that it made a good polka. The set concludes with *The Cuckoo*. Alasdair heard this from the playing of two pipers from Nova Scotia, further illustrating the migration of Scottish music with those people of the 18th and 19th centuries who went to the Maritime Provinces of Canada from Scotland, carrying both their music and the Gaelic language.

Alasdair: Fiddle

Ewen: Fiddle

Mike: Bouzouki, Tenor Guitar, Whistles, Bass

Sean: Guitar

05: NIC COISEAM

(Song for the gun called Nic Coiseam)

Trad. arr. Battlefield Band, Pub. Kinnmor Music.

This song was composed by Duncan bar MacIntyre (Donnachadh Ban Mac an t-Saoir) who was a renowned Gaelic bard during the 18th century; one of the golden ages of Gaelic poetry in Scotland. Famed for his nature poetry, the song tells of the places he used to tramp with his old gun as his companion when he was a forester in the Glen Orchy area. The gun is named for the man he bought it from.

Ewen sings first the more common melody and then finishes with a tune he learnt from Griogair Labhruidh who in turn heard it from an old recording of Donald Sinclair from Tiree.

Ewen: Lead Vocals, Fiddle

Mike: Bouzouki, Bass, Guitar

Alasdair: Fiddle

Sean: Guitar, Vocals

06: THE HAIRY ANGLER FISH

Alasdair White, Pub. Kinnmor Music

PETER THE DOLPHINMASTER

Mike Katz, Pub. Kinnmor Music

THE SOUND OF SLEAT

P/M Donald MacKinnon, Copyright Control

Three reels for the sea. Alasdair wrote the first of these for Caulphryne Polynema (aka the hairy angler fish), a fascinating but majestically ugly creature of the deep. Alasdair had a fine tune called *The Herring* on the last album so here continues the 'fishy' theme and he does enjoy seafood.

Peter Boond was the founder of the Scottish group Ceolbeg, of which both Mike and Davey Steele were a part. Mike maintains that latterly, Peter's "day job" consisted of training dolphins to serve the more nepharious needs of humankind. But this may just have been a misunderstanding on Mike's behalf: we'll never know. Nor do we know whether the training was successful. Peter unfortunately passed away during the making of this record, and Mike has named his tune in memory of a friend of great wit, ingenuity and courage.

The Sound of Sleat is the stretch of water separating the south of the Isle of Skye from the mainland. Pipe Major Donald Mackinnon of Broadford in Skye wrote this classic of 20th century bagpipe music. Mackinnon served in Korea with the King's Own Scottish Borderers before emigrating to Australia.

Alasdair: Fiddle / Ewen: Fiddle

Mike: Pipes, Bass, Guitar / Sean: Guitar

07: CEANN LOCH AN DÙIN

(At the Head of Loch an Duin)

Trad. arr. E. Henderson / A. White/M.Katz

Pub. Kinnmor Music.

CHA TOIRINN COIG PEIGHINN OIRE

(I wouldn't give fivepence for her)

Trad. arr. E. Henderson / A. White/M.Katz

Pub. Kinnmor Music.

THE HEBRIDEAN POLKA

Alex MacIver, Copyright Control

The first tune is the air of a Gaelic song in praise of a loch near Carloway in the west of the Isle of Lewis. The bard tells of his wish to be laid to rest at the head of the loch, when his day comes. Alasdair and Ewen have the tune from the singing of Iain MacKay of Point and you can hear it sung by Christine Primrose (a native of Carloway) on her mould-breaking Temple recording 'Aite Mo Ghaoil' COMD 2006.

The second is the melody used by Donald MacColl, the bard of Airigh Bheag in Ardnamurchan. Ewen learned it in the house of the Bard's nephew from box player Robert Nairn. It is a schottische, a very popular country dance in Scotland. It is a kind of slower polka with continental-European origin and many countries have adopted versions of it.

The Hebridean Polka, composed by Alex McIver, is a great favourite among dancers of the Highland Schottische.

Alasdair: Fiddle

Ewen: Fiddle

Mike: Guitar

08: DUANAG AN T-SEÒLADAIR

(Song of the Sailor)

Words Niall MacLeod; Music Trad. &

Additional Music E. Henderson and M. Katz,

Pub. Kinnmor Music

This well known sea-faring song was written by Niall MacLeod, a 19th century bard from Glendale in the Isle of Skye. He wrote a few of the most enduring popular Gaelic songs including *Far an Robh Mi 'n-Raoin*, a love song written to none other than Ewen's Great-Grandmother's Aunty. This song tells of a sailor's longing to be permanently with his love.

Normally the entire song employs the melody of the chorus but Ewen and Mike have made a different tune for the verses.

Ewen: Vocals, Fiddle, Whistle

Mike: Bouzouki, Guitar, Whistle, Bass

Sean: Vocals

09: THE EIGHT MEN OF MOIDART

THE AMOROUS CARLING

LOCHIEL'S AWA TAE FRANCE

All Trad. Arr. Battlefield Band,

Pub. Kinnmor Music

Three reels. *The Eight Men of Moidart* appears first in a collection of tunes compiled by Edinburgh music seller Robert Bremner in 1757. The most popular explanation of the title refers to the seven companions of Prince Charles Edward Stuart who arrived with him in the northwest of Scotland at Moidart in 1745. Thus began the 2nd Jacobite rebellion, which ended, in failure, at the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

There is also a more fanciful story which states that seven fisherman collecting bait on the beach, at Moidart, were so delighted at the Prince's arrival that they composed a set dance on the spot; as they were a man short they used a shovel as the eighth man.

The Amorous Carling comes from William Gunn's 'Caledonian Repository of Music' (1848). Gunn was a legendary Glasgow pipemaker, as well as collector of tunes. This is a book from which we have mined many fine tunes and will, no doubt, continue to do so. Carling is a Scots word meaning 'an old woman' usually with supernatural overtones.

Locheil was a prominent supporter of King James in 1715, the first Jacobite rebellion. John, the 18th Chief of Clan Cameron, was given the title Lord Lochiel. He fled to France after the failure of that campaign and his son Donald Cameron of Lochiel (1700-1748) returned to fight alongside Prince Charles Edward Stuart's chiefs at the Battle of Culloden. Although injured in this infamous defeat, Donald Cameron survived, and like his father, escaped to France. Numerous versions of this tune exist in the Scottish repertoire – we play both a fiddle and bagpipe version here. This tune also takes the titles *The Hoof'd Carl's Son* (a carle is the male version of the carling – see above) and is found as *Mac a Bhodich Ladhric*, in Gunn's collection.

Mike: Pipes, Bouzouki, Guitar

Alasdair: Fiddle

Ewen: Fiddle

Sean: Guitar

10: IN CONTEMPT

Words Aaron Kramer, Copyright Control:

Music Sean O'Donnell, Pub. Kinnmor Music

Aaron Kramer was a poet, activist, translator, and University professor. He wrote this poem in response to the political turmoil of 1950s USA and it was first published in the American magazine *Sing Out* during the 1960s although with a different melody. Sean has changed the tune in this rendering. Aaron Kramer died in 1997 and a fine selection of his poems entitled, 'In Wicked Times', was published by the University of Illinois Press in 2004.

Sean got permission from the poet's daughter, Laura Kramer, to put these words (and a few of his own) to music, and we thank her for agreeing to this.

Sean: Vocals

Mike: Bouzouki, Guitar, Bass

Alasdair: Fiddle

Ewen: Fiddle, Piano

11: TYNES IN OVERTIME!

Mike Katz & Ewen Henderson,

Pub. Kinnmor Music

Mike and Ewen composed this as a 'quickstep', defined as a tune similar to, and interchangeable with, a 2/4 march, suitable for a quickstep dance. They named it for Lawrence Tynes, the Scots-born place kicker for the New York Giants. Tynes made history as the only player ever to kick the winning overtime field goal in two separate playoffs; first against the Green Bay Packers in 2007-2008, and again dashing the hopes of the San Francisco 49ers in 2011-2012. On both occasions The Giants won the Lombardi Trophy, beating New England Patriots in both Super Bowls. He is the only Scots-born player to win a Super Bowl ring.

Lawrence Tynes' Scottish mother met and married her US Navy Seal husband in the 70s, when he was serving in Scotland. The family lived in Greenock and Machrihannish, Argyll, moving to the US when Lawrence was 10 years old. We understand he is still an ardent supporter of Glasgow Celtic soccer team.

Ewen: Pipes, Fiddle, Whistle

Mike: Bass, Bouzouki, Pipes

Alasdair: Fiddle, Whistle

Sean: Guitar

Robin Morton: Bodhran & bass drum

CREDITS: A big thanks to our friend and amazing harmonica player, **Mike Whellans**.

Ian Kinnear for the Smallpipes; **Duncan Soutar** –

Chanter Reeds; **George Lumsden** – Drone Reeds;

Graham Cherrie – The Pies; **Carly Vaughan** – Band photos;

Ewan MacGregor; **Denise Lindsay**; **Alison Kinnaird**,

and of course, **Robin Morton**.

The Estate of **Louis MacNeice**, and **Laura Kramer**.



COMD2106

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BONUS TRACK

ALISON KINNAIRD - LAURA BHISA

A slow air composed and performed by the renowned Scottish harp player Alison Kinnaird, played here on the gut-strung Scottish small harp & cello. Also featuring Robin Morton (concertina) and Battlefield Band's Mike Katz (whistles). This is the opening track from Alison's most recent album 'The Silver String' which is available as a download from all main outlets, or on CD (which includes a bonus DVD) direct from Temple Records and all good stores.

Alison Kinnaird - The Silver String

Temple Records COMD2096

Available from www.templerecords.co.uk

BONUS TRACK

CHRISTINE PRIMROSE

DHÈANAINN SUGRADH RIS AN NIGHN DUBH

(I Would Sport With The Black Haired Girl)

A song from Christine Primrose, one of the great Gaelic singers. A native Gaelic speaker who from the Isle of Lewis who has been singing traditional Gaelic song all her life. This recording also features Alison Kinnaird (Scottish Harp) & Battlefield Band's Alasdair White (Fiddle). This song can be found on Christine's album 'Gun Sireadh, Gun Iarraidh' which is available as a download from all main outlets, or on CD direct from Temple Records and all good stores.

Christine Primrose - Gun Sireadh, Gun Iarraidh

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