



## Biography

Since forming in the early 1990's, Old Blind Dogs have stood on the cutting edge of Scotland's roots revival. The band has developed its own trademark style with an energetic mix of songs and tunes. Dynamic percussion, polished vocals, soaring fiddle and stirring pipes fuel the delicately-phrased melodies and traditional songs.

*"The Old Blind Dogs play with a compelling energy and intoxicating rhythm,"* says The Scotsman, *"as players and audience seem to share a wild ecstasy of emotion."* Sixteen years is a long time in the life of any band and most who reach that milestone are content to rest on the tried and true formulas that have worked in the past. Not so for Scotland's Old Blind Dogs whose newly released *Four on the Floor* takes them bravely in many new directions.

The Dogs, one of Scotland's most highly touted traditional folk bands, are not known for shying away from change. A strong, shared musical vision has allowed the group to ride out inevitable line-up changes to the extent that the only original member still with the band is **Jonny Hardie** (fiddle, guitar and vocals). The Dogs' popularity has never dimmed though and the current foursome of Hardie, **Aaron Jones** (bouzouki, guitar, vocals), **Ali Hutton** (Border pipes, whistles, vocals) and **Fraser Stone** (drums, percussion) have proven more than capable of carrying on the tradition of the band that the Montreal Gazette called *"...a Scots neo-traditional supergroup with a bracingly modern musical attack."*

Together, in varying line-ups along with past members Buzzby McMillan (bass, bouzouki, vocals), Davy Cattnach (percussion, vocals), Fraser Fifield (saxophone, small pipes), Paul Jennings (percussion), Rory Campbell (Border pipes, whistles, vocals) and singer/guitarists Ian Benzie and Jim Malcolm, the Dogs have released ten albums and have won numerous awards including the prestigious title of Folk Band of the Year at the 2004 and 2007 Scots Trad Music Awards. Their latest album 'Four On The Floor' also picked up the IAP 'Best Celtic CD' Award.

*"A Scots neo-traditional super group, with a bracingly modern musical attack."* (Montreal Gazette)

*"The skill, talent and verve with which they played, belied their laddishness and the crowd responded with thunderous applause. Folk is the new rock and roll."* (Evening News).

*"The Old Blind Dogs play with a compelling energy and intoxicating rhythm, players and audience seem to share a wild ecstasy of emotion."* (The Scotsman)

*"Old Blind Dogs have mastered the tricky art of innovating within a musical tradition while faithfully revealing its essence."* (Acoustic Guitar)

*"Old Blind Dogs bring freshness and colour to acoustic music steeped in centuries of Scottish folklore and history."* (Los Angeles Times)

## Four on the Floor - Compass Records Review

One aspect of Four on the Floor that might surprise even long-term Dogs fans is that instead of bringing in a new vocalist to replace Malcolm, who left to concentrate on his family and solo career, the remaining Dogs now share the singing duties, with admirable success. "For me," says Hardie, "it was a matter of going back to thinking of the original sound of Old Blind Dogs. The band was a four piece for six years and, in many ways, I prefer the sound of four with everyone having to work a little harder. We now have the ingredients for everyone to contribute songs and tunes rather than a front man and three backing singers. Because we all have a responsibility, we tend to focus on making sure the harmonies are right."

The tracks on Four on the Floor run the gamut from contemporary songs such as Ewan McColl's 'Terror Time' and Davie Robertson's 'Star O' The Bar' to tunes from Brittany and Galicia, to tunes found, as many a favorite Dog's tune has been, in "dusty old books". As to the title, Hardie claims that it, "...is just a reference to there being four of us on the stage now as far as I'm concerned but everyone has there own theories (everything from manual gear boxes to us falling around a lot!)...you decide."

The Dogs have always been best known for their impassioned live shows and the inclusion of three classic Old Blind Dogs tracks, recorded live by the current line up, shows why. "Bedlam Boys/The Rights of Man", "Branle" and "The Bonnie Earl O Moray" which span the Dog's career, giving the listener a taste of what all the fuss is about. "It's that live performance thing." says Hardie. "There's an honesty about it and we work hard on the stage. Perhaps we even err on the side of being too frenetic. We don't really pace ourselves; we just go for it. I think ours is very immediate music."

