



**Media Release**

**Thursday 18 January 2024**

## **World-renowned winter festival Celtic Connections opens in Glasgow**

[Opening day images available to download here from 12 noon today](#)

Europe's premier folk, roots and world music festival **Celtic Connections** opens in Glasgow today, **Thursday 18 January**, for what will be one of its biggest-ever capacity programmes.

Running until **Sunday 4 February**, the renowned 18-day event will kickstart Scotland's annual cultural calendar and showcase Glasgow's **UNESCO City of Music** status and its role as the country's cultural powerhouse, welcoming celebrated artists and enthusiastic attendees from around the world for an inimitable celebration of cultural exchange and musical innovation.

Delivered by charity Glasgow Life as part of the city's annual cultural events programme, **Celtic Connections** attracts hundreds of thousands of attendees, and the contribution the festival makes to Scotland's cultural landscape and international reputation, as well as Glasgow's visitor economy, cannot be understated.

Over the course of the next two weeks, 1200 artists will perform at over 300 events, lighting up 25 venues across the city with world-class performances and exclusive collaborations for what is the biggest winter music festival of its kind in Europe.

With a programme which famously expands year on year, the music of this Celtic festival and its all-important connections will cover everything from trad, folk, roots, Americana and jazz to soul, rock, orchestral, experimental and world music.

With a number of shows already sold out, and an anticipated 110,000 attendees expected to make their way to Glasgow for **Celtic Connections** 2024, organisers are encouraging music lovers not to delay in booking tickets so they don't miss the chance to experience some unforgettable live performances.

Kicking things off in spectacular style is tonight's sold out **Opening Concert** which will see an expansive and genre-defying spectacle with the European premiere of **ATTENTION!** The remarkable

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new symphonic work from American Grammy winner **Chris Thile** – referred to by Billboard Magazine as “the best mandolin player in the world” – will also welcome the **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra** to the stage, with guests including festival favourites **Rachel Sermanni**, **Dreamers’ Circus** and **Sarah Jarosz**.

In another groundbreaking collaboration, the trailblazing **Scottish Ensemble** will join forces with American double-bassist and composer **Edgar Meyer** at Barony Hall on Saturday 20 January. On this dynamic evening of music where classical meets folk, world-renowned **Edgar Meyer** will perform a set of soul-stirring Gaelic songs with celebrated Scottish fiddler **Donald Grant**, award-winning Gaelic singer **Mischa Macpherson**, harpist and composer **Ailie Robertson** and renowned Uilleann piper **Jarlath Henderson**.

Among the array of international acts gracing the stages is Swedish folk ensemble **Väsen**, set to enchant audiences at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum on Friday 26 January with music both intense and full of humour. Formed in 1989 by the duo of **Olov Johansson**, master of the nyckelharpa, and **Mikael Marin**, a virtuoso on the viola, **Väsen**'s music finds its roots in the traditional melodies of Uppland

Adding to the rich tapestry of global sounds is musical luminary **Angélique Kidjo**, set to perform at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Monday 29 January. Renowned for her three-decade-long career and unmatched artistry, **Angélique** is an icon in the realm of international music, inspiring countless artists and creators of West African music, Afrobeat, Afro-pop, dancehall, hip-hop and alt-R&B.

Also performing at the Royal Concert Hall on Tuesday 30 January is **Carlos Núñez**. The international star of Galician music will be joined by very special guests including a rare appearance from one of Canada’s finest fiddlers, **Natalie McMaster** and Capercaillie vocalist **Karen Matheson**. On Thursday 1 February, acclaimed American banjo player **Bèla Fleck** performs with his Grammy winning bluegrass line-up. Over the past four decades, Bèla has pioneered a musical journey that has taken the instrument from its bluegrass roots to genres including jazz, classical, pop and world music.

Norway is this year’s Showcase Scotland international partner country and the Scandinavian talent represented at **Celtic Connections** 2024 includes Tromsø-born violinist, singer, and composer **Julie Alapnes**, Slovakian-Norwegian orchestra **Angrusori**, Norwegian traditional trios **Erlend Viken** and



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**Ævestaden**, and Sámi band **Gabba**, who blend traditional yoik with influences from Norwegian folk music, Americana and other world musics into their own 'Tundra Blues'.

On Thursday 25 January, Barony Hall will welcome a host of musical talent for **New Tradition**, a celebration of folk artists from across the UK and Ireland, featuring award-winning singer **Fiona Hunter**, celebrated musician **Adam Holmes**, acclaimed Irish singer and flautist **Steph Geremia**, Scotland's bouzouki powerhouse **Aaron Jones** and special guests including **John McCusker**, **Kris Drever** and **Alan Kelly**.

Another programme highlight comes from Orcadian folk quartet **Fara**, who are set to bridge borders, cultures and genres with an unforgettable night of international collaboration at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Saturday 3 February. With guests from Mali, America, the Caribbean, Quebec and Syria, this performance highlights the undeniable connective power of music.

As well as music for listening to, Celtic Connections is famed for bringing people together through dance. On the roster for 2024 is **A Ceilidh for Gordon**, a night to celebrate the life and legacy of Tíre accordion tutor **Gordon Connell**, **The RSCDS Ceilidh**, which promotes Scottish country dance and all related dance forms as inclusive, exciting activities that can be enjoyed by anyone, anywhere, and **Ando Glaso**, set to take the ceilidh format known and loved in Scotland, and introduce a Transylvanian dance element.

Scotland's famous hospitality will be on full display at Kelvingrove Art Gallery on Thursday 25 January at the **Celtic Connections Burns Supper**. Attendees will have the chance to toast the famous bard in style with a Lochlea dram amid striking surroundings, a gourmet musical menu and much loved exponents of Burns song performed by the likes of **Fiona Hunter**, **Sean Gray**, **Hannah Fisher**, **Sorren MacLean**, and the **Glasgow Chapel choir**, amongst other special guests.

**Donald Shaw, Creative Producer for Celtic Connections, said:** "As the name affirms, this festival has always been about connecting people and nations, uniting them through a shared love and appreciation of music and culture. This year's line-up, one of our biggest and most ambitious to date, is packed with amazing talent from across Scotland and all over the world, reflecting just how far the festival has come over the past three decades, and underlining our ambition to showcase music of all genres and backgrounds.



"I extend my heartfelt thanks to all those whose efforts have made this year's festival possible. Your support has allowed us to curate an exceptional event that represents the heart and soul of Celtic, folk, roots, jazz and world music.

"It's incredibly exciting to see proceedings kick off today; I know our musicians and everyone involved in the festival is ready to make this one to remember. If there is still a show you would like to see, I would urge you to buy yourself a ticket – you most certainly will not regret it."

**Glasgow Life Chair, Bailie Annette Christie, said:** "Audiences from near and far really are spoiled for choice by this year's wonderfully expansive Celtic Connections programme which features a wide range of musical genres and an incredible line-up of home-grown and international artists.

"Shining the spotlight on Glasgow's global status as a UNESCO City of Music, and the city's richly deserved reputation as a superb destination for events and entertainment, Celtic Connections is renowned for showcasing outstanding established and emerging talent. The fact that the festival attracts such a high calibre of acts is testament to how well-regarded it is by musicians, not only in Scotland and Europe but worldwide, and how great the appeal of its diverse programme is to lovers of live music.

"As an annual highlight of Glasgow's rich cultural programme, which attracts thousands of visitors and enriches the lives of so many, Celtic Connections is hugely important to the city, and we are very much looking forward to welcoming everyone attending this year's festival."

**Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development, Christina McKelvie MSP, said:** "Celtic Connections is an annual high point in the calendar bringing artists and audiences from all corners of the globe together in Glasgow to celebrate the music of Scotland and our Celtic neighbours. This breadth of this year's festival programme speaks to the huge wealth of talent our country boasts and the superb worldwide reputation of this iconic festival.

"The Scottish Government is proud to continue our support for Celtic Connections with £101,000 this year through our EXPO fund, which seeks to raise the international profile of Scottish artists and help maximise opportunities for them at home and abroad."



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**Alan Morrison, Head of Music at Creative Scotland, said:** "Celtic Connections is a world-class showcase for Scotland's wonderful musical heritage and a celebration of the incredible wealth of our established and emerging talent. The festival provides a high-profile, prestigious platform for Scottish artists spanning traditional and contemporary music across all genres. This year's programme also features what is arguably the festival's strongest-ever international line-up, enabling creative collaborations from so many different countries and cultures.

"Every day boasts major headline shows and unforgettable intimate performances, as well as workshop sessions that encourage people to try out instruments and schools concerts that will inspire the artists and audiences of the future. With so many ways to connect to the music on offer, Celtic Connections 2024 promises something for everyone."

**Celtic Connections** began in 1994 when it offered 66 events at one venue. It has since grown more adventurous, experimental and diverse each year, with an unwavering ambition to showcase the very best traditional folk, roots, Americana, jazz, soul, indie and world music and nurture unique local, national and international cultural partnerships.

**Celtic Connections 2024** will take place from **Thursday 18 January to Sunday 4 February**. The programme can be viewed in full and tickets purchased at [www.celticconnections.com](http://www.celticconnections.com).

**ENDS**

[Media accreditation is now open and you can apply here.](#)

The festival will run from Thursday 18 January to Sunday 4 February 2024. Follow the conversation at @ccfest.

For further information, images, or to request an interview, please contact: Corrie Campbell, Innes and Campbell Communications, [corrie@innesandcampbell.co.uk](mailto:corrie@innesandcampbell.co.uk), 07900 981 073.

### **Notes to Editors**

**Celtic Connections** began in 1994, when it offered 66 events at one venue. Since then it's grown more adventurous, experimental and diverse each year and now offers thousands of events in locations across Glasgow.



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Celtic Connections is delivered with funding from **Glasgow City Council** through **Glasgow Life**. **Creative Scotland** and **The Scottish Government Festivals Expo Fund** continue to provide invaluable support to Celtic Connections.

**Glasgow Life** is a charity working for the benefit of the people of Glasgow. We believe everyone deserves a great Glasgow life and we find innovative ways to make this happen across the city's diverse communities.

Our programmes, experiences and events range from grassroots community activities to large-scale cultural, artistic and sporting events which present Glasgow on an international stage.

Our work is designed to promote inclusion, happiness and health, as well as support the city's visitor economy, in order to enhance Glasgow's mental, physical and economic wellbeing.

For more information, see [www.glasgowlife.org.uk](http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk)

**Creative Scotland** is the public body that supports the arts, screen, and creative industries across all parts of Scotland distributing funding provided by the Scottish Government and The National Lottery. Further information at [creativescotland.com](http://creativescotland.com). Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Learn more about the value of art and creativity in Scotland and join in at [www.ourcreativevoice.scot](http://www.ourcreativevoice.scot)