

# DALRIADA.

*"The traditional music of Scotland which is arguably as authentic a kind of 'world' music as any other, has been relegated to the back corners and made to seem silly and inconsequential as if it had no part to play in the nation's developing culture."*

Clark Sorley

Taking into consideration the forms that Scottish music has taken over the better part of the last century, Sorley's opinion is sadly justifiable. However, the rebirth of Iona Records has allowed he and his fellow members of Dalriada to go a considerable way to making amends and reintroducing traditional songs and songwriting in a way that will perhaps become part of a new vocabulary for Scottish music.

The name of the band itself signifies the concept of renewal that has been a link throughout this project. Dalriada was the new kingdom of Scotland that encompassed most of the South Western part of the country around the 7th century and was eventually to help bring an end to the warlike system of small Pictish tribes that had dominated the country's history until then.

It has long been a source of frustration that so many fine songs were not able to be appreciated by generations of Scots, whose only conception of this art was based on the conventional 'folk' scene, which has in its own somewhat elitist way, held on to and hidden these songs from an enormous audience. It is this audience that has been reared since the 1950's on pop songs concerned largely with the themes of love and war, few of which have been written as eloquently as those contained on this album. The communication of these songs has broken down purely as a result of the method in which they have been performed.

These songs were originally performed as popular music of their time, and Dalriada intend to bring this concept up to date, whilst still remaining faithful to the songs themselves. This album falls well short of 'Celtic Rock', a movement which may in time, prove to have been damaging as it becomes relegated to the past, along with modern 'folk' interpretations. These songs should be continually reinterpreted and reappraised within the constantly shifting modes of popular music, as it is the messages contained within that are timeless. Perhaps this way of thinking will allow more and more artists to produce Scottish music that can be seen under the wider umbrella of 'world music', rather than confining it to the backwaters of Scotland's folk scene.

Our contemporary culture is largely based on things from our past, but Scotland's finest songs have been far too conspicuous by their absence for so long. Perhaps Dalriada, and the regeneration of Iona records, will produce an avenue to allow Scotland to express its identity musically, without embarrassment.

## THE BAND

Dalriada comprises three musicians from the West of Scotland who have led varied careers in popular music encompassing live performance, studio production and session work. They have collaborated on several musical projects over a number of years and formed the current band in the spring of 1991 in response to prompting from Iona Records who were keen to popularise the old songs again.

Dalriada are; Colin Kennedy - *vocals*, Robbie Dale - *guitars* and Clark Sorley - *keyboards and programming*.



*For further information contact:*

Iona Records, Lismor Recordings, 27-29 Carnoustie Place,  
Scotland Street, Glasgow G5 8PH. Tel. 041-420 1881  
or contact Avril Jamieson on 031-312 7708



# DALRIADA

## “ SOPHISTRY AND ILLUSION ”

Dalriada is the creation of music producer Clark Sorley. During a long career in the recording industry Sorley has been active in a variety of guises inc. musician, producer, engineer, recording artist, arranger, studio owner and more. In the early 90s, in collaboration with rock vocalist Colin Kennedy, he put together the album 'All is Fair' which was released on Iona Records to critical acclaim. This recording was made up of new arrangements of traditional Scottish songs reworked for a contemporary musical context producing a highly innovative approach to the folk/rock crossover. Here are some of the comments made by the press at the time:

*Maybe the best of the lot, Dalriada, and that's saying a very great deal.  
They show that Celtic music has a future.*

**Laurie Devine, Dirty Linen 40**

*A young Scots trio who bring to Scots song the spirit and sound of American soul music.  
And get away with it to a triumphant degree.*

**Alistair Clark, The Scotsman**

*Keyboard genius, Clark Sorley, produces and arranges with a keen sense of the modern. Sounds a bit like A.B.C.  
playing the hits if Robbie Burns... the results have to be heard to be believed.*

*It is recommended that you buy it by the truckload.*

**Simon Jones, First Hearing.**

The new release is a considerable development. It contains 16 titles including 10 original songs written by Sorley & Kennedy, and five instrumentals also brand new works. The songs explore a range of issues, a subtle political and philosophical bias running through the album. The production employs conventional instrumentation i.e. acoustic guitars, fiddles, whistles, pipes, bouzoukis etc. alongside a tasteful blend of synthesized textures and sampled drum loops. Kennedy's soulful voice completes the picture.

So far, 'Sophistry & Illusion' has been described as 'a diverse and complex work, not easy to categorise'. It is not rock or pop although it is influenced in that direction. Neither is it dance nor technology orientated but uses some of the associated production techniques. It would not fit into a folk niche and even less would it cater to the rampant tartanry so beloved of many of Scotland's music labels. Though none of these, it would still be happy with a mainstream popular tag and sit easily on daytime radio. With its distinctive Celtic flavour it would also seek to appeal to the tastes of a more traditional ear.

'Sophistry & Illusion' is released as a special limited edition on the new Edinburgh based label, Qudisc. It comes in CD format with a beautifully illustrated 32-page booklet designed by Ian Roy. The introductory remarks carry Sorley's damning perspective on the music industry in Scotland, attributing its poor performance to a deep rooted, unhealthy scepticism which has historically and philosophically dominated the Scottish psyche. Still, the prevailing mood in the work is generally one of hope and optimism for the future. All told, this is an unusual package drawing together an eclectic mix of musical influences in an original way, with quotes and illustrations, justifying the comment in an early review that it is indeed 'an innovation in Scottish music'.

For further info. contact at:

161 Rose Street, Edinburgh, Scotland. EH2 4LS

TEL: +44 (0) 131 226 3442 \* E.MAIL: qudisc@aol.com



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FIRST HEARING