

Full of Celtic soul

Alastair Clark finds a band taking innovative liberties with Burns — to a triumphant degree

LAST week's column carried my choice of the top folk albums of 1991. In terms of sheer adventure and innovation, however, none of those could rival a disc by Dalriada, 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.

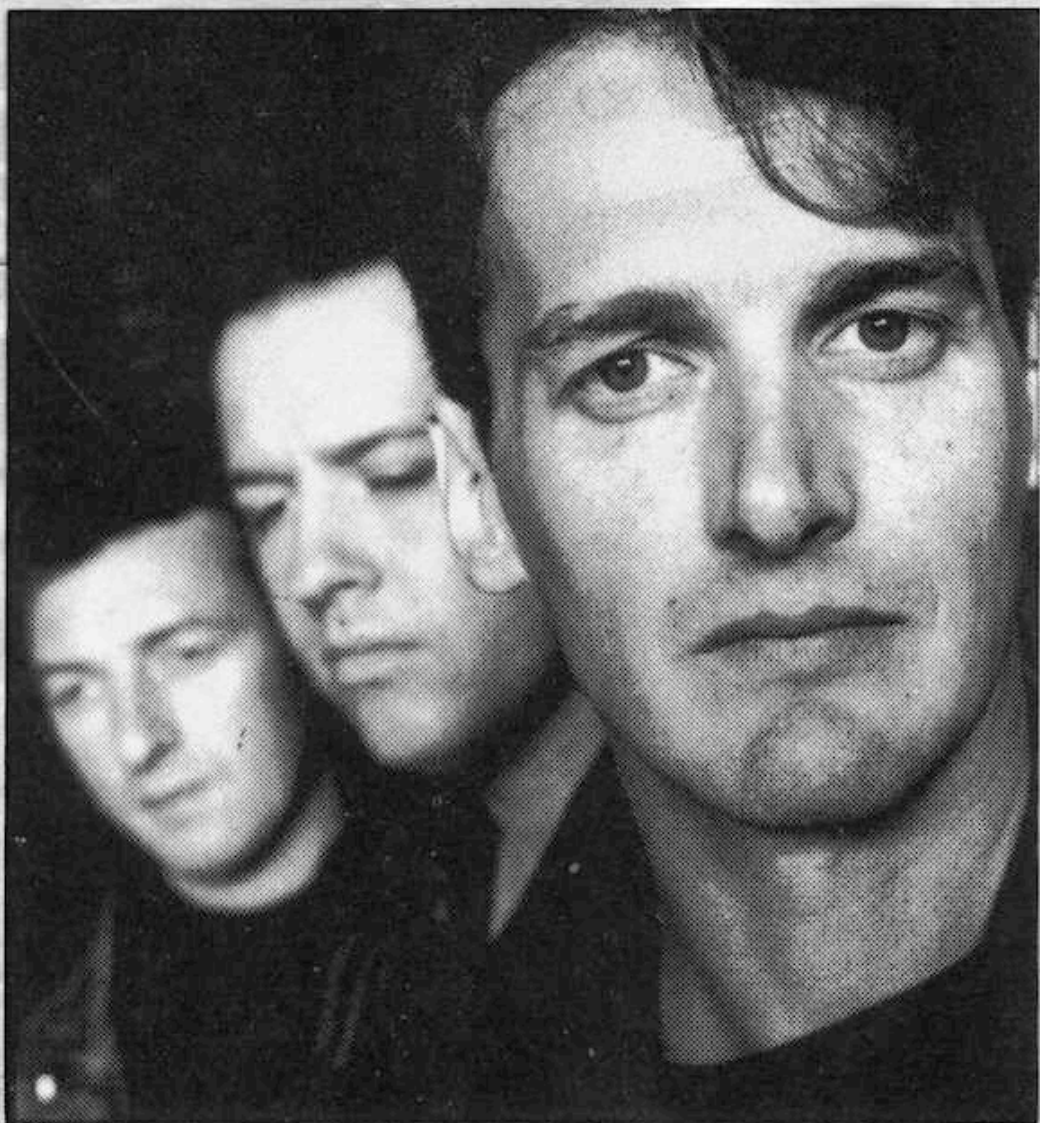
All Is Fair (Iona) is virtually all song, predominantly from the pen of Robert Burns, and sung entirely by Colin Kennedy, who has a robust Scots tongue in his head but a way of singing that puts you more in mind of Michael Bolton than Dick Gaughan.

While some folk-rock fusions have tended to be a bit heavy-handed, especially in the rhythm section, Dalriada's pulse is light and flowing, with Robbie Dale's expressive electric guitar favouring splashes of moody tone colour rather than garrulous note-notching.

I wouldn't expect an elderly admirer of Burns to be impressed by Dalriada's versions of *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Green Grow the Rashes*, as Kennedy gives them the sound of soul. But anyone who has lent Runrig an approving ear will be ready for Dalriada — in particular, the group's *Scots Wha Hae*, *Will Ye No Come Back Again* and *Ye Jacobites By Name*.

When I saw *Loch Lomond* on the song list I expected big echoes of Runrig, but Dalriada's interpretation is completely different: slow, grave, brooding. And in the final track, *The Grey Man*, Kennedy & Co show that they can write a powerful, original song.

In short, a guid New Year album — best kept under wraps until the Kenneth McKellar fans have dozed off or keeled over.



Fair warning: Dalriada are best kept under wraps until the Kenneth McKellar fans have dozed off or keeled over



Reviews

MAYBE THE BEST OF THE LOT, DALRIADA, AND THAT'S SAYING A VERY GREAT DEAL. THEY HAVE SHOWN THAT CELTIC MUSIC HAS A FUTURE. - LAURIE DEVINE DIRTY LINEN 40




THE MATERIAL'S SO FAMILIAR YOU WONDER WHY THEY BOTHER. WONDER THAT IS UNTIL YOU HEAR THE DISC. THEN ALL BECOMES CLEAR, THEY'VE MARRIED SCOTS TRAD TO POP AND WONDER ISN'T AN ADEQUATE WORD. IMAGINE A YOUNGSTER PICKING THIS UP AND YOU'LL HAVE INSTANT CONVERTS. SOMEBODY HAD TO DO IT AND I'M RATHER GLAD THIS BUNCH HAVE GONE AND DONE IT IT IS RECOMMENDED YOU BUY BOTH RELEASES BY THE TRUCKLOAD... SIMON JONES - FIRST HEARING SUMMER 92.

CLASSIC SCOTTISH TUNES... ARE REINTERPRETED, THIS ONE TAKES A COUPLE OF LISTENS TO FULLY APPRECIATE. BUT IT'S WORTH THE EFFORT. AND THE VERSION OF LOCH LOMOND IS TEN TIMES BETTER THAN RUNRIG'S AIR-PUNCHING ANTHEM.IT'S A CHALLENGING RECORD.....REFRESHING. - HECTOR MacKENZIE - JOHN O' GROATS JOURNAL OCT. 91

THE RESULT IS A VERY PROFESSIONAL LP WHICH SUCCEEDS IN SOUNDING POLISHED BUT NOT SLICK. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. - CRAIG NESBIT - IRVINE TIMES OCT. 91

BRILLIANT! THE GROUP HAS GRASPED TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH FOLK MUSIC BY THE SCRUFF OF IT'S ARAN SWEATER AND DRAGGED IT SCREAMING INTO THE MODERN AGE WITHOUT SUCCUMBING TO THE PARADOXICAL ETHOS OF CELTIC-ROCK. WILL SIT ON YOUR BLAUPUNKT FOR MANY MOONS AND TIRED YOU NEVER WILL BE OF THIS BRILLIANT BAND. - CAMPBELTOWN COURIER -NOV. 91



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