



## Media Release

**Embargoed until 0001 hours, Monday 5 February 2024**

### Curtain closes on Celtic Connections 2024

[Highlight images from this year's festival available here](#)

World-renowned folk, roots and world music festival **Celtic Connections** drew to a triumphant close in Glasgow last night after 18 days of spectacular sold-out concerts, innovative musical sessions and star-studded collaborations.

From **Thursday 18 January to Sunday 4 February**, the city came alive with over 300 incredible events involving 1,200 artists across 25 of the city's venues.

The biggest winter festival of its kind in Europe, known for its eclectic mix of genres and inclusive atmosphere, is celebrating over 100 sold out shows across its 300 events alongside welcoming over 115,000 attendees.

Once-in-a-lifetime collaborations, rare performances from global sensations, moving tribute concerts and some of the biggest shows ever played by homegrown talent were all showcased across the city for the incredible 31st edition of Celtic Connections.

Among the hundreds of sensational concerts, each of which celebrated the tradition, innovation and unifying power of music, were:

- The dazzling **Opening Concert**, which welcomed the expansive and genre-defying European premiere of **ATTENTION!** from American Grammy winner **Chris Thile** (Nickel Creek) and guests including festival favourites **Rachel Sermanni, Dreamers' Circus** and **Sarah Jarosz**. A fitting start to the festival, the night was one of unparalleled musical creativity, leaving audiences in awe
- The **Red Clydeside: John MacLean Centenary Concert**, which celebrated the music, poetry and legacy of Scottish schoolteacher and legendary revolutionary socialist John MacLean, was an evening of passion and inimitable talent. Led by the brilliant **Siobhan Miller, Eddi**



**Reader, Billy Bragg and Karine Polwart**, a surprise performance from Scottish social protest singer **Dick Gaughan** was a hugely emotional and iconic moment during the evening

- **Roaming Roots Review**, this year with the theme Songs of Modern Scotland, brought together music from a who's who of Scottish talent for a night which celebrated some of the most phenomenal artists and iconic tracks this country has produced. Joining the event's curator and host **Roddy Hart** on stage were Biffy Clyro's **Simon Neil**, Idlewild's **Roddy Woomble** and **Rod Jones**, Del Amitri's **Justin Currie**, Camera Obscura's **Tracyanne Campbell**, celebrated singer-songwriter **Emma Pollock**, uber talented **Hamish Hawk**, Admiral Fallow's **Sarah Hayes** and **Louis Abbott** and the imitable **Brownbear** among other hugely talented musicians. The night was accompanied by a **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Orchestra**, arranged and conducted by **John Logan**
- **The Bothy Band**, one of the most influential and revered Irish ensembles to revolutionise the playing of traditional music in recent generations, made their mark on Celtic Connections 2024 with a highly-anticipated, long-awaited performance. For the first time since 1979, **Donal Lunny** on bouzouki, **Triona ní Dhomhnaill** on keyboards, **Matt Molloy** on flute, **Paddy Keenan** on Uillean pipes and low whistle, and **Paddy Glackin** and **Kevin Burke** on fiddle came together to perform their first full-scale public concert, joined by **Seán Óg Graham** on guitar
- Always a Celtic Connections highlight, **Transatlantic Sessions** celebrated the rich musical traditions that connect Scotland, Ireland and the US. Featuring an outstanding line-up of artists, including AmericanaFest's "Can't Miss Act" **Lindsay Lou**, Grammy nominated singer-songwriter **Carlene Carter**, Belfast-based progressive Irish folk singer-songwriter **Joshua Burnside**, previous Scots Trad Music Awards Gaelic singer of the year **Kim Carnie** and captivating Canadian duo **Allison de Groot and Tatiana Hargreaves**, the night saw audiences soak up an exceptional assortment of tunes, songs and genres
- A special evening celebrating the life and legacy of Tiree accordionist Gordon Connell was **A Ceilidh for Gordon** at the iconic Old Fruitmarket. The revered musician and teacher was remembered through music and dance, and the memorable night was led by a host of his

former students, including **Angus MacPhail** of Skipinnish, Gunna Sound's **Campbell Brown**, Skerryvore's **Daniel** and **Martin Gillespie**, Trail West's **Ian Smith**, Tide Lines' **Ross Wilson** and many more

- Grammy nominee and multi-award-winning musician **Allison Russell** wowed crowds at Óran Mór with her purposeful music, portraying a soulful expression of liberation, love and respect. The Canadian songstress' mastery of her craft was on full display as she commanded the spotlight with her soul-stirring vocals, unrivalled musical talent and powerful words
- In a commemorative celebration, the **Traditional Music and Song Association** revisited the landmark Scots Women concert from the 2001 festival. **Scots Women - Generations o' Change** honoured the original singers of the first performance, while welcoming a new wave of Scottish female folk singers, showcasing a blend of a capella and band-accompanied songs. Featuring an esteemed lineup, the event was overseen by Musical Director **Iona Fyfe** and hosted by Scots Poet **Len Pennie**, providing a vibrant, collaborative journey through Scottish folk music
- **Showcase Scotland**, another core event within Celtic Connections, highlighted international partners Norway during the five-day programme which took place between Wednesday 24 January and Monday 29 January. The initiative welcomed international delegates from all over the UK, Europe, Australia, America and Canada to join in appreciation of the Scandinavian talent playing at the festival, including Tromsø-born violinist, singer and composer **Julie Alapnes**, award-winning Hardanger fiddle player **Alexander Aga Røystrand**, Norwegian traditional trios **Erlend Viken** and **Ævestaden**, Nordic folk five-piece **Gangar**, and Sámi band **Gabba**. Paired with Norway partners at Showcase Scotland was the **Sounds of Scotland Showcase**, supported by Creative Scotland, highlighting **Gaelic and Scots artists** performing in traditional and folk music spaces. Next year will see Ireland once again take up the mantle as Showcase Scotland partner
- Barony Hall proved to be a spectacular setting for the first time at this year's Celtic Connections. The stunning building, ideally located in the city centre, was newly introduced



as a venue for the 2024 festival, welcoming world-class performers such as award-winning trad band **Breabach**, revered folk musician **John McCusker**, Irish fiddler **Martyn Hayes** and multi-talented **Damien O’Kane**, to name a few

- Music workshops and teaching sessions were also in full swing over the past 18 days. From composing tunes from scratch to having a go at the bagpipes and learning the ukulele, participants had the chance to fully immerse themselves in every facet of the festival, while the festival’s free school concerts programme shared the joy of live music of 8,000 school children from across Scotland over the course of four morning shows

**Donald Shaw, Creative Producer for Celtic Connections, said:** "This year's Celtic Connections was a testament to the creative power and enduring importance of the arts and the music of the people. The richness of talent on display, the diverse range of genres and the infectious enthusiasm of the audiences made this year's edition truly special. It's heartening to see the festival grow and evolve, bringing together artists and audiences from all walks of life, joined by a shared appreciation for music, art and cultural expression.

"The continued success of Celtic Connections reflects the passion and commitment of everyone involved. My thanks goes to each person who bought a ticket, performed on our stages, volunteered their time, worked on or backed the event, and to the people of Glasgow who welcomed the world with open arms. Your support is the heartbeat of the festival, and it's your enthusiasm and dedication that make this celebration of music possible year after year.

"Scotland has a rich tapestry of musical traditions, and Celtic Connections is a platform that showcases the beauty and diversity of our own folk music, as well as that of other countries, and the expansive connections it has created. I am immensely proud of how well Scotland continues to champion folk music on the global stage, and feel truly excited about the path that lies ahead for what we're proud to say has become a world-renowned event."

**Culture Minister Christina McKelvie said:** "Celtic Connections always provides a brilliant start to the year and as another successful edition draws to a close I want to give my thanks to everyone who made it possible and all those who attended.



"I was fortunate enough to be able to see several fantastic performances over the course of this year's festival, including the opening concert, the Norwegian acts that played at Showcase Scotland, and the wonderful Red Clydeside Centenary Concert for the great John Maclean. The talent, warmth and energy that Celtic Connections always brings never fails to impress and I'm sure I'm not alone in eagerly awaiting next year's programme."

**Glasgow Life Chair, Bailie Annette Christie, said:** "Celtic Connections 2024 has been a resounding success, and a spectacular showcase of some of the very finest musical talent that Scotland, and almost every corner of the globe, has to offer across a wealth of genres.

"This year's wonderfully expansive, exciting programme, and superb international line-up of established and emerging artists, has delighted a very broad range of audiences and attracted festival goers in their thousands. A remarkable range of shows, special performances and inspirational events have been staged at our venues over the past 18 days – further enhancing Glasgow's reputation as a world-class cultural events destination and shining the spotlight on its status as a celebrated UNESCO City of Music.

"This 31<sup>st</sup> edition of Celtic Connections has not only demonstrated how internationally renowned and much-loved this unique festival is, it has also emphasised how immeasurably important it is to Glasgow and to Scotland – and we look forward to building on its incredible legacy in future years."

**Alan Morrison, Head of Music at Creative Scotland said:** "Powered by the energy of its artists and enthusiasm of its audiences, Celtic Connections has given Scotland's music scene the best possible start to 2024. From the Opening Concert onwards, fans have sung the praises of some of the best gigs they've ever seen at this or any other festival. It's a triumph for our own traditional music and a prime example of how connecting with artists from all over the world can brighten the darkest days."

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 is now a core part of the city's annual cultural events programme, delivered by charity **Glasgow Life**. Opportunities to support future editions of the festival can be found at [www.celticconnections.com/celtic-connections-supporters](http://www.celticconnections.com/celtic-connections-supporters).

**Celtic Connections 2025** will take place from **Thursday 16 January - Sunday 2 February 2025**.

**ENDS**

This year's Celtic Connections ran from Thursday 18 January to Sunday 4 February 2024. Catch up on the conversation across social media at @ccfest.

For further information, images, or to request an interview, please contact: Hannah Innes, Innes and Campbell Communications, [hannah@innesandcampbell.co.uk](mailto:hannah@innesandcampbell.co.uk), 07790 813 712 / 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.

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](#).



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