

Jim Malcolm biography

‘One of the most outstanding talents to have emerged through the Scottish folk scene in years’ *The Independent*

‘Quietly, unforcefully and undeniably stunning’ *Mojo*

Jim Malcolm is the ultimate Scots troubadour. Travelling the world with his guitar, harmonicas, and engaging wit, he sings the traditional songs of Scotland and his own masterfully crafted songs in a style which is modern and accessible, yet utterly authentic. He is highly regarded as an interpreter of the songs of Robert Burns, and has been described as “one of the finest singers in Scotland in any style”.

Though he now works solo, Jim was lead singer with the world-renowned and multi-award-winning Old Blind Dogs for eight years, a fantastic experience with some of Scotland’s finest musicians, taking him to the most prestigious festivals in North America and all over Europe.

With family roots in Perthshire and Strathclyde, Jim has been a professional musician since graduating from Edinburgh University. His first arena was the folk music scene in Scotland, where he gigged in almost every town and isle from Berwick to Benbecula and from Stranraer to Lerwick. Working solo or in various bands and combos in far flung pubs, hotels and clubs toughened him up for a future life on the road.

Solo tours in England, Ireland, Denmark and Germany followed, including musical adventures in some off-the-charts places like Uganda.

The opportunity to join the already established Celtic folk/rock band Old Blind Dogs saw Jim further explore countries on the European continent and North America, travelling as far as Alaska and Hawaii. Over his eight years with the band, Jim recorded three studio albums and a live cd. Jim’s 2011 release Sparkling Flash sees a band reunion ‘across the ether’, as several Dogs members make a guest appearance on the CD.

As a solo performer with ten solo CDs to his credit, Jim can mix it with anyone out there. As well as a renowned singer, he is in the top handful of simultaneous guitar and harmonica players in the world. He plays guitar mostly in the folk guitar tuning dadgad in both fingerpicking and plectrum styles.

His concerts are always highly entertaining, peppered with funny stories and observations, in the great tradition of Scottish artists through the ages, Jim has featured many times on radio and television on both sides of the Atlantic, unfazed by cameras and completely at home behind a microphone.

The release of 2011’s CD ‘Sparkling Flash’ marks a milestone for Jim. He has now recorded fifty songs which are either entirely original or were built by him around some ancient fragment of text, a poem or melody.

His career highlight of 2011 was to perform his own songs Lochanside and Battle of Waterloo with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra at a sold-out concert in Glasgow’s Royal Concert Hall, a great honour and pleasure.

The list of artists who have performed and recorded his work is steadily growing, but includes Kate Rusby with The Poozies, Beppe Gambetta from Italy, Uiscedwr, The McCalmans, Alyth McCormack, North Sea Gas and Tich Frier. In 2004 he was voted songwriter of the year at the annual Scots Trad Music Awards and to date he is the most nominated Scots singer for the Scots Singer of the Year Award, having been nominated three times.

Alongside his original work, Jim has recorded a great many Scottish songs, from early ballads through Burns and Tannahill to William Soutar and his great hero Jim Reid. He enjoys reworking old songs that form the kernel of Scotland’s great folk tradition.

To celebrate the 250th anniversary of Robert Burns Jim released his highly entertaining DVD Bard Hair Day, in front of fans, family and friends in Perth. It’s really funny.

At home Jim spends a lot of time with his kids and fly fishing on the wonderful rivers and lochs of Perthshire. He enjoys hunter-gathering for the likes of geans (wild cherries), hazelnuts, wild garlic, blaeberrries and wild gooseberries. In the winters, which have become very snowy, he has been lately heading for Glenshee Ski Resort with a snowboard and a great deal of padding. Ice is quite a hard landing.

