



listen to this

with Alasdair Maclean



THE Pipes & Drums of the 1st Battalion The Black Watch chose the title *The Ladies From Hell* (CDTRAX 162, CD) for a rousing collection of high-quality piping and drumming, executed by pipers and drummers from all over Scotland and farther afield — Cpl Alistair Duthie from New Zealand, for example — recorded in bleak but picturesque Fort George, Scotland's northernmost symbol of Hanoverian military success.

Perhaps it's an awareness of this, plus Scottish bloody-mindedness, that makes the first set 100 per cent Jacobite tunes. Whatever, this collection never flags, whether recalling the year of Prince Charlie, or celebrating battles not so long ago; and in particular the enviable reputation of the 51st Highland Division, which is now reduced to a single Brigade. It's a pity the same confident quality does not extend to the sleeve notes: for instance, the nickname "Ladies From Hell" dates from World War I, not World War II; and the steam locomotive, whether travelling to Mallaig or not, was not invented in Scotland.

Greentrax Recordings, Cockenzie Business Centre, East Lothian EH32 0HL

AN arresting collection from Simon Thoumire, Malcolm Stitt, Eilidh Shaw, and Kevin MacKenzie is *Keep It Up* (CDFSR1701, CD). This is music which is really jumping from the first note, and leaps from the jaunty to the introspective — the latter particularly eloquently crowned by Eilidh's fiddle playing — with insouciant ease and boundless confidence.

The four protagonists are pictured in both

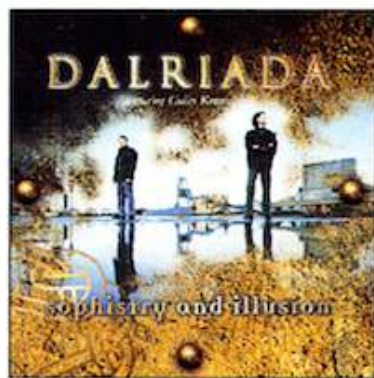
merry mood and soulful pose in the sleeve notes; a double whammy which sums up the collection more neatly, I reckon, than any amount of words from me. Nevertheless, a few pointers to guide the aficionado: look out for Eilidh's vocables in "Just For Gordon", the sheer intoxication of the reel set on track eight, and the bouncing assurance of "Barbara's Jig".

Foot Stomping Records, 17 Redford Drive, Edinburgh EH13 0BL

IT would be easy to dismiss *Sophistry And Illusion* (QUCD 001, CD) by Dalriada — Clark Sorley and Colin Kennedy — as almost knee-jerk Sixties/Let It All Hang Out/Right On stuff, especially the way the first few bars or so yield to Martin Luther King. Even the elegant presentation booklet full of quotes by philosophers and sic-like could be off-putting — but somehow it isn't; not even the comprehensive put-down of the Scottish music scene, which is the unmistakable sound of a man getting something heavy off his chest.

The Dalriada experience of largely powerful but appositely innovative rhythm, plus at times gritty sentiment, all hang together superbly well and sound just right for this nation of ours, especially at this particular moment in our destiny; and thus somehow carries its own unchallengeable validity. It also carries the listener right along with it — well, it did this listener anyway. Incidentally, the title comes from David Hume, and I really liked the credit that says "All works by Sorley and Kennedy (except Bonnie Doon by Burns)."

Qdisc, 161 Rose St., Edinburgh EH2 4LS



People AT LEISURE

SOUNDBOX with Linda Robertson

Power in the music is no illusion

WHEN Dalriada's latest album, *Sophistry and Illusion* dropped on my desk, I wasn't exactly filled with enthusiasm.

Their brand of traditional Scots rock/pop is not something I'd usually go for.

But, surprise, it's a fantastic CD (with gorgeous packaging), and definitely worth a listen.

Dalriada is the brainchild of Scottish producer Clark Sorley who, during a long career in the industry, has been a musician,

producer, engineer, recording artist and studio owner.

During 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 great critical acclaim.

This long-awaited follow up also looks set for success.

It features 16 tracks, including 10 original songs, which explore a range of issues including love, hope, faith, politics and destiny.

It's an incredibly well-crafted album with strong, intellectual lyrics, a fusion of modern and

traditional music and the soulful voice of Colin Kennedy.

It was described as "a diverse and complex work, not easy to categorise" — I have to agree.

It has traditional instruments such as fiddles, pipes, whistles and bodhrans, but it doesn't really fit neatly into folk, rock, pop or dance pigeonholes.

My favourites are the haunting instrumental tracks *Innocent* and *The Trickster* — powerful and beautiful pieces of music.

Sophistry and Illusion is available as a limited edition on Edinburgh label, Qudisc.



Dalriada take a moment to reflect...