

CALEDONIA

A Music Theatre Comedy  
in Two Acts

By

Music: Alasdair MacLean  
Book and Lyrics: Kent Stetson

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Mt. Allison Concert Version of the  
8<sup>th</sup> Draft, Revised

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## TIME AND SETTING

The action of CALEDONIA is set in the farming community of the same name in Prince Edward Island, Canada, between October 1911 – September 1945, and June 1985 – July 1990.

A graceful wooden bridge, lightly arched, spans the stage. Trucked and flown set elements convert the deck and surface of the wooden bridge to the first and second stories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century MacKinnon home, a classic P. E. I. farmhouse with gabled attic, and two-dormered ell — the airy weaving room/den.

Other set elements suggesting fields, the Whispering Pines Retirement Villa, The Cable Ten Studio TV, etc., occupy the forestage as required.

## Caledonia Characters

1911 - 1945:

The Young Dan John Dan MacKinnon  
Gaelic singer/story-teller.

Katherine MacKinnon (a.k.a. Catrìona  
Dubh) His mother. Presbyterian Elder.

Daniel Johnny Peggy MacKinnon  
His father. Farmer/Presbyterian Elder.

Sinè Màiri MacPherson  
Dan John Dan's Gaelic mentor. Elder.

Mary Margaret MacPherson (a.k.a. Màiri  
Mairead) Sinè Màiri's Daughter.

The Reverend Ethan Stewart  
Presbyterian Minister.

Black Angus the River MacGowan  
Farmer/Presbyterian Elder

Agnus MacGowan  
His Wife. Presbyterian Elder.

Little Murdoch MacGowan  
Her Son.

Big Angus MacGowan  
Brother to Murdoch.

'Red Hughie the Lake' MacPhee  
Piper.

Young Caledonians.

1985 - 1990:

Tiffany 'Mordred' MacArthur  
Disaffected Young Punk.

The Elder Dan John Dan MacKinnon  
Her Grandfather.

Katherine MacArthur  
Her mother.

Douglas MacArthur  
Her father.

Jamie MacDonald  
Mordred's friend/Island Celt.

'Phonse Murphy  
Mordred's friend/Island Celt.

Amber James  
Mordred's friend/Island Celt.

Kyle Jones  
Mordred's friend/Island Celt.

Dwayne MacLean, Host,  
Dwayne's Cable TV Hoe-down.

Bessie West, Hoe-down Accompanist.

Harold, camera/sound man.

The Gaudets: Gary, Garth and Gayle

RCMP Constables, Chorus, Dance  
Ensemble, etc.

## Musical Numbers

### Act One

Alone Quartet	Katherine, Elder Dan John Dan, Douglas, Mordred
Alone - Variation	Katherine, Elder Dan John Dan, Douglas, Mordred
The Sea #1	Mordred
Toganaidh''s Slow Air	Instrumental
Red Clay Loam	Ensemble
In Winter's Sleep	Young Dan John Dan, Ensemble
Caledonia Reel	Instrumental
The Ballad of Times Gone By	Daniel, Rev. Stewart, Catriona, Young Dan John Dan, Mary Margaret, Ensemble
Red Clay Loam - Reprise 1	Ensemble
Mist on the Meadows	Elder Dan John Dan
Fhir à bhat-a na hòro eile	Ensemble
Behind the Barn	Mordred, The Band
Caledonia Air	Young Dan John Dan
Loom Song	Sinè Màirie, Catriona
Caledonia Air - Women's Reprise	Women of the Ensemble
The Sea #2	Mordred
The Face of My Beloved	Young Dan John Dan, Mary Margaret, Mordred
I'm Trying Not To Tell You	Kyle
Caledonia Air - Ensemble Reprise	Ensemble

### Act Two

The Island Way	The Gaudets (Garth, Gayle, Gary)
Gur tu mo chruinn-eag	Elder DJD, Mordred, Island Celts
Waulking Song	Sinè Màirie, Ensemble
The Promised Child / The Face of My Beloved	Young Dan John Dan, Mary Margaret
The Lesson	Instrumental
Fhir à bhat-a na hòro eile	Ensemble
The Lamb of God	Sinè Màiri
In Winter's Sleep - Reprise	Ensemble
The Lost Child	Katherine
Turn Around Twice	Mordred, Ensemble Women
The Sea (Complete Version)	Mordred
Caledonia Air - Reprise	Kyle & Mordred, Kyle, Mordred, Ensemble
The Face of My Beloved - Reprise	Elder DJD, Mordred, Kyle
In Winter's Sleep - Reprise #2	Mordred, Kyle, Ensemble
Mist on the Meadows - Reprise	Elder DJD, Ensemble
Mary Katherine's Waltz	Instrumental
Gur tu mo chruinn-eag	Mary Katherine, Ensemble
Caledonia Air - Finale	Ensemble

## ACT ONE

Caledonia: 2010 Mt Allison Concert Version.  
OVERTURE

NARRATOR: SCENE 1, OCTOBER, 1985. The interior of the MacKinnon farmhouse.

The Elderly Dan John Dan MacKinnon, nattily dressed for travel in tweed cap and overcoat, sits in the upstairs den. His gloved hands rest on the head of his cane. He holds his upper body erect.

Tiffany 'Mordred' MacArthur, Dan John Dan's disaffected teenage granddaughter, appears from shadow. Her spiked hair is intensely colored, her black clothing artfully ripped, her lips, ears and nose are pierced. One bare shoulder is heavily tattooed.

Katherine MacArthur, in her early-fifties, enters from an adjacent bedroom carrying a packed suitcase. She is dressed against the autumn chill.

Mordred pivots on her heel at her mother's approach. She returns to the chair and flops down.

On the ground floor, at stage level, Mordred's father, Douglas MacArthur, also in his early fifties, enters. He props a real estate sign against the interior vestibule door frame. He removes his gloves, mounts the stairs.

MORDRED: Just take the poor old dude out behind the barn and shoot him.

DAN JOHN DAN CHUCKLES.

KATHERINE: There was nothing funny, Dad, about the day last winter I found you in this house. On the floor. With a broken hip. Alone.

MORDRED: You guys can't wait to bury these hardwood hills in condos. "Caledonia Estates. Come feel our charm." Come eat my socks.

KATHERINE: Caledonia Estates is your education, Tiff . . . ah, Spike.

MORDRED My name is not Spike. It's Mordred.

KATHERINE: It was Spike until yesterday. Stop calling me Tiffany, you said. My name is, like, Spike.

MORDRED: Spike is so last week!

NARRATOR: Mordred flops back into the chair.

MORDRED: Nobody hears a word I say. This family sucks eggs!

KATHERINE: (Sings **Alone**)  
Whoever you are, child,  
You come by it naturally.  
You're willful as Dan John Dan.

DAN JOHN DAN:  
Time passed too quickly,  
I've grown so old.  
In life's final moment,  
We all face our maker alone.

KATHERINE: What can I do, Dad,  
Old age is upon you.  
I'm doing the best that I can.

DOUGLAS: There's no need to fret, Kate.  
They know what they're doing.  
Be thankful they found him a bed.

MORDRED: Grandad, you sit there  
In misery and silence  
You act like you're already dead.

DAN JOHN DAN: Delicate heart,  
Fragile old bones.

KATHERINE: I'm caught in the middle  
Like wheat in a grindstone.

DOUGLAS: Hard work and family,  
Maintain a good home.

MORDRED: What kind of people  
Abandon their own?

DAN JOHN DAN: Fragile old heart,  
delicate bones.

KATHERINE: I feel I've betrayed **you** —

MORDRED: Time creeps so slowly —

DAN JOHN DAN: Time passes quickly —

DOUGLAS: So quickly —

KATHERINE: Too quickly.

MORDRED: It's terrible being —

DAN JOHN DAN: In life's final moment,  
We all face our maker —

QUARTET: Alone.

MORDRED: Alone.

DAN JOHN DAN: **(spoken)** On dina athaw Dainoc. I am the last. I am —

QUARTET: Alone.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan stands, tentatively at first. Aside from the hip, he is in

remarkable shape for his age. He shrugs off assistance, descends the stairs slowly but steadily, under his own steam.

Mordred throws herself in her grandfather's recliner, in front of the t. v. She lounges — draped, splayed, slouched . . . Limbs all akimbo.

MORDRED: I, like, hate what you're doing! (Yells) And no one gives a snot about what I think!

DOUGLAS: (**Alone Variation**) I always sought the best for you.

MORDRED: Thought you'd always be my friend.

KATHERINE: Why did we stop speaking, Dad?

DAN JOHN DAN: Màiri? Màiri Mairead?

DOUGLAS: My sweet daughter, pierced and tom.

MORDRED: When did you stop loving me?

KATHERINE: Now you're broken, frail and old.

DAN JOHN DAN: Mary? Mary Margaret?

MORDRED: When did we start spinning on a —

DOUGLAS: Why did you stop loving me?

MORDRED: World that's turning way too fast . . .

KATHERINE: When did father drift away?

DAN JOHN DAN: *Màiri? Màiri Mairead?*

KATHERINE: When did I stop listening?

MORDRED/DOUGLAS: When did we start spinning on a World that's turning way too fast.

DAN JOHN DAN: Old age is not for the feint of heart.

MORDRED: Spinning, spinning way too fast.

MORDRED/KATHERINE: When did we start spinning on A world that's turning way too fast.

DAN JOHN DAN: Old age is not for the feint of heart.

KATHERINE: Not for the old or the feint of heart.

MORDRED: Spinning, spinning way too fast.

DAN JOHN DAN: Not for the old, or the faint of heart.

KATHERINE: Old age is not for the feint of heart.

MORDRED/DOUGLAS/KATHERINE: Turning turning way too fast.

DAN JOHN DAN: *Màiri? Màiri Mairead?*

KATHERINE/DOUGLAS: Will we spend our frail old age  
By ourselves, will we be left —

DAN JOHN DAN: Alone.

KATHERINE: Alone.

KATHERINE/DOUGLAS/DJD: Alone.

MORDRED: (Speaks) Alone. I don't know who I am. And nobody cares!

KATHERINE/DOUGLAS/DJD: Alone.

NARRATOR: Douglas breaks the lingering moment of silence. He presses his father-in-law for the deed to the farm. Without it, the sale cannot proceed.

Dan John Dan responds, grudgingly, in Highland Scots Gaelic. All are stymied.

Mordred admires her grandfather's tactics and is intrigued by this strange new language no one understands but him. When she discovers that Dan John Dan didn't speak English until the age of fourteen, in rural PEI in the early years of twentieth century, Mordred brightens:

MORDRED: Cool!

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan and Douglas exit.

Mordred cranks the TV volume: Much Music – heavy metal.

Katherine presses mute.

Mordred re-establishes Much Music at a higher volume.

Katherine turns off the TV, disconnects the cable, covers it with a dust sheet.

Mordred rises in a huff, turns her back on her mother.

KATHERINE: I've put up with the gawd-awful hair-do and the wardrobe from hell for three years now. I will not be shut out.

MORDRED: I don't shut you –

KATHERINE: You do so!

MORDRED: I want the farm.

KATHERINE: We are not going through this again.

MORDRED: I've seen my future, Mom. It's in the past.

KATHERINE: Oh, for God's sake.

MORDRED: It's in this house.

KATHERINE: I would've given anything to be you. Smart. Talented. Loved by a father and a mother. But it wasn't meant to be. I made myself a good life. That's all we want for you.

MORDRED: I know it was hard for you. Growing up here. With no mother —

KATHERINE: We're talking about you here. Not me.

MORDRED: Are we?

KATHERINE: Yes we are. You've got a whip for a tongue. You're all spikes and spines and claws. You are horrible to us and it hurts.

MORDRED: I love this farm. I love this house.

KATHERINE: It gives me the willies.

MORDRED: It's a rock in the stream for me. Please . . .

KATHERINE: No. Tiff . . . ah, Mordred. The house is for sale and that's an end to it. (Pause) Darling, why did you take a beautiful young girl and make her ugly?

MORDRED: I like the way I look.

KATHERINE: You look like hell. If you don't buck up, missy, you'll find yourself creeping around the edges of your own life, drowned in misery, like your poor grandfather.

MORDRED: Back Off!

NARRATION: The unresolved standoff is postponed by a blast of the car horn. "Lord above, Douggie," Katherine says as she exits. "Relax. You'll wake the dead."  
Mordred uncovers a mirror.

MORDRED: (Spoken) Mirror mirror, snap and crack, throw the spiny creature back. (Beat) Why *am* I so angry?

NARRATOR: Mordred shout/sings **The Sea**. She dances: i.e., she makes herself grotesque.

Creature under the sea,  
Hard as stone, your spikes will protect you.  
Inside tender, all alone,  
Outside brittle, hard as stone  
Claws that snap, clack like bone

Spines that pierce, anger honed  
Creeping under the sea.

Creeping  
Creeping  
Creeping under the sea.

Weeping  
Weeping  
Tears as salt as the sea.

Falling  
Crawling  
I should be flying, instead . . .

I'm lying  
Crying  
Wishing that I was Deeeaaaad –

NARRATOR: Mordred leans close to the mirror. All around her, the dust covers rise, ghost upward and disappear. She loses interest in her mirror image when walls and windows, carpets and furniture rise and float away.

Mordred is left standing in the centre of the gracefully arched 19<sup>th</sup> Century bridge. In the near distance, a single fiddle renders **Toganaidh's Slow Air**. Lights begin to pulse slowly, then with a more insistent rhythm.

A glowing globe – a forerunner – takes form. It moves slowly at first then swirls over and above her. It pops out . . . gone as quickly as it appeared. Below Mordred, light builds on the forestage. She is mesmerized by a vision from the past which emerges on stage below her . . .

NARRATOR: SCENE 2, OCTOBER, 1911.

A potato field at the edge of an ash grove in Caledonia, Prince Edward Island, Canada emerges from the mist.

Mordred, softly framed in a small pool of light, watches amazed as weary farm men and women move slowly forward on their knees filling large, heavy potato baskets with the last of an abundant crop.

One by one they rise as they finish their rows, and the field. They survey the landscape. They sing **Red Clay Loam**.

CALEDONIA WOMEN:                      Peaceful cattle graze under harvest skies,  
Wooded hills observe the sea.  
From fields of plenty our prayers arise;  
In toil and ease, bestow Thy peace.

CHORAL (with men):                    Autumn gold and dormant winter's drifting cold,  
Seeded spring and summer green.  
Oh, blessed Isle!  
Thy grace unfold.  
Shelter us in wind and lea.

CHORUS, ENSEMBLE:                   Keep us safe, keep us strong  
  On our wave-edged home.  
  Rooted deep  
  In thy red clay loam . . .

NARRATOR: Lights fade on the bridge as Mordred, thoroughly spooked, runs off.

A strapping young man — our friend the elder Dan John Dan MacKinnon from the opening scene, now a strapping young man of sixteen years of age — helps people empty their baskets.

Dan John Dan MacKinnon's heart is filled with autumn's plenty, and love for his neighbours.

DAN JOHN DAN:                       Highland blood runs in my veins,  
  Red with ancient knowledge.  
  Prince Edward Isle has forged my soul,  
  My life, my breath, my homage . . .

  In winter's sleep, their strength maintain.  
  When spring awakes, awake the seed.  
  In summer's plenty, peace ordain.  
  In melancholy autumn feed their souls . . .  
  That they may cast off strife,  
  And sorrows misbegotten.  
  Lest those who gave them this sweet life  
  In red loam lie, alone, forgotten.

ENSEMBLE:                               In winter's sleep, our strength maintain.  
  When spring awakes, awake the seed.  
  In summer's plenty, peace ordain.  
  In melancholy autumn feed our souls . . .  
  That we may cast off strife,  
  And sorrows misbegotten.  
  Lest those who gave us this sweet life,  
  In red loam lie, alone, forgotten.

NARRATOR: Sinè Màiri MacPherson, Caledonia's most respected Elder, enters with oat cakes and barley water, which she serves by way of thanks to her neighbours who have, out of generosity of spirit, harvested her fields.

We learn from her daughter, sixteen year old Mary Margaret MacPherson, that Sinè Màiri speaks only Highland Scots Gaelic, and is no friend to English speakers.

A train whistle sounds. As the train approaches, Dan John Dan organizes a bit of fun. Big Angus MacGowan, his brother Little Murdoch McGowan, Red Hughie the Lake and other Caledonia lads hurl potatoes at the "dirty damned soot-spewing monster".

Mary Margaret cranks up a reel on her fiddle. Red Hughie inflates his pipes. The **Caledonia Reel** heightens the fun until —

The train stops.

A moment of apprehension.

A crisply dressed young cleric enters the scene.

The train gathers momentum, continues on its way.

The Reverend Ethan Stewart introduces himself. Sinè Màiri greets the Reverend in the Old Tongue.

'I don't speak Gaelic,' he says. 'But I understand a bit.'

'I have a dog like that,' Sinè Màiri responds.

Bewildered and disorientated Mordred emerges from the woods at the edge of the field and walks among the 1911 Caledonians. She is completely at a loss, feeling as though she has wandered into someone else's dream. No one takes any notice of her: we come to understand that she is invisible to them. She wanders off, her grasp of her own reality tenuous, her place in time uncertain.

Growing tension between Sinè Màiri and Reverend Stewart is diffused when the rear half of a flat-bed wagon is backed on stage, marking the arrival of Dan John Dan's parents, Daniel and Catrìona MacKinnon. As the men begin to load the potato sacks onto the wagon, introductions are made.

Like Sinè Màiri, Catrìona is not pleased they've been sent a unilingual minister and teacher. In what language, Catrìona and Sinè Màiri want to know, will services be held?

"English, of course." The Reverend Stewart replies. "English is the language of this New World. Education is the passport. Why force your children to carry a dead language and dying culture on their backs?"

"Dead?" Catrìona counters. "In Gaelic, The Holy Bible is a thing of beauty — filled with of the wonder of miracles and magic. Unlike your English book of rules and regulations."

"God did not intend that we be seduced by The Holy Bible's beauty," The Reverend Stewart insists, "but compelled by its truth."

Young Dan John Dan steps forward.

DAN JOHN DAN: Look about you. What do you see when you look at these fields?"

NARRATOR: "Typical Prince Edward Island red clay loam," the Reverend replies. "Fair sand quotient. Ideal for tubers, legumes — "

DAN JOHN DAN: You sound like a book. Do you not feel it's magic?

NARRATOR: "There's no such thing as magic."

DAN JOHN DAN: Is that so?

NARRATOR: Unnoticed by the Caledonians but clear to the audience, a potato sack on the wagon twitches, jiggles, then settles. It contorts, twists and bends. It settles. It twitches, jiggles, then settles again.

DAN JOHN DAN: No such thing as magic, eh? Then you'll be able to tell us . . . How did Toganaidh, a well-known fiddler hereabouts, learn to play the pipes without so much as one single lesson?

NARRATOR: Reverend Stewart is at a loss.

DAN JOHN DAN: Then I'll tell ye. Now Toganaidh — Peter the Music MacPhee, grandfather of Sinè Màiri here — acquired this grant of land. Well, sir. There is a lovely clear spring bubblin' up amidst the roots of the last ancient hemlock, just there at the edge of the ash grove.

NARRATOR: Playing only his bagpipe's chanter, Red Hughie lightly renders **Toganaidh's**

**Slow Air.** Mary Margaret underscores quietly on the fiddle.

DAN JOHN DAN: Toganaidh came to get a pail of spring water and didn't he fall asleep. A little faerie, about so high, bubbled right up out of the water, playing a slow air on his wee pipe.

NARRATOR: On the wagon, Mordred frees herself from the sack. She not only sees the Caledonians now, but hears what they are saying.

MORDRED: Ah . . . hi! Hello?

NARRATOR: No one notices or responds.

MORDRED: Oh man! Even in Lah-lah land, no one knows I'm here!

NARRATOR: Mordred hides among the sacks of potatoes.

DAN JOHN DAN: And after a while, didn't Toganaidh wake up, his mind a wash and a-roar with music.

NARRATOR: Mordred pokes her head up out of the sacks.

DAN JOHN DAN: He never seen the faerie, but knew something peculiar — I will na' say unnatural — was afoot. Well, sir. He went over to Billy Archie MacLean's — Billy Archie was a good fiddler and a real good piper. He picked up Billy Archie's pipes — and didn't he play the tune! Well, man dear. Toganaidh never played the pipes in his life until that faerie put the music, and the magic that made it, right into his head. Now what do you make of that?

NARRATOR: "There's no such thing as fairies," the Reverend insists.

Mordred accidentally knocks a bag of potatoes from the wagon to the ground.

The unresolved music halts abruptly.

Sinè Màiri senses but cannot see Mordred. Dan John Dan reacts as though he's heard a distant sound but can't quite identify the source. They are the only Caledonians who feel Mordred's presence.

Mordred waves her hand before their faces . . . Nothing.

MORDRED: Hello! Hello? Cool. Invisible at last!

NARRATOR: Mordred climbs back aboard the wagon, installs herself on the pile of bags for a better view.

Sinè Màiri address the Reverend directly in Gaelic. Mary Margaret translates:

"You're a fool," says Mother. "The spirit world is all around us all the time."

"You'd have done better to thank God for the intelligence which separates you from savage beast and ignorant pagan." Reverend Stewart insists.

"Beware the greasy tongued Lowlander," says Sinè Màiri "His is the way of clans dispersed and kin forgotten."

Dan John Dan's father, Elder Daniel MacKinnon, begins **THE BALLAD OF TIMES GONE BY.**

DANIEL: In times gone by, our lowland kin,  
Traitors, pawned ancestral lands.  
Our kine, our kin, cast to the winds . . .  
Our vigour mocked, our pride unmanned.

REV. STEWART: Crofts be cleared, hearth-stones chill,  
Heather burn, and bracken smoke.  
Scatter the clans, bend your will,  
Bare your neck to the Lowland yoke.

CATRÌONA/DANIEL: We will not bend, your yoke to wear,  
No chain, or hook; no stay, or lease.  
A Garden waits, and those who dare  
Will prosper there in fruitful peace.

MARY MARGARET: O'er fretful seas to foreign straths,  
Adversity fixed their intent.

DAN JOHN DAN: Highland hills, and stone-cold hearths  
echo still their heart's lament.

ENSEMBLE: Scots, wha' ha'e wi' glory shone,  
Scotland's shores ha'e left behind.  
Scotland's stalwart flame burns on  
Old and New World hearts entwine.

CATRÌONA/DANIEL: Old and new world hearts entwine . . .

DAN JOHN DAN: Hearts entwine . . .

MARY MARGARET: Hearts entwine.

DJ D/MARY MGT: Hearts entwine.

ENSEMBLE: (sweetly) Hearts entwine.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan and Mary Margaret hold each other's gaze; childhood friends,  
now young adults, see each other as if for the first time.

Mordred, still invisible to the Caledonians, descends the wagon, drawn to the purity  
of the moment.

"Is this what you wish for your children?" the Reverend Stewart demands? "Made to  
absorb the past, to drag dead history about like a rock on a chain in a world exploding with  
new ideas?"

"Sinè Màiri holds our past, alive in song and story," Catrìona responds. "The time  
has come to pass the ancient wisdom on. My son," she says, as she ushers Dan John Dan  
forward, "will carry our past into the future." He will become **The Sacred Vessel.**"

SINÈ MÀIRI/DJD: (Proclamation/Response) *I will instruct you in language,  
song and story/ You will instruct me in language, song  
and story/ I will present you, the Sacred Vessel, to the  
Elders/ I, the Sacred Vessel, will be presented to the  
Elders/ In time, you will pass the Sacred Vessel, our*

*heritage, on/ In time I will pass the Sacred Vessel, our heritage, on/ Will you accept this sacred trust?*

DAN JOHN DAN: Will I accept this sacred trust? I will. I will!

ENSEMBLE: (verse, **Caledonia Air**) Sacred Vessel, overflow.  
Thou the chosen of our age.  
Let your strength, your wisdom grow  
Guardian of our heritage.

DAN JOHN DAN: In Caledonia, my home, my home.

MORDRED: (Speaks) My home . . . My home.

NARRATOR: As Sinè Màiri and Dan John Dan begin their exit, they come face to face with Mordred. They acknowledge with a curt nod, but don't engage or address her.

Refreshed and hopeful, the Caledonians gather their belongings. They reprise **RED CLAY LOAM**.

ENSEMBLE: Autumn gold and dormant winter's drifting cold  
Seeded spring, and summer green.  
Oh, Blessed Isle, thy grace unfold  
Shelter us in wind and lea.  
Keep us safe,  
Keep us strong  
On our wave-edged home.  
Rooted deep in thy red day loam.  
In thy red clay loam.

NARRATOR: As the ensemble exits, the last rays of sunset fade.

NARRATOR: SCENE 3, AUTUMN, 1985.

Minimal set pieces — a chair, side table and bed — identify the Whispering Pines 'retirement villa'.

Dan John Dan the elder watches Grand Prix Wrestling.

Mordred enters winded, collects herself. She looks around the room.

MORDRED: Whispering Pines Retirement Villa. Festering Pines is more like it.  
This place sucks, man.

NARRATOR: Mordred dangles the car keys.

DAN JOHN DAN: Where are we going?

MORDRED: Who cares? Far from this sinkhole as possible!

DAN JOHN DAN: Your mother will have the cops on us before we leave the parking lot.

MORDRED: Would you rather end your days here in the festering Pines?

DAN JOHN DAN: Who says I want to end my days anywhere? Gimme me hat and cane.

NARRATOR: As they exit, The Whispering Pines disappears.

Off stage, car doors slam, the engine revs, tires squeal. The car radio flips through several stations before blaring rock 'n roll — Syd Vicious version of **My Way**. We flip through the dial to something soothing . . . **Mantavani** or some such. Then back to Syd vicious. Clearly there's a battle in the car over who chooses what music.

NARRATOR: SCENE 4, 1985. NIGHT; THE BRIDGE.

Autumn mists. Mordred and Dan John Dan stand on the graceful, slightly arched wooden bridge. Dan John Dan tells Mordred of the joy she generated in others as a child. She began to sing almost at the same time she learned to speak. She had a sweet, sweet voice. She was pretty and shy.

MORDRED: Yeah. Right. As if.

DAN JOHN DAN: It's true. And you loved to dance. Do you and your friends dance?

MORDRED: Dance?

DAN JOHN DAN: Yeah. You know. Like waltz.

MORDRED: No, man. We throw ourselves at each other and spit.

DAN JOHN DAN: Sounds awful.

MORDRED: It is. I'm fed up with the whole punk scene. I've decided to become a Celt.

DAN JOHN DAN: You are a Celt. There's not a drop of English blood in your veins.

MORDRED: I'm gonna learn Gaelic and sing the old songs and become, like, a fabulous, internationally adored Celtic Funk Fusion singer. I want you to teach me Gaelic.

DAN JOHN DAN: No, dear. It's too late for the Gaelic

NARRATOR: Unseen by Dan John Dan and Mordred, Mary Margaret appears under the bridge, as we last saw her in 1911. She raises her fiddle. She plays **a waltz**, unheard by Mordred, but by Dan John Dan, who becomes lost in memories.

DAN JOHN DAN: People came to Caledonia from all over Kings County, in July, to celebrate the hay makin'. And the strawberries. They'd come, the old and young. Everyone brought food, slept in people's houses, or in the barns on the new hay. We'd all drink moon-shine, dance and talk all night. I'd tell the old stories. It was wonderful.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan sings **MIST ON THE MEADOWS**.

DAN JOHN DAN: Wonderful!  
From a little way back, I can still hear the music —  
Soft lantern lite on bright shining waters.  
I can still see the dancers *here* in the moonlight  
We'd dance and sing  
On this bridge and we sang until dawn.

(Chorus) The babies asleep on the new hay, in wagons,  
Their dreams filled with music,  
Their hearts light with song.  
There's mist on the meadows  
The new hay in mounds  
We'd sing and we'd dance on the bridge until dawn.

DAN JOHN DAN: (Speaks) My Mary Margaret, your Grandmother, would play a sweet  
summer waltz rendered from a strathspey.

DAN JOHN DAN: A chill stills the air, the hay moon's a ghost now . . .  
The lanterns fade, the sun *heralds* morning.  
A slow air played soft marks the coming of day.  
A lament for times past  
For days lost and gone.

MARY MARGARET BRIEFLY EVOKES THE LAMENT.

(Chorus) The babies awake on the new hay  
The sun's slanting rays  
Turn the green stubble red.  
Through mist on the meadows,  
We'd made our way home.  
We *sang and we danced* on the bridge until dawn.

MARY MARGARET COMPLETES THE LAMENT'S FULL EXPRESSION.

DAN JOHN DAN: Mary Margaret would slow down . . . then she'd stop.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan begins to drift. Mordred takes his hand, bows, then offers; Dan John Dan accepts. They waltz briefly, with as much grace as his stiff hip and her Doc Martin's will allow.

The waltz soon dissolves in awkward laughter.

Mordred circles back to her true agenda. She wants to embrace her heritage. She'd be real, then. Authentic. Only Dan John Dan can help.

Dan John Dan stands firm. He will not teach her the old ways. She'd simply have somewhere else to hide — behind a language no one understands.

DAN JOHN DAN: I will not teach you the Gaelic. For the same reason I wouldn't teach your mother.

MORDRED: I am not my mother. Sometimes I feel like my life is over before it even started. The next step is oblivion.

DAN JOHN DAN: Mordred! Don't ever say such things. let alone think them. Life is

sweet, Mordred. Sweet!

MORDRED: Grandad . . . ?

DAN JOHN DAN: What, child?

MORDRED: . . . was I . . . ?

DAN JOHN DAN: Where you what?

MORDRED: Pretty and shy?

DAN JOHN DAN: Oh my yes. You were a sweet, sweet little girl. Oh dear. Don't cry. Mordred . . . ? What is the matter, child?

MORDRED: Mom was my best friend . . . And Dad . . . He was . . . We used to have so much fun . . . Mom and Dad hate me . . .

DAN JOHN DAN: They don't hate you. They're just afraid of you —

NARRATOR: **Toganaidh's Slow Air** shimmers in the distance.

MORDRED: Cool . . . A forerunner.

DAN JOHN DAN: You've seen this before?

MORDRED: Oh, man. I'm always seeing weird crap like this . . . Listen!

NARRATOR: Distant voices sing **Fhir à bhàt-a** softly.

DAN JOHN DAN: Mordred . . . Mordred! Get me out of here! Now!

ENSEMBLE: Fhir à bhàt-a na hòro èile  
Fhir à bhàt-a na hòro èile  
Fhir à bhàt-a na hòro èile  
Mo-shoraidh slàn leat 's gach àit' an teid thú.

NARRATOR: The forerunner rises, falls behind Mordred and Dan John Dan, sweeps swiftly under the bridge. It 'pops' out. Gone.

DAN JOHN DAN: Take me back, Mordred. Now.

MORDRED: Where?

DAN JOHN DAN: Home. To Caledonia.

NARRATOR: The 1914 Caledonia people, in formal highland Scotts attire, sweep through the river bed below Mordred and Dan John Dan.

ENSEMBLE: 'S tric mi sealstuinn o'n chonc a's àirde  
Dh'fhuech am faic mi fear à bhàt-a

An tig thu'n diugh no'n tig thu' màireach  
'S mir tig thu idir, gur truagh a tà mi.

NARRATOR: In the last of the growing dawn, revolving red and blue light, sirens, then automobile headlights, blind Dan John Dan and Mordred.

Katherine and an RCMP constable approach. Dan John Dan calls to the 1914 Caledonians below.

DAN JOHN DAN: Sinè Màiri! Big Alec! Little Murdoch!

MORDRED: Grandad? Who are they? Grandad!

DAN JOHN DAN: Mary Margaret! It is yourself!

ENSEMBLE: Fhir à bhàt-a na hòro èile  
Fhir à bhàt-a na hòro èile  
Fhir à bhàt-a na hòro èile  
Mo-shoraidh slàn leat 's gach àit' an teid thú.

NARRATOR: Below, the young Dan John Dan, Mary Margaret and Sinè Màiri acknowledge the elder Dan John Dan on the bridge above. Young Dan John Dan returns his wave. Sinè Màiri hurries him off.

The Elder Dan John Dan attempts to climb the rail, determined to jump.

DAN JOHN DAN: No! Wait! It is myself. Don't leave me. On dina athaw dainoc! I am the last!"

NARRATOR: He is restrained by Katherine. Dan John Dan calls out to Mary Margaret, as she disappears into the mist. "Màiri Mairead! Wait! Take me home!"

Katherine ushers him off.

Mordred is left alone on the bridge.

MORDRED: Mom! Mom? MOTHER!?

NARRATOR: Blackout.

NARRATOR: SCENE 5, SPRING. 1914.

An open field. Young Dan John Dan and Sinè Màiri seed a field. Tension runs high.

Two and a half years have passed since Dan John Dan agreed to be schooled in the old ways by Sinè Màiri. Her instruction has been thorough, the process rigorous and relentless.

As they move slowly and deliberately across the freshly tilled red soil broadcasting flax seed by hand, his mentor quizzes Dan John Dan. He answers Sinè Màiri's questions thoroughly, his tone curt and to the point.

NARRATOR: SCENE 6; 1985: THE WHISPERING PINES.

The Elder Dan John Dan lies in bed, asleep. TV blares: Grand Prix Wrestling.

Mordred presses mute. She paces. She smokes. She's lost a spike or two, and



My song is done and finished.  
Smash your T.V., set yourself free  
Before you are diminished.

MORDRED/BAND: Smash your T.V.  
Set yourself free.  
Look at yourself  
Then look at M-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E!

NARRATOR: Mordred grabs Jamie's guitar. She smashes the television: smoke, sparks, etc. The band looks on in horror and delight.

MORDRED: Set yourself free  
Smash your T.V.  
Look at yourself  
Then look at M-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E!

NARRATOR: When the TV is reduced to rubble, Mordred smashes the guitar.  
The room becomes a mosh pit. The Island Celts throw themselves at each other and spit.  
Dan John Dan struggles out of bed.

DAN JOHN DAD: That'll do, Mordred. Mordred! That will do!

MORDRED: BEHIND THE BARN (reprise)  
I thought you said  
When you were dead  
The misery would be over.

DAN JOHN DAN: (Shouts, over) Stop that damn caterwauling. I already told you — no.  
I will not teach you the —

MORDRED: You want to die  
And so do I  
Our time has come,  
More-over —

ISLAND CELTS: I can't conceal  
How bad I feel.  
Smash your T.V.,  
Set yourself free —

DAN JOHN DAN: Alright, alright! I'll teach you one song. One.

MORDRED: Cool. Wadda ya got?

DAN JOHN DAN: A blistering headache. Come back tomorrow.

MORDRED: We might be in jail by tomorrow. Unless a wise, caring, you know,  
like, old person . . . stands up for us.

DAN JOHN DAN: Alright! Alright. Just don't sing, or whatever you call that. Here's an easy one. It's **Nigh-neag bhoidh-each** a stepping song:

(Sings) Nigh-neag bhoidh-each mheall-shui-each,  
Tha fir a' haile 'n toir ort —

What?

MORDRED: Uhm . . . Ah . . . That's Gaelic?

DAN JOHN DAN: Hah! You should see your faces. Be warned. This will be hard work.

NARRATOR: Mordred and the band commit. Dan John Dan teaches the tune with **Mouth Music** . . . the words, and their meaning will come later.

DJD /MORDRED/ISLAND CELTS: **Nigh-neag bhoidh-each mouth music.**

NARRATOR: The upbeat rhythms of the light-hearted 'Stepping Song' soon captivate the young punkers and lift their spirits. A couple of quick 'run-throughs', and they are on their feet . . . They dance, that is to say, they hurl themselves at each other. Dan John Dan discourages spitting.

A spell has been cast. Dan John Dan knows he's touched their hearts when 'Phonse dances past, 'high-fives' him, and calls him Grand-dude!

The spell is broken when Katherine enters. Mordred will be sent to private school on the mainland. There will be no discussion. Arrangements have been made. She has become a danger to her grandfather and herself. No amount of argument will change Katherine's mind, despite Mordred's promise that she will behave, and Dan John Dan's assurance that he will toe the line, especially now that Mordred has found a clear goal.

DAN JOHN DAN: I believe I can reel her back in. She has the sight, Katherine. Strong as I ever seen it.

KATHERINE: (beat) The sight.

DAN JOHN DAN: Yes, the sight.

KATHERINE: I'll tell you what sights I remember. You and your old cronies, drunk and weeping, singing the Gaelic. Stuck in reverse, going full tilt in the wrong direction. 'I am the last,' you used to moan. 'I am the last.'

DAN JOHN DAN: I'm teaching her the Gaelic.

KATHERINE: The Gaelic. God help me. She's on cloud nine without a rope and you're teaching her The Gaelic? You couldn't abandon the 'old ways' fast enough.

MORDRED: Let me work with Grandad, Mom, on my own time. I'll go back to The Rural, get my grade ten, then —

KATHERINE: You won't. You didn't before, and you won't now.

MORDRED: It's different now. I had nothing to keep me sane before —

KATHERINE: Your father and I will see you educated, educated to the best of our ability, whether you like it or not.

MORDRED: So I can lead a bland, nowhere, suburban existence? I don't think so. I'd rather die than live like you.

KATHERINE IS IMMOBILIZED, MORDRED UNYIELDING THROUGH A PAINFUL SILENCE.

KATHERINE: We're catching the 7 a.m. ferry tomorrow morning.

MORDRED: Help! Police! I'm being abducted!

KATHERINE: You're being rescued. Go home and pack. One way or another you're leaving our house tomorrow.

NARRATOR: Katherine exits. The room falls silent until straight-laced Kyle stands forward with an idea. While Mordred is in exile, Kyle will tape the old songs with Dan John Dan, send the cassettes to Mordred.

Amber, 'Phonse and Jamie will jam the tunes. Then, when Mordred comes home at Christmas, they'll get together. Maybe Kyle will find them a gig. The room brightens. This plan could work.

In the meantime, the Island Celts will have their first rehearsal, this evening at Mordred's house, complete with instruments — including amplifiers and full drum kit. A little going away present for Mordred's parents.

They dance to the stepping song, mimicking the Highland Fling. They move more like Highland bears than graceful lasses and lads amidst Highland heather!

After one last high-five from 'Phonse, they leave.

Dan John Dan finds he's quite pleased with himself.

DAN JOHN DAN: Grandude! Ha!

NARRATOR: An instrumental version of **Behind the Barn** carries us through the blackout.

NARRATOR: SCENE 7. Summer, 1914. The MacKinnon Farm house.

The parlor, at stage level, is formally arranged for company.

What was Dan John Dan's second floor den in the opening scene is revealed in its original configuration. A long fulling table dominates the room. We hear a rhythmic, reverberant clatter and thump. Sinè Màiri, works a large loom.

Young Dan John Dan in MacKinnon in formal highland dress enters, followed by his mother, Catrìona. Tonight Dan John Dan will be examined by the Elders. He's reassured by his mentor Sinè Màiri and his mother that he is more than ready to be invested as The Sacred Vessel.

Dan John Dan requests time alone. As Sinè Màiri and his mother exit, young voices call from below.

Dan John Dan opens the window, peers out into the crisp, starlit night. Big Angus and Little Murdoch McGowan stand on the lawn below.

"I suppose you know everything now, do you Dan John Dan?" Big Angus asks.

"I know enough, Dan John Dan replies. "More than you at least. Which is to say very little!"

"Is that so . . . then tell me. What's the square root of zero?"

"Who taught birds to swim, if you're so smart?" Little Murdoch demands. "Who taught fish to fly?"

Dan John Dan considers escape. He reconsiders, closes the window. He recounts the tale of the *Sluagh*, tiny spirit birds which flock in their thousands, descend from the skies and carry off the troubled, the vulnerable and the alone. He sings **CALEDONIA AIR**.

DAN JOHN DAN: (Verse) Come spirits, fly me away,  
I yearn to roam  
To some far shore  
Where the new world's turning.  
My family, my friends and all I hold dear,  
Gather here —  
Their expectations haunt me.  
Come spirit birds, fly me away.

(Chorus) Caledonia, where would I go  
Leaving all that I love and know.  
Caledonia, live in my heart  
Be my compass, be my chart.  
Caledonia, I yearn to roam.

(Verse) Such a bright world beckons to me,  
Such people there,  
Alive, ablaze in a world electric.  
In automobiles and flying machines,  
I dream a dream of flying.  
Come shining world fly me away.

NARRATOR: Downstairs the last of the elders arrive with Reverend Stewart. Dan John Dan cracks the door, listens. The elders greet each other in Gaelic. The chat becomes loud and animated. Expectations, already high, rise. Dan John Dan doses the door, leans against it.

DAN JOHN DAN: (Chorus) Caledonia, please, let me go  
Far from all that I love and know.  
Caledonia, let it begin,  
Let my life come tumbling in.  
Caledonia, I yearn to roam.

(Bridge) Foreign fields beneath my wings  
Cloudless skies, my spirit sings.  
Then the tempest hurls me down  
Broken wings, thunder sounds  
Lying shattered on the ground,  
Far from home, I am . . . alone.

(Verse) Is there someone waiting for me,

Someone to love? How will I know  
When at last I've found her?  
Her soul will be kind, our spirits will shine,  
Hearts entwined,  
We'll live in love forever.  
Come spirit birds, fly her to me.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan is interrupted by a thump against the outside wall. He raises the window, stares transfixed as Mary Margaret climbs a ladder steadied by Big Angus and Little Murdoch.

MARY MARG'T: What's the matter, Daniel? You look like you've just seen a ghost.

DAN JOHN DAN: I just . . . I asked . . . I . . . Do ghosts inhabit the future, do you think? As well as the past and present?

MARY MARG'T: Well, ah . . . What?

DAN JOHN DAN: If the past is alive in the present, and the present gives us the future, does that mean the past is alive in the future too?

MARY MARG'T: I don't know what you're saying.

DAN JOHN DAN: Either do I . . . exactly. Have you ever seen the future?

MARY MARG'T: No. Not all of us are blessed with the second sight like yourself, you know.

DAN JOHN DAN: Two years ago, I looked at someone I knew since childhood. And suddenly I saw her . . . Saw this person . . . Saw you . . . for the first time. And I saw our future.

NARRATOR: Big Angus whistles lightly from below. Mary Margaret reaches in the open window, touches Dan John Dan's hand.

MARY MARG'T: Good luck, Dan John Dan –

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan closes the window as Mary Margaret descends.

DAN JOHN DAN: Caledonia, why would I go  
Leaving all that I love and know.  
Caledonia, lift me above,  
Bring me courage, bring me her love –  
Mary Margaret, my own, my own . . .  
(Quietly) Mary Margaret.  
Why would I leave you?  
Leave my love . . .  
Leave my home . . .  
My home.

NARRATOR: As Dan John Dan leaves the weaving room, Sinè Màiri resumes her place at

the loom.

In the downstairs parlor, all eyes are on Dan John Dan as he descends the staircase.

The Elders and young Caledonians rise with Reverend Steward who, when Dan John Dan is ready, begins to evoke the blessing.

The Lords Prayer, spoken in English, is drowned in the rhythmic clatter and thump of the loom.

Reverend Steward won't be outdone. Nor will Sinè Màiri. If the blessing won't be invoked in Gaelic, it will not be invoked at all. Sinè Màiri, her full soprano commanding and clear, sings the rhythmic work song **Lù ò ra hiù à**.

SINÈ MÀIRI:

Lù ò ra hiù à  
O hì o hì ò  
Lù ò ra hiù à

Gura mise tha fo mhulad  
air an tullaich ud shuas

NARRATOR:

The Reverend Stewart raises his volume. "Our father which art in heaven — "

SINÈ MÀIRI:

(raises her volume) Lù ò ra hiù à  
O hì o hì ò  
Lù ò ra hiù à

NARRATOR:

The reverend shouts: HALLOWED BE THY NAME!

SINÈ MÀIRI:

(top volume) Cha dìrich mi brauch  
Cha siubhai mi buan

Lù ò ra hiù à  
O hì o hì ò  
Lù ò ra hiù à

NARRATOR:

THY KINGDOM COME! THY WILL BE —

CATRÌONA/  
SINÈ MÀIRI:

Cha dean mi ceum còmhnard  
à Dhòmhach na Luain

Lù ò ra hiù à  
O hì o hì ò  
Lù ò ra hiù à

'S tric mo shùil air a' rubha  
Far a' bhruaich ud shuas

Lù ò ra hiù à  
O hì o hì ò  
Lù ò ra hiù à!

NARRATOR: Defeated, the Reverends sits.

As she and Catrìona descend the stairs — a battle if not the war won — Sinè Màiri raises a new objection. “Is the Sacred Vessel to be examined in the presence of the Lowlander?”

Dan John Dan translates.

“I’d hoped we’d left these old rivalries back in Scotland,” the Reverend replies.

Sinè Màiri ends the discussion with raised hands, palms forward as she sits. She drops her hands to her lap, where they lie quietly.

The first question, posed in Gaelic by Black Angus, is easily answered. As are the second and third.

Dan John Dan’s response to the fourth question is interrupted: Red Hughie the Lake enters pipeing Dame FLora MacLeod’s **Welcome to Prince Edward Island**.

The Caledonians move outside where they learn from an officer in the full dress uniform of the Frazier Highlanders that the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand has been shot. Germany is expected to invade Serbia. Europe will not tolerate unbridled aggression. England, therefore Canada, will soon be at war. All are called to enlist.

There is no hesitation. Big Angus and Little Murdoch will sign up. So will Red Hughie the Lake. So will Dan John Dan.

Catrìona swallows her fury. The women follow her back into the parlor where they sit, rigid with anger.

Outside, the boys are encouraged by their fathers. The men pass a flask. The young men drink their first “wee dram” in public with their fathers

In the parlor, the seated women reprise **The Caledonia Air**.

WOMEN: (chorus) Sons and husband’s stolen away  
Wives and mothers grieve and pray . . .  
When the wrath of God sweeps the field,  
Be their fortress, be their shield.  
God preserve them, bring them home.

CATRÌONA: To Caledonia —

AGNES: Caledonia —

TRIO (add Mary Margaret): Caledonia, our home  
Our home.

ENSEMBLE: Amen.

NARRATOR: The MacKinnon house disappears, as though in a gust of wind. Blackout.

SCENE 8: The Bridge. Sunrise.

Flooded by the rays of the rising sun, Mordred leans toward the audience, arms folded on the rail. Her solitude is broken when ‘Phonse and Jamie, led by Amber, whiz through on Skate boards. They vie for Mordred’s attention, each trying to outdo the other with increasingly complex board tricks. Mordred ignores them. They exit.

Mordred refocuses. This time her anger and frustration seem diminished, replaced by a certain strength and sense of hope. She begins to find her true voice as she reprises **The Sea**.

MORDRED: Creeping . . . Creeping . . .  
Creeping under the sea.

Weeping . . . Weeping . . .  
Tears as salt as the sea.

Sunrise . . . Daybreak . . .  
Tears the veil of the night.

Sunrise . . . Daybreak . . .  
Let my spirit take flight . . .

(Verse) Creature under the sea,  
Hard as stone, your spikes can't protect you.  
Inside tender, all alone,  
Outside brittle, hard as stone  
Claws that snap, clack like bone  
Spines that pierce, anger honed  
Keep you under the sea.

(Verse) Creature under the sea,  
Crack your shell,  
Dare to live undefended.  
Let your isolation end,  
Let your troubled spirit mend,  
Let your heart and soul ascend,  
Creature rise from the —

NARRATOR: Mordred turns away, embarrassed when Kyle enters. She hopes either she or he will simply leave vanish. Neither does. They stand awkwardly side by side. Amber, 'Phonse and Jamie rattle through again on skateboards. Mordred breaks the silence.

MORDRED: Banished to the mainland. Oh God. Why don't they just take me out behind the barn and shoot me.

KYLE: Don't say that. Stop saying that!

MORDRED: I beg your pardon?

KYLE: Why do you keep saying that violent crap about shooting or getting shot!

MORDRED: Wow! The mouse finally roared. It's not you, Kyle. It's them. No one has the right to force me to be what I do not want to be.

KYLE: It would help everybody if we knew, Mordred, exactly it is you want to be. We could help.

MORDRED: Big . . . not small and miserable and little and unhappy and resentful and spiky and mean. I wanna be BIG! VERY BIG! THIS BIG!  
(Spreads arms) HUGE!

NARRATOR: Don't show me. Tell me!

MORDRED: (Chorus) Lift, my spirit  
 Rise, my soul, from the sea.  
 Fly, my spirit, rise and fly,  
 Strong and free.  
 Take me higher  
 Up, past heaven above.  
 Show me, spirits,  
 How to live, how to love.

KYLE: WOW! That was fabulous! Mordred . . . I think I can help you —

NARRATOR: Mordred shushes Kyle. The hears a single instrument shimmer; **Toganaidh's Slow Air**, very faint.  
 The boarders skate on, alarmed by the sudden rise in the wind.  
 Mordred sends them to get the car, urges Kyle to follow. Kyle veers off, hides under the bridge.  
 A storm of sound envelops Mordred. Fiddles. Pipes. Voices. **Toganaidh's Slow Air** becomes present.  
 Mordred hides. Kyle, unseen by her, watches Mordred. The wind drops. Mordred, but not Kyle, sees . . .  
 Young Dan John Dan and Mary Margaret enter arm in arm. On the surface of the bridge, it is autumn, 1912. Sunrise sits lightly upon the young lovers who lean on the rail.

MARY MARG'T: I can't believe it. I finally catch your eye, Dan J'n Dan. Now I may never see you again.

DAN JOHN DAN: One summer, you'll come to the communion . . .

DAN JOHN DAN/  
 MORDRED: . . . with a handsome young devil driving two black, black horses.

MORDRED: But she'll leave with you.

DAN JOHN DAN: But you'll leave with me.

MORDRED: I knew it!

MARY MARG'T: Will I now?

DAN JOHN DAN: Aye, lass. You will.

MARY MARG'T: Look at you. When did you become so handsome?

DAN JOHN DAN: Were you always this beautiful?

MARY MARG'T: Maybe it's the sunrise.

MORDRED: No, Mary Margaret. You are beautiful. Just like Grandad said.

DAN JOHN DAN: It's your eyes, Mary Margaret. And your lips. It's your hair and your cheeks and your lips and your lips and —

MARY MARG'T: It's your shoulders, and your neck and your face. It's your voice. And sunrise. It's your voice —

MORDRED: You fools. Can't you see? It's love.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan and Mary Margaret sing **The Face of my Beloved.**

DAN JOHN DAN: (Verse) Your sweet face shines.  
In your bright eyes, the spirit . . .

MARY MARG'T: (Verse) Your sweet voice sounds  
In its soft tones, the spirit . . .

MARY MARG'T/D J D: (Chorus) The face of my beloved shines on me  
and deep within revolves a mystery.  
The voice of my beloved circles me  
and deep within resounds the mystery.

DAN JOHN DAN: (Verse) Your sweet face shines.  
In your bright eyes, The spirit . . .

MARY MARG'T: (Verse) Your sweet voice sounds  
In its soft tones, the spirit . . .

DAN JOHN DAN/ The spirit . . .

MARY MARG'T: (Sings) The spirit . . . .

NARRATOR: As they kiss, they are swarmed by Caledonians. Dan John Dan and Mary Margaret waltz. Others pair off and join them.

Two men in world war two battle dress enter, each with a sword in either hand. The waltzing couples scatter. The men place their swords. The highly stylized aggression of the dance evokes the courage, strength and ferocity of battle.

Agnes MacGowan assembles the women. She leads a traditional Scottish country dance, which surrounds and overwhelms the sword dance. The men push back. The stately Strathespey prevails.

A gust of wind. The dancers surround Dan John Dan and Mary Margaret, waltz them off in a protective swirl.

Mordred reclaims the bride, her attention fixed on the departing couple.

Kyle reappears, unnoticed by Mordred. His attention is fixed on her.

She sings, her voice strong and true:

MORDRED: The face of my beloved shines on me  
and deep within revolves a mystery.  
The voice of my beloved circles me  
and deep within resounds the mystery.

KYLE: Mordred?

MORDRED: Eh? Geeze, Kyle. You scared me. What?

KYLE: Sorry. Nothing. Sorry. Where did you learn that song? It's beautiful

MORDRED: I dunno. Heard it somewhere . . . Here's my ride. I guess I'll see you.

KYLE: I guess. Yes. Ah Mordred?

MORDRED: Yeah?

KYLE: I, ah . . . Have a good trip.

NARRATOR: Mordred exits. Kyle sings **I'm Trying not to Tell You that I Love You.**

KYLE: I'm trying not to tell you that I love you  
Perhaps the hardest words I'll ever say.  
What if I say the tender words I love you  
And love unfolds its wings, and flies away.

I tried my best to tell you that I love you  
I tried my best and now you've gone away.  
But love won't rest, one day I'll say I love you  
And in my heart I hope that you will say . . .

I pray you'll tell me that you truly love me.  
I pray that day is not too far away:  
The day love lights with grace upon our shoulders;  
The day our doubts and fears all melt away.

I'm trying not to tell you that I love you  
Perhaps the hardest words I'll ever say.  
What if I say the tender words I love you  
And love with folded wings decides to stay?

NARRATOR: In the full light of day, the 1912 Caledonians re-claim the bridge. Though lost in their midst, Kyle takes no notice of them, nor they of him as he exits.

Pipes. Fiddle. Martial air. Young Dan John Dan enters in full uniform. He stands beside Mary Margaret. She takes his hand. The ensemble **reprise The Caledonia Air.**

ENSEMBLE: God in Heaven, bring them home  
Safe and sure never more to roam.  
When the bells of victory peal,  
Let their souls, their spirits heal . . .

MARY MARGARET: In Caledonia,

DAN JOHN DAN: Caledonia,

ENSEMBLE: Caledonia, our home, our home.

NARRATOR: Act one, curtain.

## Act two

Caledonia: 2010 Concert Version.

NARRATOR: SCENE 1: 1987. Community Cable T.V. Studio.

Welcome to Cable 10, and Dwayne's Country Cable Hoe-down! (Country Music riff?)

An upright piano, drum kit, TV studio cameras, microphone stands and few chairs.  
There are two cameras and one frazzled cameraman.

Host Dwayne MacLean introduces Gayle Garth and Gary, the Singing Gaudet family from Gaspereau. They sing **THE ISLAND WAY**.

GARTH:                               The crop was good, the prices high  
  Potatoes in demand.  
  The milking done, the stable cleaned  
  The harvester on hand.

GAYLE:                               At ten to six that Monday mom'  
  The sky was clear and blue,  
  When poor Dad gasped in agony,  
  His face a ghostly hue.

GARY:                                (Spoken) "Oh Millicent, some awful pain  
  Has bent your man in two.  
  My back's give out, they're talkin' rain  
  And all the bills are due."

GARTH:                               The ambulance took Dad away,  
  And Momma with him too.  
  A whole year's income in the field,  
  What could three children do?

TRIO:                                (Chorus) The Island way,  
  The Island way.  
  Work hard, play fair,  
  Then lend a hand,  
  It's just the Island way

GAYLE:                               It was six that night when they got home  
  The news it wasn't good.

GARTH:                               Dad's back would be out for a week.  
  We'd do the best we could.

GARY:                                That night the milkin' took a while  
  We went to bed bone-tired.  
  Up at five, back in the barn  
  When Garth yelled from the yard.

GARTH:                               Come out here quick, you gotta see,  
  I swear, no word `a lie.  
  Whoever said that God is dead  
  Never lived on P. E. I.

TRIO: (Chorus) The Island way,  
The Island way.  
Work hard, play fair,  
Then lend a hand,  
It's just the Island way.

GAYLE: Up the lane came three John Deeres  
Towin' harvesters behind.  
On every one a neighbor's crew,  
I swear I felt like cryin'.

GARTH:  
GAYLE:  
GARY:  
TRIO: There was Athol and Doris and their five sons,  
Ced, Myrtle and Myrna too.  
Helen and Cecil, their boys and Libby  
All laughin', what a hull-a-ba-loo!

TRIO: (Chorus) The Island way,  
The Island way.  
Work hard, play fair,  
Then lend a hand,  
It's just the Island way.

GARTH: By ten a. m. not a spud remained  
There was nothing left to do  
But thank the Lord who held the rain  
'Till all the work was through.

GAYLE: Whoever said that God was dead  
Had nothing much to say.  
GARY; Dad wiped a tear, grinned ear to ear...  
It's just the Island Way.

TRIO: (Chorus) The Island way,  
The Island way.  
Work hard, play fair,  
Then lend a hand,  
It's just the Island way

(Repeat Chorus) The Island way,  
The Island way.  
When you're in trouble,  
Help's next door...

GAYLE: It's just . . . the Island . . . way.

NARRATOR: Dwayne is not pleased when the next act appears. The Island Celts, minus Mordred, stride in — all spikes and tattoos and attitude, ready to kill their first gig.

Mordred, we learn, got stuck in ferry traffic at Wood Islands but is on her way. Tension mounts. Kyle buys time. The Celts are about to lose their spot when Mordred enters, still in her school uniform. Her hair is tamed, her make-up subdued, her appearance altogether acceptable.

'Phonse stares. "Jeeze. You look like Olivia —"

MORDRED: Olivia Newton John. I know.

NARRATOR: Studio accompanist Bessie West pounds out her standard set of cords on the upright as Mordred strips off her jacket, tosses tie, opens her conservative blouse's top buttons, 'de-Olivia's' her hair, adds gel, etc.

When ready, Mordred counts them in . . .

MORDRED: One, two, one two three —  
(Sings) **Nigh-neag bhoidh-each** mheall-shui-each,  
Tha fir a' haile 'n toir ort —

NARRATOR: Bessie's chords bear absolutely no relation to the Island Celts' music. They founder, come to a dead halt. "Come onto her again when yer ready," Bessie tells them.

MORDRED: One more time. One. Two. One two three —

(Sings) Nigh-neag bhoidh-each mheall-shui-each (etc)

NARRATOR: Bessie over-compensates. Kyle loses the beat. Mordred is completely lost. All looks pretty grim, until Phonse yells:

PHONSE: Yo! Look! It's Grandude!

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan the Elder emerges from shadow. He seems taller now, and walks without his cane.

MORDRED: What are you doing here?

DAN JOHN DAN: Kyle asked me to stand by — Bessie, cord Lord MacDonalds's Reel (?). Only slower to start. Then pick it up. Follow our lead. Count us in, Mordred.

MORDRED: On, two, three . . .

DJD/MORDRED: Nigh-neag bhoidh-each mheall-shui-each,  
Tha fir a' haile 'n toir ort.

(Chorus) I u o ra hu o  
Gur tu mo chruinn-eag

Dheigh-inn do an gheal-aich leat,  
Na'n geal-ladh to mo phos-adh.

NARRATOR: Jamie weaves a playful overlay. Kyle on drums is a model of restraint if not rhythm. Amber 'hoes down' on the fiddle. 'Phonse dances with his button accordion.

Mordred finds a harmony. Sweet music casts a brief spell.

THE ISLAN CELTS/  
DAN JOHN DAN:

(Chorus) I u o ra hu o  
Gur tu mo chruinn-eag  
I u o ra hu o  
Gur tu mo —

NARRATOR: Dwayne steps in front of Mordred.

MORDRED: Hey! We're not finished!

DAN JOHN DAN: Never mind, Mordred. You did it. More or less.

MORDRED: What we did is make total fools of ourselves. In public.

KYLE: That will never happen again. Tonight. Seven p.m. Jamie's dad's garage. (Hands out tapes) Mr. MacKinnon and I worked out a couple of arrangements. Give them a listen, and we'll learn them tonight. (Beat) I'll, ah, wait in the car.

NARRATOR: Kyle and the band exit.

MORDRED: Where's your cane?

DAN JOHN DAN: It was holding me up. (Slaps his hip) New hip.

MORDRED: You and Kyle have gotten pretty chummy.

DAN JOHN DAN: Kyle and I are building you a . . . what's he call it . . . 'repertoire'.

MORDRED: Oh? Do I get any say in this?

DAN JOHN DAN: We thought you'd be pleased.

MORDRED: I run my life, Grandad. Not you, not Kyle. Not anyone else.

DAN JOHN DAN: Is that what you learned in Thornhill? To be even more self-centred than you were before you left?

MORDRED: I learned to depend on no one but myself.

DAN JOHN DAN: Then your mother and father wasted your time and their money. And Kyle and I misplaced our good intentions.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan exits.

MORDRED: Grandad . . . I didn't mean . . . Great. Welcome home, Spike!

NARRATOR: Mordred follows.



MARY MARG'T: We haven't changed, Daniel.

DAN JOHN DAN: The things we've seen — the horrible things we've done to other young men no different than ourselves. The whole world has changed, Mary Margaret. I came in that door tonight . . . the elders, standing there. I thought . . . They're ghosts. Their world is gone forever.

MARY MARG'T: You're home, Daniel. You're alive.

DAN JOHN DAN: I feel as if someone took a shovel and dug the heart right out of me. All the goodness and joy of Big Angus. And how many like him? Our bravest and best.

MARY MARG'T: Mother says a loved one's death tears open a chamber in your heart. It's that chamber, not the grave, that becomes the resting place of the lost beloved.

DAN JOHN DAN: Then my poor heart is full to bursting. I fear the grief of it will kill me.

MARY MARG'T: I know, love. I know.

DAN JOHN DAN: There's times I envy the dead.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan's grief overwhelms him. Mary Margaret embraces him. He buries his head in her shoulder.

MARY MARG'T: Hush, love. Hush. There's plenty of time for tears. You needn't spill them all tonight. We need you to be strong and sure, Dan John Dan. There are others waiting in our hearts. Lovely little souls who'll need our full attention. Do you know who I'm speaking of?

DAN JOHN DAN: I suppose I do. But I must hear you say it.

NARRATOR: Mary Margaret sings **The Promised Child**.

MARY MARG'T:
   
His laughter floats just out of reach.
   
We glimpse her face in waking dreams.
   
And in our hearts, their spirits stir —
   
The hope of promised children.
   
  
Comes the time the promised child
   
Parts the veil, her face shines.
   
His laughter rings, our spirits sing —
   
Delight in promised children.
   
  
In them we glimpse eternity
   
Our love made flesh, our dreams set free.
   
In shining smile, in piping song, we live on —
   
In promised new born children.

DAN JOHN DAN: Was ever a woman more beautiful than yourself, Mary Margaret?

MARY MARGARET CARESSES HIS FACE.

MARY MARG'T: Was ever a man more handsome than you?

DAN JOHN DAN: Your sweet face shines,  
In your bright eyes, our children —

MARY MARG'T: Your sweet voice sounds  
In its soft tones, our children —

DJD/MARY MARG'T: The face of my beloved shines on me  
And deep within revolves the mystery.  
The voice of my beloved circles me  
And deep within resounds —

DAN JOHN DAN: The mystery . . .

MARY MARG'T: The mystery . . .  
DJD/MARY MARG'T: Our children.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan takes both Mary Margaret's hands, holds them gently.

DAN JOHN DAN: Will you marry me, Mary Margaret MacPherson?

MARY MARG'T: Of course I'll marry you, Daniel John Daniel MacKinnon. The sooner  
the better.

NARRATOR: They kiss. Sinè Màiri descends the staircase, the freshly pressed length of  
tartan draped over her forearm. She hands the cloth to Mary Margaret.

MARY MARG'T: MacPherson tartan. For my wedding. Mother. It's beautiful.

NARRATOR: Sinè Màiri wishes them many children and all happiness.

DAN JOHN DAN: Highland happiness and little Gaelic speaking children no doubt?

NARRATOR: "Of course," Sinè Màiri replies. As Mary Margaret unfolds the tartan, a manilla  
envelope drops to the floor. Sinè Màiri hands it to her daughter. "Fill your lives with love,"  
she tells them.

NARRATOR: SCENE 3: 1989; THE MACKINNON HOUSE, EXTERIOR.

Mordred—her hair jet-black and close-cropped, her black on black on black clothes hip and  
beautifully tailored—peers through the downstairs window.

The last of the fading light inside catches Young Dan John Dan, Mary Margaret and  
Sinè Màiri as they vanish.

The Elder Dan John Dan enters, carrying a tool box, from which he extracts a claw  
bar.

DAN JOHN DAN: What's the matter child. You look like you saw a gho — Oh. You did.

MORDRED: I spent all those years trying so hard to be weird. Now I am. Totally.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan hands her the claw bar.

MORDRED: What am I supposed to do with this?

DAN JOHN DAN: I brought you here to give you something. Now I see you have to find it for yourself. I tell you this: break this lock, open that door, you'll never be the same again.

NARRATOR: Mordred hesitates.

DAN JOHN DAN: Perhaps I was wrong.

NARRATOR: Just as Mordred accepts the claw bar and begins to pry the lock, her father enters.

Awkward silence prevails until Dan John Dan states his understanding that a man can break into his own house.

Douglas suspects Dan John Dan of withholding the deed on purpose.

"What if I am? A man can change his mind," Dan John Dan responds.

In Douglas' world a deal is a deal.

In matters of the spirit, Mordred says . . .

MORDRED: . . . Things are not so clear cut. Haven't you ever witnessed something you couldn't explain, Dad? Something wonderful, or scary or just plain bewildering?

NARRATOR: "I'm a real estate salesman, not a prophet." Douglas replies. "That stuff's for you 'arty' types. If you want me to step aside, Mordred, just say so."

MORDRED: I want you to step aside.

NARRATOR: Douglas exits. Mordred snaps the lock, opens the door and enters.

NARRATOR: SCENE 4; 1989; THE MACKINNON HOUSE, INTERIOR.

The furniture is draped with white sheets, recalling act one, scene one.

Dan John Dan flips a light switch. Nothing. He lights candles, hands one to Mordred.

DAN JOHN DAN: Upstairs. In the trunk, in the old weaving room.

NARRATOR: As Dan John Dan winds and sets the grandfather clock, Mordred climbs the stairs.

Toganaidh's slow air shimmers in the half light.

In the upstairs den, the shadowy figure of a woman stoops to open a trunk. Sinè

Màiri straightens, beckons. She speaks. She offers Mordred a parcel tied with ribbon and wrapped in tissue paper. Mordred accepts. Sinè Màiri vanishes.

MORDRED: Grandad? Grandad!

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan Climbs the stairs.

DAN JOHN DAN: What is it, child?

MORDRED: The old woman. Your Gaelic teacher. My . . .

DAN JOHN DAN: Your great-grandmother. Did she speak?

MORDRED: She did.

DAN JOHN DAN: What did she say?

MORDRED: I don't know. She gave me this.

DAN JOHN DAN: She handed it to you?

MORDRED: Yes.

DAN JOHN DAN: Put it right in your hands?

MORDRED: Yes.

DAN JOHN DAN: Good. Open it.

NARRATOR: Mordred unwraps the package. As she unfolds the beautifully made full-length MacPherson tartan skirt, the familiar manilla envelope falls to the floor. Dan John Dan picks up the envelope.

DAN JOHN DAN: So that's where I put it!

NARRATOR: Mordred holds the skirt to her hips.

MORDRED: This was Mary Margaret's.

DAN JOHN DAN: Her wedding skirt. Yes.

MORDRED: This is so cool.

DAN JOHN DAN: Cool, is it. I'd say it's yours, now. This too.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan hands Mordred the manilla envelope.

DAN JOHN DAN: What do you make of this?

MORDRED: (Opens envelope) August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1806. I can't read this.

DAN JOHN DAN: That's because it was drawn up in Gaelic. It's the deed to the farm.

MORDRED: Oh Grandad. Thank you. Thank you thank you thank you! Thank you so much.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan breaks free from her exuberant strangle hold!

DAN JOHN DAN: Alright alright alright. Stars above, Child. You'll choke me to death. Now. If you're going to be talking to ghosts, you'd best learn their language.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan removes books from the trunk . . .

DAN JOHN DAN: My old Gaelic grammar. And bible. Sit ye down, my Lassie. I always thought your generation lacked rudimentary politeness. We'll start with the basic civilities.

NARRATOR: Mordred sits at the table. Dan John Dan hands her the grammar. They start with simple Gaelic phrases of greeting.

The lesson is lightly underscored.

As Dan John Dan and Mordred progress with the lesson upstairs, lights rise in the parlour below.

Mary Margaret, in the ninth month of her pregnancy, enters supporting Sinè Màiri. Sinè Màiri reclines on the settee. Mary Margaret reassures her, then exits hurriedly seeking help for her ailing mother.

Sinè Màiri half rises. She begins to sing **The Lamb of God**.

SINÈ MÀIRI: My work is done  
Oh precious lamb.  
Lead thy weary shepherd home. . .

NARRATOR: Sinè Màiri hears distant voices, come to usher her home. She lies back. In the upstairs den, Dan John Dan and Mordred lift their heads from their work. They rise and face forward. Their gaze rests upon a far horizon.

ENSEMBLE: (Hushed, distant) Fhir à bhàt-a na hòro éile  
Fhir à bhàt-a na hòro éile  
DJD/MORDRED/ENSEMBLE: Fhir à bhàt-a na hòro éile  
Mo-shoraidh slàn leat  
gach àit' an teid thú.

NARRATOR: Mary Margaret hurries into the parlour accompanied by the Young Dan John Dan. They ease Sinè Màiri's passage.

As the events unfold in the parlour below, the scene is split between the upper and lower levels.

Dan John Dan explains to Mordred what happened those many years ago.

Below, as her strength fades, Sinè Màiri extracts a promise from Mary Margaret and the Young Dan John Dan: they will do all in their power to pass the old ways on to their children.

DJD ELDER: Teach the child the old ways . . . ? There are so few of us left who have



MARY MARG'T: This one's strong! Go —

DJD YOUNGER: (Off) Mother!

MARY MARG'T: God in heaven. Let my child live!

NARRATOR: Mary Margaret takes her mother's hand.

MARY MARG'T: God protect her. Take her home.

NARRATOR: Mary Margaret caresses her own round belly.

MARY MARG'T: God help me. Save my child.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan and Mordred's lines of vision shift downstage where mourners gather at a grave. A coffin is lowered into the earth.

Dan John Dan and Mordred descend the stairs, exit the house. They stand a respectful distance from the 1925 Caledonians.

The Reverend Stewart begins to recite: The Lord's my shepherd, I shall not want.

The young Dan John Dan interrupts.

DJD YOUNGER: I'll ask you to step aside, Reverend. We're not so far gone we can't honor my wife in our own tongue.

NARRATOR: Young Dan John Dan continues, in Gaelic. He prays for the soul of his lost young wife.

MORDRED: Oh no . . . Mary Margaret . . .

DJD ELDER: Hush, child.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan the Younger throws throw soil on the coffin. The ensemble reprises **The Harvest Prayer**.

ENSEMBLE: In winter's sleep, our strength maintain.

When spring awakes, awake the seed.

In summer's plenty, peace ordain.

In melancholy autumn feed our souls

ENSEMBLE/ DJD, ELDER

That we may cast off strife,

AND YOUNGER:

and sorrows misbegotten.

Lest those who gave us this sweet life

In red loam lie, alone, forgotten.

DJD YOUNGER: In the name of the Father, and the Son and The Holy Spirit.

DJD ELDER: World without end.

CONGREGATION: (Sung) Amen.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan the Elder and young Dan John Dan make eye contact. They resist the urge to speak.

The young Dan John Dan nods to Mordred and The Elder Dan John Dan as he exits. The congregation follows.

Unseen by Dan John Dan and Mordred, Katherine is revealed as the mourners depart. She overhears the conversation.

MORDRED: It was Mary Margaret who died.

DAN JOHN DAN: War took our men. Childbirth our women. The soil takes us all. Mary Margaret was dead and buried five days after Sinè Màiri.

MORDRED: And the child?

DAN JOHN DAN: Your mother. Katherine Ruadh.

NARRATOR: Katherine approaches.

KATHERINE: Why was I not told?

DAN JOHN DAN: It's was Màiri Mairead's dying wish. She didn't want you blaming yourself for her death.

KATHERINE: You blamed me instead.

DAN JOHN DAN: I blamed God. I looked in your face and saw all the power and beauty of your mother, yes and her mother before her. At that moment I was able to care for you. I hardened my heart and I vowed you would never be burdened with things too painful to remember. I put it all past me. The music. The tartan. The Gaelic.

KATHERINE: I was born and your past died.

DAN JOHN DAN: The present came to life. I never spoke a word of the Gaelic to you. If I heard you speak it, I made sure I didn't hear it again.

KATHERINE: Why teach her?

DAN JOHN DAN: Because I think I made a mistake. I do. So much has been lost. God forgive me . . . So much lost . . . (silent tears)

MORDRED: Grandad? (Pause) Grandad. (With great tenderness) Ciamar a tha thu?

DAN JOHN DAN: Glè mhath, my dear. Glè mhath. Katherine, I . . .

KATHERINE: What?

DAN JOHN DAN: She's a lovely child.

KATHERINE: Yes.

DAN JOHN DAN: So were you.

SILENCE.

MORDRED: Mom?

KATHERINE: You go ahead. Go on. I'm okay.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan and Mordred enter the house.

Katherine stands by her mother — Mary Margaret's — grave.

Mordred raises the upstairs window. She listens as Katherine sings **The Lost Child**.

KATHERINE: Mother.  
Mary Margaret.  
Our story is a story with no end.  
No beginning.

Did you see me?  
Mother?  
If I look through the book  
Of my uncompleted life  
I will never turn a page and see  
Serene eyes looking back at me.  
Your eyes . . .

Mother?  
I don't know how to say your name.  
I don't know if you ever uttered mine.  
I wonder if the wound that opened in  
My heart the day you died  
Will ever heal?

And has it caused  
My own poor heart  
To harden to my own lost child.  
My daughter?

Helpless . . .  
I'm her Mother.  
Something here has sparked her soul,  
Touched her as I wish I could.  
I miss the love that she now gives  
The grieving man who cared for me,  
Whose love was tinged with tragedy.  
I know he did his best for me.  
My Father.

Mother?  
I'll wonder till the day I die  
How life would be if I had known your love  
when still a child . . .  
A mother's love would make me strong  
And give me hope

I'd pass hope on  
To my own daughter . . .

Is she gone from me . . .  
Forever?  
Have I lost her?  
My daughter?

Mother?  
Mary Margaret  
Lead me to my troubled child  
Let me shelter her awhile.  
When she's grown and flown away  
Let her love me on that day  
Let her love me, let me be  
What you could never be,  
What you could never be for me . . .  
A Mother . . .

NARRATOR: Katherine exits. Mordred turns from the window.

MORDRED: I need to ask you something.

DAN JOHN DAN: What?

Mordred: I don't know how to talk to mom.

DAN JOHN DAN: Use your head, not just your heart.

MORDRED: My head . . . ?

DAN JOHN DAN: Yes your head. Every time you open your mouths, the pair of you, your hearts pop out, you hack away until you're both raw then throw in a handful of salt for good measure. And, I might add, you're starting to do the same thing to Kyle.

MORDRED: Kyle? I am not —

DAN JOHN DAN: You are so.

MORDRED: I am no — Oh, God. I am aren't I? He's got me all confused. I really like him, but — I don't know. He's no musician. I gotta ask him to leave the band.

Dan JOHN DAN: Entirely?

MORDRED: No, no. He's a miracle on the phone. He could sell, I don't know—

DAN JOHN DAN: MacDonald tartan to a Campbell? Never mind. It's a long story.

MORDRED: And . . . he seems to, like, really like me.

DAN JOHN DAN: Like you? That's the understatement of the year. Unless I've gone completely ga-ga. You feel the same way.

MORDRED: I don't know what I feel.

DAN JOHN DAN: Yes you do.

MORDRED: Granddad, GET OFF MY CASE!

DAN JOHN DAN; Hah! I thought so!

MORDRED: But he's so — mild. I can't just march right up and —

DAN JOHN DAN; Storm the barricades? It worked for Katherine, with your father. Ask her.

MORDRED: Yeah, right. As if.

DAN JOHN DAN: Nothing would please me more than to hear you offer your mother a kind word.

MORDRED: About what?

DAN JOHN DAN: The subject matter is immaterial.

MORDRED: (Mock bow) After you.

DAN JOHN DAN: What?

MORDRED: Have you ever told her you love her? (Silence) You do love her, don't you?

DAN JOHN DAN: Of course I do.

MORDRED: Well? Have you told her?

DAN JOHN DAN: I find this stuff hard to talk about.

MORDRED: Love?

DAN JOHN DAN: We weren't like you fellas, always spoutin' on about . . . about —

MORDRED: Love? Can't you even say it?

DAN JOHN DAN: The word's too precious to use loosely. Especially in the dark. I gotta get these lights workin'.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan begins to exit to cellar.

DAN JOHN DAN: Oh. About, you know, Kyle. There was something they used to do in uncertain matters of romance . . . Ask the mirror, turn around twice,

and there'll be the face of your beau . . . Some silly thing or other.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan exits.

Mordred uncovers the parlor mirror. With candle in hand she addresses the mirror.

MORDRED:                   Mirror, mirror  
                                  Who will love me?  
                                  Can you point the way?

                                  Mirror, mirror  
                                  Will you show me  
                                  How to make love stay?

NARRATOR: Three generations of women stream through the doors, out of closets, down stairs, through walls.

They remove dust sheets from the furniture as they dance and sing: **Turn Around Twice.**

WOMEN:                    Turn around twice  
                                  Then look in the mirror  
                                  Drink water upside down.  
                                  Watch sunset and  
                                  Before you know it  
                                  Your heart's on a merry-go-round.

CATRÌONA:                Upon hearing the coo  
                                  Of a dove in spring  
                                  Take off your left shoe.

MARY MARG'T:            There on the toe  
                                  Of your left stocking  
                                  A hair from your beau will show.

WOMEN:                    Turn around twice  
                                  Then look in the mirror  
                                  Drink water upside down  
                                  Watch sunset and  
                                  Before you know it  
                                  You're wearing a wedding gown.

MORDRED:                Um, ah . . . can I ask a question?

MARY MARG'T:            Why ever not?

MORDRED:                Ah I, ah . . . Umh . . . Sorry, I'm not used to speaking with the dead.

MARY MARG'T:            Just open your mouth and flap your lips, like normal.

MORDRED:                Oh. Okay. God knows I'd hate to be thought, you know . . . stunned or anything. How do you drink water upside down?

NARRATOR: Mary Margaret bends, drinks from the far side of the glass.

MORDRED: Oh.

MARY MARG'T:: May we continue?

MORDRED: By all means.

MARY MARG'T: Roast a humming bird's heart  
Grind it down to a powder  
Then mix with the dew of a rose.

AGNES: Drink it down quick  
Say the name your beau  
Then point to the end of your nose.

MARY MARG'T: In a pan of meal, place a snail.  
Your love's initials  
Will appear in it's trail.

AGNES: Stand on your head, chew beef gristle  
Under your window  
Your lover will whistle.

WOMEN: Turn around twice  
Then look in the mirror  
Drink water upside down.  
Watch sunset and before you know it  
Your belly is big and round.

CATRÌONA: Now all of these things  
May fail, more over —

MARY MARG'T: You might get stuck  
With a shiftless rover

AGNES: Or a love that's pale  
As the cliffs of Dover

MARY MARG'T: Your very best bet  
Is a four leaf clover.

CATRÌONA: Send him in search of  
the four-leafed jewel . . .

MARY MARG'T: The herbaceous anomaly  
Which evades a fool.

AGNES: You won't be stuck  
with a witless rover . . .

MARY MARG'T:                    If he's sharp enough to find  
a four-leaf clover.

CATRÌONA:                        Pop it in your mouth  
Chew it up good,

MARY MARG'T:                    Tell him you could love him  
If you think he could —

WOMEN:                            Turn around twice  
Then look in the mirror  
Drink water upside down.  
Watch sunset, before you know it  
You're laundering hand-me  
Hand-me-downs!

MORDRED:                        My guy's too shy for all this. I'd scare him away. Besides, where are  
we going to find a snail at this time of year?

MARY MARG'T:                    Hmm . . . A shy one eh?  
  
All of these things  
May fail, more over —

AGNES:                             You just might fall  
For a shiftless rover

MARY MARG'T:                    Or end up hitched  
To a real push-over —

CATRÌONA:                        Your last resort  
Is a four leafed clover.

WOMEN:                            Turn around twice  
Then look in the mirror  
Drink water upside down.  
Watch sunset, before you know it  
You're wearing a wedding . . . a wedding gown!

NARRATOR: Katherine knocks at the door. Mordred is snapped back to 'reality'.  
The early Caledonian women vanish as Katherine enters.

KATHERINE:                        What was that, dear. Some kind of new dance?

MORDRED:                        You saw . . . what did you see?

KATHERINE:                        You dancing around, all by yourself. Kyle's trying to get a hold of you.  
Evidently Campbell Webster saw you at Myron's last night, and wants  
to book you for a Maritime tour. Opening for Barbed Wire. Now, I  
think you should go for it. Here's what we'll do —

MORDRED: I already have a manager. And one is quite enou . . . I'm sorry. I'm doing it again aren't I?

KATHERINE: No, no. You're right. You have every right to live your own life. Where's your Grandfather?

MORDRED: Downstairs.

KATHERINE: God in heaven Mordred. You let him go down those rickety stairs by him . . . I'm sorry. You're not your grandfather's keeper. It's your house now. And you're not a child.

MORDRED: Do you ever think we'll ever be able to speak to each other without snapping or apologizing?

KATHERINE: I spent too much time trying to be your friend instead of your mother. I should never have listened to Oprah. What's she know about parenting? She raised two cocker spaniels, for god's sake. I'd give anything to start over.

MORDRED: Well. Here's your chance. How did you know you loved Dad?

KATHERINE: I didn't.

MORDRED: You married him anyway?

KATHERINE: Well, he loved me so much. I liked him a lot. He was so handsome and funny. But he was terribly shy. And persistent. Eventually I just caved in.

MORDRED: I think Kyle is going to ask me to marry him.

KATHERINE: No! And..?

MORDRED: I don't know . . .

KATHERINE: Do you think you, you know, ah . . .

MORDRED: Love him? Yes. No. I'm not certain. He adores me. He has for years. Things are happening so quickly. My career is taking off. I appear to be growing up in spite of myself. I'm becoming more like my mother, which is not as hideous as I . . . ah . . . I mean —

CAR HORN, OFF.

KATHERINE: Saved by the horn . . . Mordred, if Kyle loves you the way your father loved me, if you even think you love him, I say marry him. In time you'll find the way to love him the way he needs to be loved and love will carry you through pretty much anything. (Begins exit) Oh, and tell your grandfather we're expecting him for supper on Sunday. Now there's a minor miracle. He's completely back to his old self. You've

done a wonderful thing for that man.

MORDRED: Thank you. I . . . Thank you.

KATHERINE: They say if you live long enough, you learn life's most important lessons from your children.

MORDRED: Only if they listened in the first place.

KATHERINE: Yes. It seems the more we know of our past, the sweeter our lives become.

MORDRED: And the better our chances of survival.

KATHERINE MOVES TO EXIT.

MORDRED: Mom?

KATHERINE: Yes, dear?

MORDRED: Grandad told me he loves you.

KATHERINE STIFFENS.

MORDRED: I love you, too.

KATHERINE: Thank you, dear. Your father and I . . . well. You know, ah, we —

CAR HORN.

KATHERINE: I have to go.

NARRATOR: Mordred watches her mother exit. A moment. She sings **The Sea**.

MORDRED: (Verse) Creature under the sea,  
Hard as stone, **your shell won't** protect you.  
Soft inside, but hard as stone  
Claws that snap, clack like bone  
Spines that pierce,  
You're all alone.

(Verse) Creature under the sea,  
Crack your shell,  
Dare to live undefended.  
Let your troubled spirit mend,  
Let your isolation end,  
Let your heart and soul ascend,  
And rise from the sea.

(Chorus) Lift, my spirit  
Rise, my soul, from the sea.

Heal, my spirit, rise and fly,  
High and free.

(Verse) I rise through the sea,  
Sky above, wind and sun all around me.  
Pure white sea-birds swimming there,  
Break the surface, take the air,  
Where they wheel and glide and dare  
Dare to rise from the sea.

(Chorus) Soaring, flying  
Soaring over the sea.  
Teach me sea birds  
How to soar, how to love  
Take me higher  
Up to heaven above.  
Above.

(Bridge) What will happen to me?  
Falling free, no shell to protect me,  
If I tumble from the sky  
If the dream I dream should die  
All alone, not knowing why  
No one stands beside me.

(Chorus) Stone cold creature  
Creeping under the sea.  
White bird flying,  
On the edge of a dream.  
Fill my heart now  
Let the future begin.  
Come now spirits,  
Life, come tumbling in.  
Take me higher  
Beyond heaven above.  
Show me, spirits,  
How to live, how to love . . .  
To love,  
To love.

NARRATOR: Kyle appears in elevated, neutral space. He reprises **Caledonia Air**.

KYLE: (Verse) Love unspoken, trembles and fails  
And fades away.  
A broken heart knows endless sorrow.  
The kindness of love  
Will lift us above  
The fear of our tomorrows.  
Oh spirits, come, show her the way.

MORDRED: (Verse) Come, spirits, show me the way

My heart should go . . .  
Is love a gift, or a web of sorrow.  
If love should bloom,  
Then fail and fade, I'm afraid  
The grief of love will haunt me.  
Oh spirits, come, show me the way.

CALEDONIA WOMEN/MEN: (Chorus) Love, sweet love will carry you through  
Love will heal, love renew.  
Love will bloom where kindness abides  
Love will bloom and joy will arise  
In Caledonia, your home, your home.

KYLE: (Verse) There is someone waiting for you,  
Someone to love.

MORDRED: How will I know  
When at last I've found him?

KYLE: His heart will be kind, his spirit will shine,  
Hearts entwined,

MORDRED/KYLE: We'll live in love forever.  
Oh spirits, come show us the way.

NARRATOR: Mordred and Kyle bridge the gap between them. They stand face to face. An awkward moment. They lean in to kiss.

Kyle's mobile phone rings. He opens his briefcase, extracts the headset, untangles the curled cord.

MORDRED: Sometimes I'd like to take that damn phone and throw it in the river.

NARRATOR: Mordred ends the call, snaps the briefcase shut.

MORDRED: Now. Where were we?

KYLE: Oh. Look. I dropped my briefcase containing my mobile radio telephone when I got out of the car. I bent to pick it up. Look what I found!

MORDRED: Oh. My. God. A four-leafed clover.

NARRATOR: Kyle is amazed when Mordred turns around twice, looks in the mirror, drinks water up-side down, chews then swallows the clover, grabs him by the lapels, pulls him to her.

Their second attempt at a kiss is thwarted by Dan John Dan who enters from the cellar.

MORDRED: Grandad. We have wonderful news . . .

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan does not respond. He moves to the foot of the stairs, his

attention fixed on the top steps where Mary Margaret appears in a pool of light.  
Dan John Dan sings **The Face of my Beloved** (reprise).

DAN JOHN DAN: (Verse) Your sweet face shines.  
In your bright eyes  
The spirit . . .

MARY MARG'T: (Verse) Your sweet voice sounds  
In its soft tones  
The spirit . . .

NARRATOR: The elder Dan John Dan begins to mount the stairs. He disappears at the landing.

Dan John Dan the younger steps onto the empty landing and mounts the final flight. It is he who embraces Mary Margaret at the top.

MARY MARG'T/  
YOUNG D J D: (chorus) The face of my beloved shines on me  
and deep within revolves a mystery.  
The voice of my beloved circles me  
and deep within resounds the mystery.

KYLE: (Verse) Your sweet face shines.  
In your bright eyes, The spirit . . .

MORDRED: (Verse) Your sweet voice sounds  
In its soft tones, the spirit . . .  
The spirit . . .

YOUNG D J D/MARY MARG'T/  
MORDRED/KYLE: (chorus) The face of my beloved shines on me  
and deep within revolves a mystery.  
The voice of my beloved circles me  
and deep within resounds the mystery.  
The mystery . . .

NARRATOR: The younger Dan John Dan and Mary Margaret disappear.  
Toganaidh's Slow Air shimmers.

The lights flicker, fail and rise in the upstairs den. The Elder Dan John Dan sits slumped forward in his chair.

Mordred runs to the top of the stairs. Kyle follows.

Mordred sits at her grandfather's feet. Kyle kneels, his hands on her shoulders. Mordred takes her grandfather's hand in hers.

MORDRED: He's gone.

NARRATOR: The ensemble appears in silhouette. They reprise **In Winter's Sleep**.

ENSEMBLE: In winter's sleep, our strength maintain.  
When spring awakes, awake the seed.  
In summer's plenty, peace ordain,  
In melancholy autumn feed our souls . . .  
That we may cast off strife,  
and false dreams misbegotten.

MORDRED/KYLE: Lest those who gave us this sweet life,  
In red loam lie, alone, forgotten.

ENSEMBLE: Forgotten.

NARRATOR: As the MacKinnon house disappears, the bridge dominates the stage.

NARRATOR: SCENE 6: 1992; THE BRIDGE. EARLY EVENING. FULL MOON.

Early Caledonians festoon the bridge with garlands and lanterns. Dan John Dan the elder sings **Mist on the Meadows (reprise)**.

DAN JOHN DAN: From a little way back, I can still hear the music —  
Soft lantern lite on bright shining waters.  
I can still see the dancers *here* in the moonlight  
We'll dance and we'll sang sing  
On the bridge until dawn.

The babies asleep on the new hay, in wagons,  
Their dreams filled with music,  
Their hearts light with song.

DAN JOHN DAN/ENSEMBLE: There's mist on the meadows  
The new hay in mounds  
We'll sing and we'll dance  
On the bridge until dawn.

NARRATOR: At the sound of car horns and approaching cheers, the Caledonians disappear.  
Jamie pipes on the bridal party: Amber, 'Phonse, Katherine and Douglas MacArthur,  
etc.

'Phonse steps forward.

"Amber and I," he says, "wrote this to celebrate the wedding of Mr. Kyle Jone's and  
Spike — ah, Tiff — ah, Mord — I mean our own Mary Katherine MacKinnon. It's called  
**Mary Katherine's Waltz.**"

Kyle and Mary Katherine, formerly known as Mordred, waltz onto the bridge.

Below, Dan John Dan the Elder waltzes out from under the bridge with Sinè Màiri.

Mary Margaret and the Young Dan John Dan enter dancing, followed by the ensemble.

The stage is alive with dance, until . . .

An insistent, annoying sound brings first the dancers on the bridge then those below,  
then the music to a complete halt.

The annoyance is Kyle's new cell phone, a grey two-pounder about the size and  
shape of brick. Kyle extracts it from his briefcase, withdraws the long antenna. Mary  
Katherine throws the phone off the bridge.

It lands with a thump at Dan John Dan's feet. It rings. He answers it. Too late. In  
response to Sinè Màiri's question, Dan John Dan says . . .

DAN JOHN DAN: There's no Gaelic name for it yet. No one's quite sure how to translate  
'Infernal Contraption.' It's not without it's uses, mind. Watch this.

NARRATOR: Dan John Dan dials a number.

On the bridge, Mordred and Kyle are about to kiss.  
'Phonse's phone rings.

'PHONSE: Yo! Whao! It's Grand dude!

MARY KATHERINE: (Takes phone) Grandad? Ciamar a tha sibh?

DAN JOHN DAN: Glè Mhath. Glè Mhath. Listen Dear, I'm calling long distance.

MARY KATHERINE: Long distance?

DAN JOHN DAN: Yes dear. From the other side. I haven't got a lot of time and the connection's faint.

MARY KATHERINE: I can barely hear you . . .

DAN JOHN DAN: I was telling everyone here about you and the Gaelic. They're pleased as punch!

MARY KATHERINE: What . . .?

DAN JOHN DAN: Would you sing for us?

MARY KATHERINE: Sing?

DAN JOHN DAN: We'd all love to hear you sing. It would do our hearts good!

MARY KATHERINE: Hello? Hello! It's gone dead. They want us to sing for them.

KATHERINE: Who dear?

MARY KATHERINE: Everyone. But first things first. There's something I have to do.

NARRATOR: Mordred plants a big wedding kiss on a very willing Kyle. Much cheering and applauding.

MORDRED: Phonse? **Nigh-neag bhoidh-each mheall-shui-each**, and don't spare the horses!

MARY KATHERINE: Nigh-neag bhoidh-each mheall-shui-each,  
Tha fir a' haile 'n toir ort.

MARY KATHERINE/AMBER: (Chorus) I u o ra hu o  
Gur tu mo chruinn-eag.

MARY KATHERINE: (Verse) Dheigh-inn do an gheal-aich leat,  
Na'n geal-ladh to mo phos-adh.

QUARTET, ADD JAMIE/  
'PHONSE: (Chorus) I u o ra hu o  
Gur tu mo chruinn-eag.

ENSEMBLE: (Chorus) I u o ra hu o  
Gur tu mo chruinn-eag

SINÈ MÀIRI: (Verse) Ann an eilean nan leòdach  
Far am pòs gach caileag.

ENSEMBLE: (Chorus) I u o ra hu o  
Gur tu mo chruinn-eag

SINÈ MÀIRI/MARY KATHERINE: Nigh-neag bhoidh-each mheall-shui-each,  
Tha fir a' haile 'n toir ort.

ENSEMBLE: (Chorus) I u o ra hu o  
Gur tu mo chruinn-eag

SINÈ MÀIRI/ MARY KATHERINE/  
MARY MARGARET: (Verse) dheigh-inn do an gheal-aich leat,  
Na'n geal-ladh to mo phos-adh.

ENSEMBLE: (Chorus) I u o ra hu o  
Gur tu mo chruinn-eag.

NARRATOR: The generations mingle on both levels, above and below the bridge.  
Dancing erupts . . . As many styles and variations as contemporary and traditional choreography can reasonably sustain.

In time, **Mary Katherine's Waltz** emerges and dominates. Mary Katherine and Kyle take the bridge. They waltz.

The ensemble reprise **Red Clay Loam, The Ballad of times Gone By, and The Caledonia Air.**

CALEDONIA WOMEN: Peaceful cattle graze under harvest skies,  
Wooded hills observe the sea.  
From fields of plenty our prayers arise;  
In toil and ease, bestow Thy peace.

CHORAL (with men): Autumn gold and dormant winter's drifting cold,  
Seeded spring and summer green.  
Oh, blessed Isle!  
Thy grace unfold.  
Shelter us in wind and lea.

CHORUS, ENSEMBLE: Keep us safe, keep us strong  
On our wave-edged home.  
Rooted deep  
In thy red clay loam . . .

YOUNG DJD: In times gone by, our lowland kin,  
Traitors, pawned ancestral lands.  
Our kine, our kin, cast to the winds . . .  
Our vigour mocked, our pride unmanned.

REV. STEWART: Crofts be cleared, hearth-stones chill,  
Heather burn, and bracken smoke.

Scatter the clans, bend your will  
Bare your neck to the Lowland yoke.

CATRÌONA/DANIEL: We will not bend, your yoke to wear,  
No chain, or hook; no stay, or lease.  
A Garden waits, and those who dare  
Will prosper there in fruitful peace.

MARY MARGARET: O'er fretful seas to foreign straths,  
Adversity fixed their intent.

DAN JOHN DAN: Highland hills, and stone-cold hearths  
Echo still their heart's lament.

ENSEMBLE: Scots, wha' ha'e wi' glory shone,  
Scotland's shores ha'e left behind.  
Scotland's stalwart flame burns on  
Old and New World hearts entwine . . .

KYLE: (Verse) There is someone waiting for you,  
Someone to love.

MARY KATHERINE: How will I know  
When at last I've found him?

KYLE: His heart will be kind, his spirit will shine,  
Hearts entwined,

MARY KATHERINE/KYLE: We'll live in love forever.  
Oh spirits, come show us the way.

MARY KATHERINE: (Chorus) Caledonia, ancient and true  
Hear my song,  
My soul renew.

KYLE/DAN JOHN DAN: Keep her steadfast,  
Guide her heart.

KATHERINE/DOUGLAS: Be her compass,  
Be her chart.

CHORAL, ENSEMBLE: In Caledonia,  
Our home . . .  
Our home . . .  
Our home!