

LAND OF MY YOUTH

American Piping in the Scottish Tradition
MARK CUSHING & DON LINDSAY



AFTER ALL OF THESE YEARS,

it is great to see this album re-released. As far as we are aware, it was the first recording of Scottish Smallpipes either solo or with other instruments, let alone with Tabla! Also to use Great Highland Pipes, as a duo and in combination with other instruments had not been done previously.

It is kind of interesting how this album came about. I had been a student of Donald's, and while still under his tutelage, I had taught for a few years at his summer piping school, Invermark College of Piping. Subsequently I started teaching a piping class for the Old Songs organization run by Bill & Andy Spence. Bill, who had done a number of albums on his Front Hall label, had an idea to do an album on American piping. I was excited by the idea of course, and my first thoughts were of doing it with Donald. At the time, Alannah Fitzgerald and I were doing gigs as a duo at coffeehouses and Folk festivals in the Northeast, and we had also started playing music together with Donald and Tom Gibson, a gifted tabla player. It seemed like a natural evolution of things we were doing at the time to have some of this music go on the album. Bill had his heart set on an album that was focussed on piping in particular, and so the idea was set. We would do an album of

American Piping in the Scottish tradition -every cut had pipes- and what a great idea it was!

Along the way, we picked up a young and talented guitarist, Sean Smith. We were also lucky to have a great friend and Gaelic snare drummer, Norman MacLeod, write a score for one of my hornpipes. I think Donald made his debut as a bass drummer on that cut! To the best of my recollection, the bulk of it was recorded over the course of a week or two in the cold January of 1980, with a few tracks added later on.

The great pipes Donald played were 1920 vintage with a Henderson bass drone, two Glen tenors and a Sinclair chanter. The set I played was of my own manufacture. For the piping duets we used two pipe chanters of my own design. The B-flat miniature smallpipes were this sweet set of ivory-mounted Glen's that Donald found in an antique shop in Bennington Vermont of all places. The Low E-flat pipes you hear were a hybrid of some Leo Rowsome Uilleann drones we borrowed from our friend Andrew Hoag, and a low E-flat chanter I made just for the occasion. It was a very quiet instrument, but blended pretty well - it was quite the finger stretch to play with any agility though!

In retrospect of course, there are things that could have been better, but all in all, it is quite a pleasant album, and the piping is great! Enjoy!

Mark Cushing - May 2015

ABOUT THE TUNES & SONGS

1. Medley of Jigs

(The Hen's March; D.R. MacLennan's Tuning Phrase; The Glasgow Police Pipers)

These jigs were all composed by Donald MacLeod. This version of **Glasgow Police Pipers** was arranged by Pipe Major Tom MacAllister of the Shotts and Dykehead Caledonian Pipe Band.

Donald and Mark: Highland Bagpipe.

2. Atholl Cummers Medley

(Nellie's Strathspey; Atholl Cummers; The Little Cascade; The Rejected Suitor)
Nellie's Strathspey is found in the William Ross Collection. **Cummers**, according to Morag MacLeod and A.L. Lloyd, is derived from the French "commères" meaning gossips.

While a "gossipy" dialogue permeates this strathspey, the addition of tabla, whistle, and guitar have brought out an entirely different aspect. **Little Cascade** is one of the many fine compositions of the late P.M. George S. MacLennan. As the story goes, he composed this tune while staying at the Inveran Hotel, owned by the famous Angus MacPherson.

A repetitive dripping sound in the washbasin suggested a pleasing rhythm and melodic line. **The Rejected Suitor** dates to the 1700s. It is

also known as **The Rejected Sailor**.

Sean: Guitar. Mark: Whistle. Donald: B-flat miniature pipes, Tom: Tabla.

3. Strathspey and Reel Medley

(The Caledonian Society of London; Mrs. MacPherson of Inveran)

While the first and second parts of this strathspey are quite old, the third and fourth were composed by the late Nellie MacDonald, sister of the legendary John MacDonald of Inverness. She is said to have been a great devotee of the pipes' light music, but ironically, had little time for Piobaireachd (the classical music for which her brother achieved great acclaim). The reel, **Mrs. MacPherson of Inveran**, is also by George S. MacLennan. This tune is a fine tribute to the wife of his life-long friend, Angus MacPherson.

Donald: Highland Bagpipe.

4. Johnnie Cope Medley

(Johnnie Cope; Loch Linnich; The Smith of Chilliechassie)

On September 21, 1745, General Cope's forces "ran like rabbits" before the Jacobites at Prestonpans. His troops having surrendered to Bonnie Prince Charlie's forces, General Cope galloped into Berwick ahead of his advance party. He consequently achieved the dubious distinction of becoming "the first general in Europe who had brought the tidings of his own defeat". This tune has, since that time,

been used for reveille in the Scottish highland regiments. **Loch Linnich** is a reel done in mouth music or puirt-a-beul. We hunted it up in an old book of the same name, which was printed in the 1800s. We do it here in canonic form. **The Smith of Chilliechassie's** strong rhythmic patterns were no doubt inspired by the sounds of a blacksmith at the anvil.

Alannah: Lead Vocal, Bodhran. Donald: E-flat pipes. Mark: Mandolin, E-flat pipes, backup vocals. Tom: Tabla and conga. Sean: Guitar.

5. Slow Air and Hornpipe

(Hasten Home; Leslie McKay of Lever Hill)
About these tunes, Mark relates: "**Hasten Home** was written as I was travelling home from a week of playing coffeehouses. **Leslie McKay** was written about one of my closest friends. I remember quite clearly how the main theme came to me virtually complete one spring night in 1971."

Mark: Highland Bagpipe. Donald: Bass Drum. Norman MacLeod: Gaelic snare.

6. Two Hornpipes

(Duncan Johnstone; The Train Journey North)
Donald MacLeod wrote **Duncan Johnstone** for the renowned player and composer. **The Train Journey North**, written by Tom Anderson, is another modern hornpipe, the melody of which evolves from the familiar rhythms



of wheel and track.

Donald and Mark: Highland Bagpipe.

7. Atholl Highlanders

This tune commemorates the only remaining private army in Scotland. It still serves as a guard of honour for royal visits to Blair Castle. A slow rendition of this air, for us, conjures images of mythological courts and kings.

Alannah: Bodhran. Donald: E-flat pipes. Mark: B-flat miniature pipes. Tom: Tabla. Sean: Guitar.

8. Medley

(She Moves Through the Fair;
The Weary Maid; Malcolm the Tailor)

She Moves Through the Fair is based on the theme of lovers parting, never to meet in this lifetime. Alannah was struck by this poignant tune one clear night in County Clare in 1972. **The Weary Maid** and **Ailie Bhan** are both versions of the same ancient Scottish tune. **Malcolm the Tailor** is traditional and appears in John MacFayden's Book 1.

Alannah: Lead Vocal. Donald: E-flat pipes. Tom: Tabla. Mark: Backup vocals, mandolin, flute, guitar.



is of Welsh origin. Nathaniel Gow is credited with the composition of **The Fairly Dance**. It appeared in Neil Gow's 5th Collection (1809) as Largo's Fairy Dance.

Alannah: Lead vocal. Donald: B-flat pipes. Mark: Guitar, backup vocals. Tom: Tabla.

9. Hornpipe and Jig

(Lucy Cassidy; The Curlew)

Lucy Cassidy was composed by George MacIntyre of Campbeltown, Scotland. **The Curlew** is by Donald MacPherson.

Donald: B-flat miniature pipes. Mark: E-flat pipes.

10. MacNeill's Farewell to Barra

This unpublished tune was written by Tom Muirhead, and was first recorded by the Shotts and Dykehead Caledonian Pipe Band. E-flat pipes and bamboo flute seem well suited to this haunting air.

Donald: E-flat pipes. Mark: Bamboo flute.

11. Geordie Medley

(Geordie; Tail Toddle; The Fairy Dance)

The words for this version of **Geordie** are found in "Kinloch's Ancient Ballads". This particular version is about George Gordon, 4th Earl of Huntly. In 1554, he incurred the queen regent's displeasure by failing to penalize a highland robber. He was brought to Edinburgh, and his wife subsequently saved him from execution by paying a ransom. **Tail Toddle** is one of the oldest known reels and

12. March Medley

(Hi Ro Hiram; Wee Highland Laddie)

This is a Gaelic "ditty" which has no meaning beyond the nonsense words of the title which imitate the sound of the pipes. **Wee Highland Laddie** is by Donald MacLeod.

Donald: B-flat miniature pipes. Mark: Practice chanter.

13. Land of My Youth (Tir Nan Og)

Land of My Youth or **Tir Nan Og** (phonetically: Cheer nan oak). In Celtic thought, when the spirit left the body at death, it went to Tir Nan Og, which roughly translates as Land of My Youth or the Land of Eternal Youth. There one joined relatives and friends, and lived beyond time. Alannah wrote the words to this ancient air. It seemed a natural title for the album, as it sums up our feelings for this music, and for the Celtic concepts of life, death, sorrow and joy. With this tune, we leave you until we meet again in Tir Nan Og.

Alannah: Lead Vocal. Donald: B-flat miniature pipes. Mark: E-flat pipes, whistle. Tom: Tabla.

ABOUT THE MUSICIANS...

Donald Lindsay is a recognized authority on piobaireachd (or Ceol Mor, ancient classical piping) as well as Scottish march and dance music. Donald received much of this tuition in piping from Robert Brown and Robert Nicol, pipers to the Royal Family at Balmoral, who were a vital link in passing on the tradition of a very musical and emotive style of piping which goes back several centuries. At the time of the original album release Donald was president of the Eastern U.S. Pipe Band Association. From then until now Donald has remained active in international piping competitions and attained the Argyllshire Gathering Silver medal for Piobaireachd playing in 1986. He is the Director and Resident Instructor at the Invermark College of Piping in Petersburg NY, and continues to teach and perform though out North America and Britain. He has devoted much of his time to teaching and judging at Highland Games, and many of his students have become leading performers in North America and Scotland.



Mark Cushing spent his early musical years studying French horn and piano. This, coupled with his training at Eastman Preparatory School, has made him a versatile instrumental arranger and performer. At 16, Mark heard his first recording of Piobaireachd, sparking a deep interest in piping and Celtic music. At Invermark, he studied piping with Bob Brown and Donald Lindsay, eventually becoming an instructor himself. In 1972 Mark studied Piobaireachd in Scotland with Bob Nicol, and the following year he started a pipe-making business and began performing Scottish and Irish music with Alannah. Mark is currently a musician, bagpipe maker, wood artist and cabinet-maker residing in Ithaca, NY.



Alannah Fitzgerald studied Theatre and Mime, and in 1973 was co-founder of her own theatre company, The Traveling Stage, in Petersburg, NY. Growing up in Petersburg,

she was greatly influenced by the music at Invermark and the Fox Hollow Folk Festival, where she performed with Mark and Donald. In 1974, she began performing Celtic music with Mark and they appeared at numerous coffee houses and folk festivals throughout the Northeast. She is a singer, songwriter, and percussionist who has performed in the US and Europe as well as the Soviet Union. Alannah and Donald have continued to collaborate musically and recorded on the Telarc label with the Empire Brass on the *King's Court and Celtic Fair* CD. Alannah Fitzgerald earned her PhD from Cornell University and taught as a professor at St. Lawrence University. She is the mother of four children and is curator for The Music and Art Cafe in Petersburg, where she makes her home.

Tom Gibson has studied Western and Eastern percussion extensively. Although Tom is heard primarily on Indian tabla, he is well versed in the jazz and orchestral mediums of trap set and tympani, as well as the various keyboard instrumentals. Tom currently resides in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.



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Judy Campbell and Donald Lindsay



INVERMARK COLLEGE OF PIPING

was the actualization of an idea conceived by Donald's father, James F. Lindsay in 1961. Situated in the hills of Petersburg, NY, Invermark remains a world centre for the study of light and classical pipe music.

As we met and were inspired there, "Invermark" was a natural name for our group. We remember the love of music we all shared there; for it is music and love which brings us all together.

