

January 2012

CELTIC CONNECTIONS AT ST ANDREW'S IN THE SQUARE

TICKETS FOR ALL CONCERTS ARE £13 FROM

[www.celticconnections.com](http://www.celticconnections.com) or 0141 353 8000

**Fri 20 January 7:30pm Cuairt nan Eilean**

Translating from the Gaelic as "a tour around the islands", and staged as the opening show of 2011's Hebridean Celtic Festival, Cuairt nan Eilean brings together three of today's finest young Gaelic singers, performing both classic favourites and little-known gems, to illuminate their diverse Hebridean traditions. Representing Harris, where her family roots lie, is Jenna Cumming; from Skye comes fellow Mod gold medallist Darren Maclean, while North Uist's Linda Macleod brings a wealth of scholarly research as well as her beautiful voice to the project. They're accompanied by an array of top instrumentalists including Matheu Watson, Patsy Reid, Fiona Macaskill and James Mackenzie.

**Sat 21 January 7:30pm This is How we Fly and Liguriani**

A white-hot creative crucible uniting four pyrotechnic young talents, This Is How We Fly was born of a 2010 Dublin Fringe Festival commission, supposedly a one-off encounter between Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh (fiddle/hardanger fiddle), Seán Mac Erlaine (bass clarinet/saxophones/electronics), Nic Gareiss (percussive dance), and Petter Bermdalen (drums/percussion). The cutting-edge chemistry they ignited, between Irish and Swedish trad, American freestyle footwork, improvised jazz and live electronica, is blazing an awesome new trail.

As their name suggests, Liguriani champion the distinctive culture and dialect of their native Liguria, near the French border in north-west Italy, in a vibrant array of songs with instrumentation including fiddle, flute, bagpipes, accordion and guitar.

**Sun 22 January 7:30pm Empreintes and Cruinn**

While continuing his 30-year career as a linchpin of numerous major Breton bands and performance projects - including Skolvan, Barzaz, L'Héritage des Celtes and Bagad Kemper's Azéliziza - master guitarist Gilles Le Bigot has released two acclaimed solo albums under the Empreintes title, in 2002 and 2011, here selecting from that material in company with vocalist Marthe Vassallo, flautist Jean-Michel Veillon and saxophonist Bernard Le Dréau.

Making their maiden public performance, Cruinn are a new Scottish Gaelic supergroup comprising James Graham, Fiona Mackenzie, Brian Ó hEadhra and Rachel Walker, whose outstanding vocals and interpretative finesse are complemented by strong contemporary songwriting and an array of instrumental skills.

**Mon 23 January 7:30pm A Celebration of the Dewar Awards**

Founded in 2002 as an apt ongoing memorial to Scotland's inaugural First Minister Donald Dewar (1937-2000), the Dewar Arts Awards exist to "to give exceptionally talented young people of meagre means some assistance in fulfilling their potential in any branch of the arts." This 10th anniversary celebration, curated by current Awards trustee Sheena Wellington, features some of the many traditional musicians who've benefited from the scheme, be it in recording albums or acquiring new instruments, including flautist/singer Nuala Kennedy, fiddlers Lauren MacColl and Graham Mackenzie, piper Angus Nicolson and harper Fraya Thomsen.

**Wed 25 January 7:30pm Sligo Live Sessions with Máirtín O'Connor & Seamie O'Dowd, The Gorgeous Colours and The JP Trio**

Marking the second year of Celtic Connections' partnership with the Sligo Live festival, another triple bill curated from Ireland's traditional heartland - and one of its most exciting contemporary hotbeds - reunites the fabled partnership of pioneering accordionist Máirtín O'Connor with guitarist, singer and fiddler Seamie O'Dowd, as heard on O'Connor's 2005 album The Road West.

Aptly-named indie-popsters The Gorgeous Colours channel blues, folk, jazz, soul, rock, indie and electronic influences into "a perfect package of feelgood, danceable and all-round gorgeous sounds" (State.ie), while O'Connor himself has hailed young Sligo natives and Danny Kyle Award winners The JP Trio as "the new cutting edge of fused traditional music".

**Thur 26 January 7.30pm Cissokho Solo and Fidil with Fatoumata Diawara and Michael McGoldrick**

Building on a very special show originally staged at the 2011 Earagail Arts Festival in Donegal, tonight reunites the radical young Irish fiddle trio Fidil with seventh-generation Senegalese griot singer and kora player Solo Cissokho - which built in turn on his previous collaborations with Altan's Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh and Dermot Byrne, as well as with Swedish fiddler Ellika Frissell. Forging further new links between African and Celtic, traditional and contemporary music, the wonderful new Malian singer Fatoumata Diawara, aka Fatou, will team up with the Michael McGoldrick Quartet, featuring Gerry O'Connor on banjo, guitarist Tony Byrne and percussionist James Mackintosh.

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### **Fri 27 January 7:30pm The Wrigley Sisters and Tattie Jam**

While their age might belie their 20-year playing partnership, the fact of fiddler Jennifer and guitarist/pianist Hazel Wrigley's twinship means they did start very young: 13, to be precise, on their debut recording *Dancing Fingers*. Since then they've toured the world several times over, before founding their successful music school, *The Reel*, back home in Orkney. Having recently released their sparkling fifth album *Idiom*, the Wrigleys are raring to be back on the road. Tattie Jam are cellist and singer Seylan Baxter with Ruaridh Pringle on vocals, guitar, banjo, didgeridoo, mandolin and percussion - though to hear their big, dynamic folk/swing sound you'd swear they were twice that number.

### **Sat 28 January 7:30pm Alistair Hulett Tribute Night with very special guests**

As *Celtic Connections 2012* explores and celebrates the interplay of music and politics, tonight pays tribute to a much-loved local hero in this field, with a second musical gathering in memory of singer, songwriter, socialist and revolutionary Alistair Hulett (1951-2010). The line-up includes such friends and kindred spirits as legendary fiddler Dave Swarbrick - with whom Alistair enjoyed a popular duo partnership - and singers/songwriters Roy Bailey, Karine Polwart, Alasdair Roberts and Ian Bruce. Also on the bill will be the winner of the Songs for Social Justice Award, a new songwriting competition aimed at continuing Alistair's musical and political legacy.

### **Sun 29 January 7:30pm Sultans of String and The Outside Track**

Self-styled purveyors of "atomic world-jazz flamenco", Sultans of String are one of Canada's hottest new musical exports. Centred on the founding interplay between Chris McKhool - a six-string violinist of Lebanese/Egyptian descent - and Kevin Laiberté's rumba-accented guitar, they weave a gorgeously-hued tapestry of Spanish, Arabic, Latin, French and gypsy strands. "Immaculate musicianship - terrific group" - fRoots  
Two Canadians also feature in *The Outside Track* - Vancouver singer/flautist Norah Rendell, and Cape Breton fiddler Mairi Rankin - together with award-winning Scottish harpist Ailie Robertson and accordionist Fiona Black, plus lone Irishman Cillian O'Dálaigh on guitar. Drawing from across this vibrant spectrum of home traditions, they combine classy musicianship with winning joie de vivre.

### **Fri 3 February 7:30pm The Spey in Spate**

Named after a classic tune by Scottish fiddle icon James Scott Skinner, tonight's line-up cherry-picks from the flood of exceptionally gifted, highly distinctive fiddlers currently inundating the Scottish scene, featuring well-kent names alongside players less often seen on the concert circuit. Each performing with a sole accompanist of their choice, they include Shetlander Kevin Henderson of Fiddlers' Bid fame; Orkney's Kristan Harvey in her penultimate performance as the reigning Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year; the classical-tinged lyricism of Anna-Wendy Stevenson; and Galloway-born Amy Geddes, previewing material from her forthcoming solo album, plus other special guests.

### **Sat 4 February 7:30pm Mary Gauthier and Darrell Scott**

After mounting acclaim for her five previous albums, Louisiana's Mary Gauthier won a remarkable sweep of critical superlatives with 2010's *The Foundling*, exploring her experiences of childhood abandonment and adoption. Rarely can such unanimity have prevailed between *No Depression* ("the most raw, brave and ultimately satisfying album I've heard in a very long time") and *The Sun* ("one of the most brilliant and heartbreaking pieces of music you'll hear this or any year"). Recently recruited into Robert Plant's *Band of Joy*, Darrell Scott reveals his romantic side on current solo release *A Crooked Road*, combining the songcraft behind numerous country hits with his own luscious baritone voice.

### **Sun 5 February, 7:30pm Rachel Sermanni & Friends (on sale 11/11/11)**

A year on from her triumphant *New Voices* show, Rachel Sermanni's star remains steeply on the rise, with the imminent release of her official, Ian Grimble-produced, debut EP following last summer's self-released four-track, *The Bothy Sessions*. Numerous festival appearances throughout 2011 saw her captivating audiences at home and abroad, with highlights including *South by Southwest*, LA's *Musexpo* and Holland's *Eurosonic* plus the *Insider*, *Hebridean Celtic Festival* and *Cambridge Folk Festival* - not to mention opening for Elvis Costello at October's *Sligo Live*. She returns to Glasgow with her full eight-piece band, including fiddles, piano, guitars, bass and Admiral Fallow's Louis Abbott and Phil Hague on percussion.