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Our Uncle, Dan R. MacDonald From Talks with John Donald and John Allan Cameron  
A new cassette tape has been issued made up entirely of Dan R. MacDonald's compositions, in individual performances by 22 musicians. This is an important approach to Cape Breton music. While we are used to hearing one fiddler play a range of tunes, both traditional and more recent compositions, this "Tribute to Dan R. MacDonald" is apparently the first tape to focus on a single Cape Breton composer. Also, a first volume of Dan R. MacDonald compositions has been published, called The Heather Hill Collection. And pianist Doug MacPhee's new album, "Master of the Cape Breton Keyboard," has 7 Dan R. compositions- none of which are on the "Tribute" tape above. In honour of all this recent activity focusing on Dan R. as a composer, we talked with his nephews John Donald (photo, top right) and John Allan Cameron. This article is edited from separate interviews. John Donald Cameron: I'll tell you about the first time that I saw Dan R.. met Dan R., was probably about 1946--May, 1946. I guess--I don't know-- about 7 years old, we were. And looked out the window at the house one night--Glencoe Station. The train had just gone through. And we saw this chap coming in with a fiddle, through the door. I recognized him-- it was a Mr. MacMaster, Hughie MacMaster. And walking a short distance behind him was this big soldier, in uniform. I knew right away it must have been Dan R. I hadn't seen him before. So they came in the house, and sat down. It was a big hello, you know, for my mother, and for my father--a big fuss, you know--Dan R. was there. They had a couple of bottles of something, and they gave everybody a drink. And there was a dance somewhere that night--a wedding or something going on, up the road. My mother was going. So Dan R. went with her. They went, and they had a fine time up there. And some of the local ladies, they liked Dan R. They found him attractive--an attractive man. That night one of the girls, locally, mentioned to my mother what a nice-looking man he was. And Dan R. wasn't that--he didn't seem to be too interested  
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