



**Performance at Edinburgh International Festival  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2024  
PROGRAMME NOTES**

Founded in 1986, Fèis Rois (meaning “Ross-Shire Festival” in Scottish Gaelic) provides transformative opportunities for people of all ages to learn skills in Scottish traditional music and the Gaelic language and culture.

The Ceilidh Trail project is a professional development opportunity for young people aged 16 to 25 considering a career in traditional music performance.

Performed by Anja MacIennan (guitar), Anndra Cumming (accordion and vocals), Emma Racionzer (fiddle), Kitty Sykes (fiddle) and Lucy Robertson (fiddle and harp)

**1. In Praise of the Braes (composed Adam Sutherland) and The First Wave (composed John Somerville)**

The first tune was written by Adam Sutherland for the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Team. The second melody was written by John Somerville as part of an album commissioned by Fèis Rois commemorating the voyage of the ship, The Hector, which left Ullapool for Canada in 1773. While the journey was one of drama and hardship, this reel reflects the good weather and optimism in the first few weeks of the ships voyage.

**2. Thug iad a Thung thu**

We heard this song first from the singing of Calum Alex MacMillan. Murdo MacFarlane (the bard, or poet) was from the Isle of Lewis and he describes how empty he feels after his nephew moves across the bay from Melbost to Tong. He also makes reference to the politics of the time, afraid that his own nephew may be sent away to war by those in power.

Performed by Dean Munro (fiddle), Debi Hutchison (fiddle), Ester Strachan (fiddle), Magnus Turpie (accordion and fiddle) along with Isla Ratcliff (fiddle), Freya Taylor (fiddle) and Peter Macpherson (piano)

**1. Flett from Flotta / The Battle of Waterloo**

These popular pipe marches are commonly played for the ceilidh dance, The Gay Gordons.

**2. I Bhi Ada / Och is Duine Truagh Mi**

Two popular puirt-a-beul, or Gaelic mouth music, tunes.

Performed by Mischa Macpherson and Innes White (see [www.mischamacpherson.com](http://www.mischamacpherson.com))

**1. Cha D'Fhuair Mi'n Cadal (I Didn't Get Any Sleep)**

Mischa learned this this song from the singing of Roddy Campbell, from the Isle of Barra. The song recounts the tale of men navigating treacherous waters and weather. After a tough journey, they finally make it to the home of an Irishman in Barra, where they're welcomed with a hearty meal of pork, beer and a dram—a true taste of island hospitality.

**2. Cò Ni Mire ri Màiri & Meal do Bhrògan**

Puirt à Beul, literally translating as mouth music, are short Gaelic songs that were written specifically for dancing. This set includes 'Cò Ni Mire ri Màiri' (Who Will Flirt with Màiri) and 'Meal do Bhrògan' (Praise Your Shoes). The lyrics are often playful and lighthearted, as most of the words were chosen for their rhythmic value instead of their poetic meaning.

Performed by Catriona Kane (harp), Eoin Cumming (accordion, guitar and vocals), Kirsty Harrison (fiddle), Peter Macpherson (piano and vocals) and Ruby Smith (fiddle)

**1. The Hour Before Dawn (Calum Stewart) and Partick Sun (Ruby Smith)**

The Hour Before Dawn was composed by flautist and Uilleann piper, Calum Stewart from Moray. We finish off with a tune written by our very own Ruby Smith, 'Partick Sun'. This tune was inspired by an unusually sunny day in Partick, Glasgow!

**2. Oran an t-Saighdear (Alasdair Mac Iain Bhain) with Pipe Major Jimmy McGregor (John Scott)**

This song translates to 'The Soldier's Song' and is believed to be about a young man in Edinburgh being convinced to enlist into the army, but he realises it is not everything it was made out to be. We then go into a jig called Pipe Major Jimmy McGregor composed by John Scott.

Performed by Rachel Newton (see [www.rachelnewtonmusic.com](http://www.rachelnewtonmusic.com))

**1. A Phiuthrag 's a Phiuthar**

Rachel learned this from the singing of Flora MacNeil. In the song, a young woman sings to her sister that she has been kidnapped by the fairies.

Performed by Rachel Newton and Mairearad Green (see [www.mairearadgreen.com](http://www.mairearadgreen.com))

**2. Maggie West's Waltz**

Mairearad wrote this tune for her and Rachel's Grandmother Maggie West. The tune is very popular and has become part of the traditional Scottish music repertoire, played at ceilidhs and concerts all over the world.

Performed by the whole ensemble and composed by Rachel Newton and Mairearad Green:

**1. Anna Bhàn**

Our great great Grandmother, known as Anna Bhàn, was one of a group of young women who were at the forefront of the Coigach Resistance of 1852/53. The events that formed the resistance were among only a few that were successful during the Highland Clearances in the lead up to the Napier Commission and the Crofting Act of 1886. We wrote this piece as part of a new album of music that celebrates and remembers these historic events and the community of Coigach. We are so pleased to perform this piece for the first time with the Ceilidh Trail, which set us up so well for a career in music 25 years ago.

Performed by the whole ensemble

**2. Puirt-a-beul (Gaelic mouth music)**

Innes White and Mischa Macpherson taught this set of 'Puirt a Beul' to the Ceilidh Trail musicians during their training week in Cromerty in July 2024. It begins with 'Orra Bhonnaga,', a song found in the 'Margaret Fay Shaw Collection' which Innes' auntie, 'Gillie Mackenzie' recorded on her first album. The set then goes into 'A Mhòrag Nighean Dòmhnail Duinn' (Little Mòrag, Daughter of Dark Donald), and finishes with a reel, 'Siud a' Rud a Thogadh Fonn' (That Would Raise a Laugh).

[www.feisrois.org](http://www.feisrois.org)