



Chris Stout Quintet **"Devil's Advocate"** Greentrax Recordings

A musical wunderkind, Fair Isle born and Shetland bred Chris Stout according to his booking agency web site [<http://www.bechhofer.demon.co.uk/artists/stout.html>], is considered to be *"the leading fiddle player of his generation both in Scotland and beyond, a title he has earned through the plethora of musicians and bands he has collaborated with."* Since graduating from Glasgow's Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in 1999, Stout has recorded three albums with the Shetland band Fidders' Bid, two with Edinburgh based Salsa Celtica, and one duo album with Catriona McKay. **"Devil's Advocate"** credited to the Chris Stout Quintet, follows **"First O' the Darkenin'"** his 2004 solo debut for Edinburgh based Greentrax Records.

The support players on **"Devil's Advocate,"** a collection of tunes – some traditional, many contemporary - are Catriona McKay [harp, piano, clarsach], Fraser Fifield [saxophone, pipes, whistles], Malcolm Stitt [guitar] and Neil Harland [upright bass]. The opening and closing pieces "Devil's Advocate" and "Dynrost" were commissioned by BBC Scotland for performance at Celtic Connections 2007 by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. "Bambodansarna" was penned by Olov Johansson of the Swedish band Väsen, while the Stout trad. arr. "Auld Swaara" which follows is based on an old Shetland seafaring tune.

The details conflict regarding tracks 4 and 5, given at two locations on the liner, although I've assumed that track 4 is in fact "Phil's Alexander's Tune." Over the course of its five minutes plus length and written as a tribute to the Salsa Celtica pianist, Stout's melody dives at times into jazz extemporisations. "The Aith Rant" is composed of four jigs, the opening "Aith Rant" being trad. arr., while "The Dynamo" was penned Stout and Fifield, and it's followed by Donald Grant's "Braeroy Road" and "Lorient Est Grand" by Jacky Molard a Breton based musician. The theme of 'the sea' permeates many of these compositions and "Fisherman's Prayer" teams Stout's composition of the same name with Co. Monaghan bred award winning harpist Michael Rooney's wistful "Talaimh An Eisc." In the liner Chris dedicates "The Sheriff" to *"the 'cop' I encountered while on tour in the States....!"* while the ensuing "Nanny And Andrew" is a trio of trad. arr. Shetland reels.

Folkwax Score 6 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

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