

**ALASDAIR FRASER & NATALIE HAAS - *Abundance***

Culburnie Records CUL124

In their fourth duo release, the entirely winsome union of fiddler Alasdair Fraser and cellist Natalie Haas celebrates their belief in the joy and power of music to “heal, inspire, soothe and provoke” and the abundant communitarian spirit of their joint mondial experiences in concerts, music camps and workshops.

In this latest panoply of traditional and composed material, their symbiosis is again strikingly evident in the tight weave of their musical dialogue encompassing the gamut of sublime classical and traditional through to adventurous contemporary stylings, often within single pieces. In particular, Natalie’s exquisite realisation of the possibilities of the cello, melodically and rhythmically, through plucking pizzicato (sometimes outright funky in its syncopation) and bowing arco options is awesome.

As on their last release, *Highlander’s Farewell*, several guests provide some further instrumental support and layering options, occasionally consequentially echoing the complex dynamics of Skyedance. These include Donald Shaw (piano, accordion), James MacIntosh (percussion), Corey DiMario (bass) and Dominick Leslie (mandolin) and, more surprisingly, some book-end brass contributions.

Central to the recording is the Connie Suite, a commissioned sequence of movements inspired by several dance forms well befitting their spirit of ‘abundance’. Other pieces celebrate family events and friends including a more jazzily inflected tune for award winning micro-brewer Derek Moore of Kelburn. The sound of a soaring gull is cleverly evoked on the late Michael Ferrie’s musical account of inadvertent avian kitten kidnap (*On The Wings Of A Skorrie*) and finally, listen up veteran Brits winner, there’s a jolly jape of a number called *The Referendum!*

[www.alasdairfraser.com](http://www.alasdairfraser.com)

**Kevin T. Ward**