

Calum Dòmhnallach

1. Dè thug a-steach dhan cheòl an toiseach thu?
AOIS?

An radio. 'S e a' chiad cheòl a bha mi air cluinntinn seinn nan salm san eaglais agus an uair sin òrain Ghàidhlig aig na cèilidhean a-staigh. Ach nuair a rinn an teaghlach againn imrich dhan Eilean Sgitheanach ann an 1962, bha an radio an-còmhnaidh a-staigh againn. B' e seo cuideachd a' bhliadhna a nochd a' chiad chlàr leis na Beatles sna cairtean agus chaidh mo tharraing a-steach ann an saoghal iongantach. Far an d'fhuair mi ceòl is òrain pop. Mar ghille òg aig aois ochd bliadhna, chaidh mo thoirt air falbh air an t-sùmainn ud. Chan breug a th' ann a ràdh gun do dh'atharraich e mo bheatha.

2. Cò th' air do spreagadh gus ceòl a dhèanamh agus cuin a dh'fhàs e follaiseach gum b' urrainn dhut bith-beò a dhèanamh às?

Saoilidh gun tug dà shaoghail ciùil gu math eadar-dhealaichte an spreagadh a bha dhìth. Bha saoghal mòr ceòl roc is pop a bha ag atharrachadh fad na tìde agus tha mi an dùil gun d'rugadh mi aig an àm cheart an rud a bha na ar-a-mach a thaobh cleachdaidhean na h-òigridh agus ceòl a' phobaill. Fada an dèidh sin fhuair mi eòlas às ùr air ceòl is dualchas ciùil na Gàidhlig - thug measgachadh nam buaidhean sin slighe an turais airson ar cuid òran.

Thàinig am beachd gum faodamaid bith-beò a dhèanamh às a' cheòl againn beagan air bheagan. Bhrosnaich a bhith a' sealltainn air luchd-eisteachd a' dol am meud adhbhar cultarail agus amas na h-òrain againn a leasachadh is a

sgaoileadh.

3. Dè a' bhuaidh a th' air a bhith aig ceòl, sluagh, cultar, àrainneachd Uibhist a Tuath air a' cheòl a tha thu a' cruthachadh?

Rugadh is thogadh mi ann an Uibhist a Tuath agus chuir mi seachad a' chiad ochd bliadhna de mo bheatha ann. Tha a h-uile càil a bhuineas ri Uibhist na chuid cho mòr de mo bhith 's nach biodh e comasach dha gun a bhith aig cridhe ge b' e dè 'n obair-ealain a ghabhas tu os làimh. Tha a' chiad ochd bliadhna de mo bheatha air sealladh air Uibhist nach gabh dubhadh às fhàgail agus tha iad fhathast nan spreagadh airson dèanamh nan òran. 'S e buaidh a th' innte nach bi gad fhàgail a-chaidh.

4. Dè an ceòl/an t-òran as fheàrr leat à Uibhist a Tuath ri ghabhail no èisteachd ris agus carson?

'An Eala Bhàn'. Tha an t-òran air a bhith a' ruith tro chuislean an teaghlaich agam bho thùs. Bha m' athair ag obair mar Oifigear nan Sochairean ann an Uibhist a Tuath sna 50an agus aig toiseach nan 60an agus nam ghille òg rachainn còmhla ris air a chuid chuairtean timcheall an eilein. Bha e na charaid aig Dòmhnall Ruadh Chorùna agus rachadh e air chèilidh air san taigh aige agus sgrìobhadh e sìos a chuid òran. Gu mì-fhortanach bh' agam ri fuireach anns a' chàr daonnan, ach tha cuimhne agam glè mhath air m' athair a' tighinn air ais dhan chàr aon là làn tòcaidh agus e ag innse dhomh mu Dhòmhnall Ruadh agus mar a bha e na bhàrd mìorbhaileach - cha robh leughadh no sgrìobhadh aige ach bha cuimhne aige air a chuid òran gu lèir, bha a' bhàrdachd uile aige air mheomhair. Tha an t-òran gu tur a rèir gach rud a tha prìseil dhomh a thaobh cultar, muinntir is eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath. Bhiodh m' athair a' seinn 'An

**Eala Bhàn' aig na cèilidhean - 's e Laoidh
Nàiseanta Uibhist a Tuath a th' ann agus b' e òran
là mo bhainnse fhèin a bh' ann.**

5. Nuair a chruthaicheas tu ceòl ùr no a thaghas tu pìos ri chlàradh, dè an dòigh-obrach chruthachail a th' ann?

Chan eil riaghailtean teann ann. Bidh Ruairidh is mi fhìn a' dèanamh òran air leth agus còmhla, aig caochladh ìrean, ach uair sam bith a nì sinn ceangal ris a bheachd a bh' aig an fhear eile an toiseach, tha sinn buailteach tuigse a bhith againn sa bhad air an rathad a ghabhas an t-òran. Tha òrain coltach ris a' chloinn agad, agus ged a tha e sònraichte dha-rìribh òran fhaicinn a' fàs stèidhichte agus a sgaoileadh air luchd-èisteachd a' seinn, saoilidh mise gur h-e breith òrain ùir sam bith agus a bhith ag obair air a' chiad dreach a' chuid as fheàrr de thuras an òrain gu lèir.

7. Dè a' chomhairle as fheàrr a fhuair thu riamh?

Feuch am bi lìomh air do bhrògan an-còmhnaidh.

8. Dè an obair a bhiodh agad an-dràsta nad bheachd mura robh dreuchd ri ceòl air a bhith agad?

Rinn mi ullachadh mar thidsear foghlaim chorparra agus bha mi a' teagasg ann an caochladh sgoiltean fad deannan math bhliadhnaichean mus do dh'fhàs Runrig stèidhichte, mar sin 's e as coltaiche gum bithinn an sàs ann am foghlam no ann am buidheann air choreigin ceangailte ri spòrs.

Calum MacDonald

1. What first got you into music? AGE?

The radio. The first music I would have heard would have been psalm singing in church and then Gaelic songs in house ceilidhs. But when our family moved to Skye in 1962, the radio became a permanent fixture in the home. This was also the year that The Beatles first hit the charts and I got drawn into a magical world of discovery. Discovery of pop music and song. As a young eight year old, I got carried along on that euphoric wave. It's no exaggeration to say that it was life changing.

2. Who has inspired you to make music and at what point did it become apparent that you could make a living from it ?

I think two very different musical worlds provided the necessary inspiration. There was the whole evolving story of rock and pop music and I suppose I was born at the right time to experience what was a revolution in youth culture and popular music. Much later I went through a re-discovery of Gaelic music and Gaelic music tradition - the fusion of those two influences provided the direction of travel for our songs.

The idea of making a living from our music was a gradual process. Watching an audience grow encouraged a cultural purpose and an aspiration to develop and share our songs

3. What part has the music, people, culture, environment of North Uist played in the music you create?

I was born and brought up on North Uist and spent the first eight years of my life there. Everything to do with Uist is such a part of my whole being that it would be impossible for it not to be at the heart of whatever artistic endeavor you undertake. The first eight years of my life have left an indelible impression and Uist continues to be a well of inspiration for the songwriting. It's an influence that never leaves you.

4. What's your favourite piece of North Uist music/song to perform or listen to and why?

An Eala Bhan. The song has ran through the veins of my family from the beginning. My father was the district Welfare Officer on North Uist in the 50s/early 60s and as a young boy I would accompany him on his visits round the island. He was a friend of Domhnall Ruadh Chorùna and would visit him in his house helping him write down his songs. Unfortunately, I always had to stay in the car, but I distinctly remember my father coming back into the car one day quite emotional, telling me about Domhnall Ruaidh and what an amazing bard he was - he couldn't read or write but he could remember all his songs, all his bardachd from memory.

The song is synonymous with everything I treasure about the culture, the history and the people of North Uist. My father used to sing *An Eala Bhan* at ceilidhs - it's the North Uist National Anthem and it's what my wife came down the aisle to.

5. When you create new music/chose a piece to record, what's the creative process?

There is no set recipe or formula. Rory and I write songs separately and together, in various states of completion, but whenever we connect with

each others initial idea, we tend to have a shared, intuitive sense of direction for the song. Songs are like your children, and although it's unbelievably special to see a song become established and to share it with a singing audience, I find that the birth of any new song and working on the rough demo is the most rewarding part of the whole song journey.

7. What is the best advice you've been given?

Always make sure your shoes are polished.

8. What type of work do you think you'd be doing right now, if you hadn't had a career in music?

I trained as a teacher of physical education and taught in various schools for quite a few years before Runrig became established, so I would probably be involved in education or in some sports related organisation.