

## JAMIE MCCLENNAN BIOG 2009

New Zealand born musician Jamie McClennan has many strings to his bow –performer, composer, teacher, producer, agent, graphic designer, chef....coffee fanatic! He has over ten years experience as a touring musician having played in line-ups ranging from surf bands to pipe bands to traditional bands. 2009 sees the release of his long awaited first solo recording ‘In Transit’, a collection of tunes Jamie has written over the years travelling and touring around the world.

Jamie grew up in a house filled with music; his parents, both musicians, ran a folk club and folk festival in Hamilton, New Zealand during the 70s & 80s and their home was a regular stop over for many touring musicians. Jamie first became interested in the fiddle at the age of nine. He recalls sitting out in the sun porch at home mesmerised by Canadian fiddler Leo Ready playing the well-known fiddle tune ‘The Four Poster Bed’.

Impressed by the versatility of the violin he took up classical lessons. With a good knowledge of the discipline and technique needed, his original love of traditional fiddle soon found him leaving the classical world behind and focusing on folk and blues music. Local festivals gave him an opportunity to play with like-minded musicians and hone his improvisational skills. Armed with CDs and tapes he spent hours learning tunes and playing styles from recordings of his musical heroes from the other side of the world.

Moving to New Zealand’s capital city in 1998, Jamie began a degree in Music and Psychology at Wellington University. However, at the end of his first year he gave up studying to go on the road and play music full time.

While in Wellington he formed the band ‘The Last Drop’ with fellow kiwis Gerry Paul and Andy Laking along with Irish whistle/flute player Alan Doherty. Whilst short lived the band was well received on the NZ folk scene and acted as a catalyst for his decision to move to Scotland and further his musical career. His band mates Gerry, Andy and Alan left for Ireland and formed Irish band ‘Grada’. Both Gerry and Alan feature on Jamie’s new album.

Jamie became well known on the Glasgow music scene playing sessions and ceilidhs and as a founder member of ‘Quarter Mile’ with whom he won a Danny Award at Celtic Connections festival in 2002. Also in 2002 he met Scottish singer Emily Smith. Emily had recently won the ‘BBC Young Traditional Musician of the Year Award’ and was putting a band together. Jamie joined Emily’s band initially on fiddle and whistle but through the years has become her lead guitarist and an integral part of Emily’s sound. With Emily he has toured worldwide, performed on all three of her albums as well as co-producing her latest ‘Too Long Away’.

Performing on stage with the like of The Waifs, Beth Neilson Chapman, Phil Cunningham, Brian Finnigan and John McCusker, Jamie’s style is a melting pot drawing on influences from his ancestral roots of traditional Scottish and Irish fiddle music, but also from a love of bluegrass and blues. His versatility and passion for music comes across in his infectious energy on stage and it’s clear that every part of him is affected by his performance.

“He puts one in mind of the sort who'd at least contemplate selling his soul for fancy fiddle licks”.

**SING OUT!**