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Scottish-Nordic festival returns to Edinburgh in April

Musical families, top new young talent and a rich mix of cultures feature in the **Northern Streams Festival of Nordic & Scottish Music, Song & Dance 2024** in Edinburgh.

Taking place 26-28 April, this year's festival features artists all based in Scotland with backgrounds and repertoire from Iceland, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Shetland, and North-East Scotland:

- **Brian Ó hEadhra & Fionnag NicChoinnich with Órla Ní Eadhra and Ró Ó hEadhra (BFÓR):** a family affair from Inverness drawing on the Gaelic traditions of Scotland, the Nordic countries and the North Atlantic Fringe.
<https://www.brian-fionnag.com>
- **Erin Mungall-Baldvinsdottir with Evie Alberti, Becka Gauld and Ben Shanks:** members of Jelephant Folk Band in their full Nordic/Scottish mode ranging from Icelandic, Finnish, Saami and Gaelic.
<https://www.facebook.com/JelephantBand>
- **Sir-Reel Clarks:** a music and song duo comprising Andy & Aaron Clark, carrying on their family's musical heritage despite the challenges Aaron has faced to become a champion melodeon player.
<https://www.facebook.com/SirReelClarksFamilyBand>
- **Miguel Girão & Amy Laurenson** (BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year 2023 winner): Guitarist and Piano duo drawing on Amy's native Shetland traditions and Miguel's exploration of Scandinavian cultures.
<https://amylaurenson.com/> & <https://miguelgirao.com>

Event Organiser, Fiona Campbell, said: *"I'm really excited about this year's Northern Streams line-up. We have amazing talent in Scotland who are exploring the music and song of Scottish and Nordic cultures and coming up with new sounds, whilst respecting the past. This was one of the founding ideas behind the festival. And we have a variety of ways people can take part with concerts, workshops and a session."*

The outline Festival programme is:

Friday 26 April

7.00pm Evening Concert

Brian Ó hEadhra & Fionnag NicChoinnich with Órla Ní Eadhra and Ró Ó hEadhra (BFÓR) + Erin Mungall-Baldvinsdottir with Evie Alberti, Becka Gauld and Ben Shanks. Featuring Nordic and Scottish music and song from talented artists based in Scotland, including from Gaelic, Icelandic and Finnish cultures.

Saturday 27 April

11.00am - 5pm **Workshops:**

7.00pm Evening Concert

Sir-Reel Clarks + Miguel Girão & Amy Laurenson. Featuring Nordic and Scottish music and song from talented young artists based in Scotland, including BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year 2023 winner Amy Laurenson.

Sunday 28 April

2-5pm **Open Music & Song Session** - FREE entry

For more details of the Northern Streams programme, guest artists or for booking links, visit www.northernstreams.org. All Edinburgh events take place at **The Pleasance, 60 Pleasance, Edinburgh EH8 9TJ**. Ticket prices range from £7 for a workshop - £15 for the concert tickets, with concessions and discount deals worth checking if you plan to attend more than one event.

Other ways to get details are by email: eltmsa@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 0795 191 8366, or Facebook - TMSAEdinburgh&Lothians and Twitter@northernstream1.

The Northern Streams festival is organised on a voluntary basis by the Edinburgh & Lothians Branch of the Traditional Music & Song Association of Scotland (TMSA) **and acknowledges support from** Tasgadh Traditional Arts Small Grants Scheme and the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo in association with the City of Edinburgh Council.

ENDS

Notes to Editors & performer details

- Publicity photos of all the performers are available electronically at the Media page on www.northernstreams.org - please tel: 0795 191 8366 (Fiona) or email: eltmsa@yahoo.co.uk for any queries e.g. if you require any recordings.
- Described as “...*something out of the ordinary*” by The Herald, throughout the years Northern Streams has showcased performers often new to Scottish audiences, offering opportunities to learn about different cultures around the North Sea through a mix of concerts and workshops.
- Northern Streams is organised on a voluntary basis by the Traditional Music and Song Association (TMSA) Edinburgh & Lothians Branch. Details about the Branch at: www.eltmsa.org.uk and TMSA - www.tmsa.scot
- The Traditional Music & Song Association of Scotland (TMSA) was formed in 1966 as an organisation to promote, present and preserve the traditional music and song of Scotland. Its first events were annual festivals based in Blairgowrie, bringing

together many of the finest exponents of the traditions as well as new faces. Current projects include the annual TMSA Event Calendar, an interactive Music Map of Scotland and TMSA Young Trad Tour of the BBC Radio Scotland Young Musician of the Year finalists. The TMSA is registered as a Scottish Charity SCO03819 & a company limited by guarantee No: 199976. Registered Office: The Signal Box, Edinburgh EH14 1JL. Website: www.tmsa.scot

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Brian Ó hEadhra & Fionnag NicChoinnich with Órla Ní Eadhra and Ró Ó hEadhra (BFÓR)
Brian Ó hEadhra and Fionnag NicChoinnich, along with their children, perform songs from the Gaelic, Scots and Irish traditions as well as newly composed material drawing inspiration from music and cultures primarily from the North Atlantic fringe.

Brian grew up in St John's, Newfoundland, Canada, and Dublin, Ireland. Fionnag is from the Isle of Lewis, Scotland. They are based in Inverness, the capital of the Scottish Highlands. Over the past 25 years, they have performed across the globe and recorded on many albums with acts such as Anam, Cruinn and Mackenzie, as well as performing on various projects including international films and game soundtracks. Fionnag received the Gaelic Singer of the Year award at the MG ALBA Scots Trad Awards 2020 whilst Brian was nominated for the same award in 2019.

The duo has released three albums; "*TÌR - Highland Life & Lore*", "*TUATH - Songs of the Northlands*", and "*Càirdeas*". *TÌR* was nominated for Album of the Year at the 2018 International Folk Awards. All albums have received high critical and public acclaim with *TÌR* being described as "...destined to become a classic of contemporary folk music... an inspired, beautiful album" by Folk Radio and *TUATH* as a "masterpiece" by *Irish Music Magazine*. Their latest album *Càirdeas* was released in 2021 and was described by *Irish Music Magazine* as "one of the most appealing acoustic albums of the year... this is a work of deep cultural importance... the album is a model for every artist who has something to say and sing about."

"Brian Ó hEadhra and Fionnag NicChoinnich are two extraordinary artists. Both are outstanding singers and songwriters and some of the best voices in the Gaelic language world." Folk Music Central

Erin Mungall-Baldvinsdottir with Evie Alberti, Becka Gauld and Ben Shanks
Singer/flute/whistles/songwriter: Erin Mungall-Baldvinsdottir's powerful folk-rock vocals combine a three-octave range with operatic high notes, gruff low notes, a jazz lilt and the inspiration she takes from Nordic singing traditions such as Saami joik, Swedish *kulning* and North Karelian folksong. She studied jazz flute at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and folk music and song in Finland, Iceland and at an international music camp that she helped run at Skye's Gaelic College Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in 1999. Long ago she reported for BBC Radio 3 and World Service Music and even sang live at an Irish/Iceland folk festival at Icelandic Opera House. Her lyrics address neurodiverse relationships, social isolation during the pandemic, involuntary childlessness, political exile, heartbreak, stroke, internet dating, and love for her favourite feline!

Piano: Ben Shanks, a Peebles native, is a recent piano graduate of the music degree course at Edinburgh Napier University for which he spent time studying in Finland. A classical pianist and organist by background, he is Director of Music at a church in

Edinburgh's Morningside, leads a choir and glides happily between playing Sibelius, liturgical music and pelting the life out of a Scots dance tune.

Saxophone: **Becka Gauld**, a known face on Edinburgh's folk-arts scene, is a folk-jazz sax player who shines brightest when improvising a new riff or amping it up on a jazz classic. She started playing at a young age, and when not making music moonlights as a crafts maker with her original line of ecologically-themed jewellery and wire sculptures, *Becka's Insects*.

Guitar: **Evie Alberti** is a guitarist, improviser and multi-instrumentalist from the north-east of England based in Edinburgh. She is guitarist for the band Jelephant. Whilst studying music at the University of Edinburgh, Evie's performance experience has ranged from Jazz Bar gigs to 5-star rated fringe shows and Hidden Door festival performances.

Sir-Reel Clarks

Meet Sir-Reel Clarks, the dynamic family band hailing from Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Music has always been a part of the Clarks' family tradition, and it was after Aaron inherited his grandfather's melodeon in 2019 that he discovered his passion for playing music. Despite facing challenges in school, Aaron was determined to show the world that anyone can learn to play music. With inspiration from Tim Edey, Aaron honed his skills during lockdown and is now making a name for himself as a talented and innovative musician.

Aaron has just released his debut album, *Out of the Box*, which he collaborated on with his dad Andy and Tim Edey. Featuring some of Aaron's original compositions, the album showcases his ability to juggle different styles and genres to create a truly unique sound. But Sir-Reel Clarks is more than just a band - it's a family that supports Aaron's aspirations and helps him realize his dreams. Aaron's Autism, ADHD, Dyspraxia & Tourettes have not stopped him from becoming a North-East Scotland Champion and winning numerous TMSA competitions over the past few years.

As Tim Edey himself said, "*Aaron stands out as an extremely gifted melodeon player, whose musical ability cannot be denied*".

Amy Laurenson and Miguel Girão

Amy & Miguel, a piano and guitar duo, met in 2021 while studying together at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. The duo explore the music traditions and folklore of Scotland, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Rooted in the traditional music scene, but having had classical training, the duo challenges the roles usually associated with their instruments. Through the interchange of melodic and harmonic roles within their arrangements, the duo draws influence from classical, contemporary, and jazz music.

Amy Laurenson is a pianist from the Shetland Isles, currently based in Glasgow. Rooted in the traditional music of Shetland, Amy explores the music of her homeland and further afield. Amy is the BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year 2023 winner and gained her Honours Degree in Traditional Music from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Miguel Girão is a guitarist from the Portuguese midlands, now based in Glasgow. Having established himself as a soloist, Miguel also works collaboratively with artists and projects such as Eve Simpson, Tern, and Jocelyn Petit & Ellen Gira. Over the years Miguel has released records with different projects in his homeland, and more recently released his debut album 'Prologue' followed by the release of his latest EP 'The Courtly Seam'.