

Cowboy Celtic BIOGRAPHY

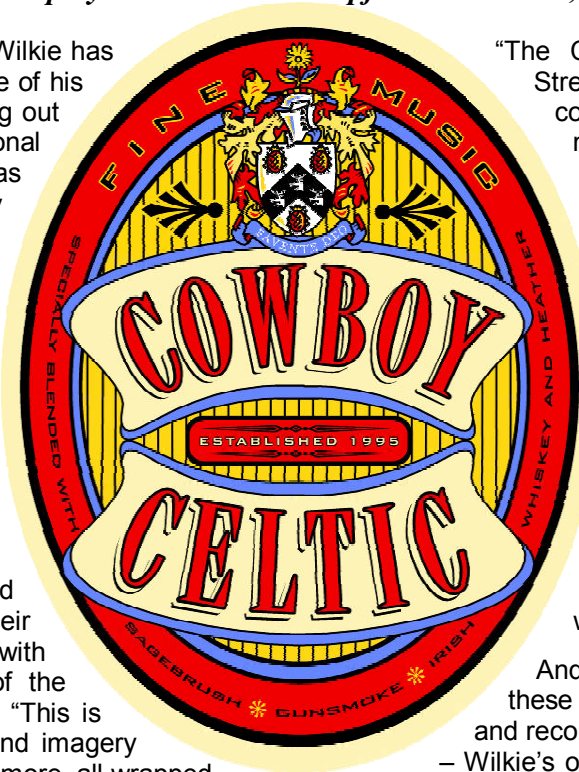
Their **Music** has been called “a beautiful evocation of just how much Celtic music inspired the melodies played around the campfires in the wild, Wild West.”

Over the last ten years, David Wilkie has devoted much of his time to one of his favourite passions – the seeking out of Celtic origins of traditional cowboy music. The result has been the release of three highly successful Cowboy Celtic CDs, *The Drover Road* (2001), *Cowboy Ceilidh* (1997) and *Cowboy Celtic* (1995).

David Wilkie and Cowboy Celtic are becoming well-known for the connections they are making between western (traditional cowboy) music and the music of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England. The ‘Celtic and cowboy’ musical marriage on their recordings has struck a chord with music lovers on both sides of the ocean. As one reviewer put it, “This is more than music. Its theatre and imagery and history and storytelling and more, all wrapped up in sagebrush and tartan.”



These musical and historical connections, and the influence of Celtic music on traditional cowboy songs, come to light in the group’s music, where they combine old world Celtic instrumentation and music with cowboy songs. One Celtic melody that has survived the centuries and the distance across the Atlantic is that of



“The Cowboy’s Lament” (also called “The Streets of Laredo”), popular among cowboys and fans of western music. The melody is that of the old Scottish song “The Unfortunate Rake” and the Irish song “The Bard of Armagh.” The cowboy song’s melody and theme are the same as the older Celtic songs, but the words differ in all three songs.

Many more of the old Celtic songs were refitted with new lyrics by Celtic men and women and their descendents who made their way west (some to be cowboys) and told the stories of their new lifestyle through song. Tunes from home were easier to remember than the words, and hence, the new lyrics.

And so, David Wilkie has taken many of these ‘cowboy’ songs, and a few of his own, and recorded them in the Celtic style. The result – Wilkie’s own brand of Cowboy Celtic music that ranges from hauntingly beautiful to foot-stompin’ lively. As one critic said, it’s “enough to make you shake the trail dust from your jeans and wash it down with a jug of Irish whiskey.”

Among the successes that David Wilkie has had in his foray into the Cow-Celt Cosmos is a Wrangler Award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma. His *Cowboy Ceilidh* CD was voted Outstanding Traditional Western Music Album for 1998, and the award was presented in 1999 in Oklahoma City.

Cowboy Celtic was chosen to play at The Governor General’s Award Presentation to Ian Tyson in Ottawa in November 2003.

The group has toured Scotland three times and has played in the U.S. in Tennessee, Missouri, Oklahoma (National Cowboy Hall of Fame), Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, California (J. Paul Getty Museum and Gene Autry Museum, Los Angeles), Washington, Oregon, Wyoming and Montana.

Cowboy Celtic are members of The Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City www.cowboyhalloffame.org
And The Western Folklife Center in Elko
www.westernfolklife.org