



Media Release

Tuesday 23 January 2024

Cultural collaboration initiative Showcase Scotland shines a spotlight on Scottish and Norwegian musical talent at Celtic Connections

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Showcase Scotland, the important industry initiative which supports international cultural collaboration as part of Glasgow's renowned music festival Celtic Connections, is this year partnering with Norway.

Starting on 24 January, a five-day programme of networking events and special performances is being hosted for international delegates and VIPs during this year's world-famous festival to further opportunities abroad for Scottish-based musicians and celebrate the talent and connections of Celtic cousins Scotland and Norway.

Celtic Connections 2024, the 31st edition of Europe's premier folk, roots and world music festival, opened on 18 January and runs until 4 February. Delivered by charity Glasgow Life, it features over 300 events at 24 venues across the city, and an outstanding line-up of established and emerging home-grown talent, as well as artists from almost every corner of the globe.

The Showcase Scotland industry programme supports Scottish-based artists by raising their international profile and helping maximise export opportunities that will benefit them by enabling them to perform and promote their work overseas.

As the largest annual gathering of the international music community in Scotland, the industry showcase initiative provides a valuable platform for promoters, record labels, agents and festival organisers to connect with the Scottish industry and each other.

Each year, Showcase Scotland has an international partner to focus cultural collaborations with a specific country, encourage links with industry contacts there, and celebrate the connections between the musical cultures of the partner country and Scotland. Prior to this year's partnership with Norway, Brittany and Wales were joint partners in 2023, and partners in previous years have included Ireland, Australia, India and New Zealand.

Celtic Connections 2024 features a broad range of Scandinavian talent in recognition of Scotland's shared cultural heritage and connections with Nordic nations. The featured acts from Norway that the spotlight is being shone on as part of the Showcase Scotland programme are Tromsø-born



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violinist, singer and composer Julie Alapnes, award-winning Hardanger fiddle player Alexander Aga Røystrand, Norwegian traditional trios Erlend Viken and Ævestaden, and five-piece folk ensemble Gangar, and Sámi band Gabba which blends traditional yoik with influences from Norwegian folk music, Americana and other world music into their unique 'Tundra Blues'.

In addition to the Norwegian talent, Gaelic and Scots music artists are highlighted throughout the Showcase Scotland programme, and these are the focus of a special promotion – supported by Creative Scotland – on Thursday 25 January.

Music and events industry representatives taking part in Showcase Scotland to experience the outstanding musical talent of both Scotland and Norway at Celtic Connections are attending from all over Europe, Australia, the USA, Canada, as well as the UK.

The Showcase Scotland programme will see delegates from 23 countries gathering in Glasgow and being introduced to the Scottish music sector to highlight the wealth of talent our country boasts from traditional to contemporary music, across genres including folk and acoustic.

International delegates participating to explore cultural collaborative opportunities Showcase Scotland offers have to apply to attend, and there has been an outstanding demand for this year's programme, which is fully subscribed.

The Showcase Scotland cultural initiative was initially piloted in 2000 by British Council Scotland and the Scottish Arts Council, and its success led to it being established as a core, annual strand within Celtic Connections. It is produced, on behalf of Glasgow Life by Active Events.

Lisa Whytock, Executive Producer of Showcase Scotland, said: “We are really looking forward to welcoming an expansive global network of industry representatives, as well as international VIPs, to this year's Showcase Scotland to shine the international spotlight on some of Scotland's best musical talent. And this year's exciting partnership with Norway will celebrate the strong heritage and cultural links between Norway and Scotland.”

Norway's State Secretary for the Ministry of Culture and Equality, Even Aleksander Hagen, said: “We are delighted to be partnering with Showcase Scotland for this year's programme, and our artists are excited to be supporting it and of course to be performing at the iconic Celtic Connections. Taking part in what is renowned as Europe's biggest winter festival of its kind gives them a fabulous opportunity to perform at it to audiences in Glasgow and highlight how their music not only harnesses the ancient music traditions of our country but interprets them vibrantly and with creative innovation in their own unique style.”



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Scotland's Minister for Culture and International Development, Christina McKelvie said: "This year's partnership with our near neighbours in Norway, where we'll see some of the best musical talent from Scandinavia perform, reminds us just how important music is and how it brings us together wherever we are in the world.

"The interest from international delegates in attending the Showcase Scotland has been particularly strong this year which is testament to how valued the opportunities the programme offers are. I'm really looking forward to enjoying the world-class entertainment on display."

Creative Scotland Head of Music, Alan Morrison, said: "Showcase Scotland offers a direct route for Scottish artists to break beyond our borders and engage with industry delegates from across the world. It's also the catalyst for bringing the best music from international partners into the heart of Celtic Connections. Norway is the perfect partner for 2024. Like Scotland, music is woven through its cultural identity, including the indigenous languages – Sami, Gaelic and Scots – that we will celebrate with special showcase events this week."

Glasgow Life Chair and City Convener for Culture, Sport and International Relations, Bailie Annette Christie, said: "We are indebted to the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland for their continued support of Celtic Connections and the Showcase Scotland programme which shines the spotlight on Scottish talent and the international collaborations the festival fosters. While remaining true to its roots of celebrating the music of Scotland and traditions of our heritage, by showcasing a strong contingent of home-grown established and emerging talent, this year's diverse Celtic Connections programme is arguably also our most international yet, reflecting our recognition of the importance of cultural connections."

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For details of the programme for Celtic Connections 2024 and to purchase tickets please visit: www.celticconnections.com For media accreditation, please apply [here](#). Follow the conversation at @ccfest.

For further information, images, or to request an interview with any of the acts performing at Celtic Connections 2024, please contact: Hannah Innes, Innes and Campbell Communications, hannah@innesandcampbell.co.uk, 07790 813 712 or Corrie Campbell, Innes and Campbell Communications, 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 the festival has grown more adventurous, experimental and diverse each year and it now encompasses a broad range of musical genres.

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.

Glasgow Life offers diverse volunteering opportunities for people of all ages and abilities – ranging from involvement in one-off events to regular volunteer roles in our museums, arts and music venues, libraries, community and sport facilities. For more information visit www.glasgowlife.org.uk/volunteer-with-glasgow-life, call 0141 287 2809 or email volunteering@glasgowlife.org.uk.

For more information, see 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. 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.