



Eadar an Saoghal 's a' Bhiothbhuan
Between the World and Eternity

A Musical Celebration
of the Poetry of

Sorley MacLean

Plockton High School: Thursday 7 June

Caol Community Centre: Friday 8 June

Àros, Portree: Saturday 9 June

Carnegie Hall, Clashmore: Thursday 14 June

Culloden Academy: Friday 15 June

Dingwall Town Hall: Saturday 16 June



Composers

Mary Ann Kennedy

Mary Ann Kennedy is a Glasgow Gael, now living in Lochaber where she and her husband, Nick Turner, run Watercolour Music Studios in the idyllic West Highlands. A trad music background and a classical training coupled with fifteen year's experience working with the BBC has established her as a major figure in the Scottish music scene, equally respected as a performer and as an authoritative commentator on world, classical, traditional and folk music. She has won several major awards, including the Concours Internationale de l'Harpe Celtique and both National Mod Gold Medals. Her band, Cliar, won the all-time Best Album accolade at the inaugural Scots Trad Music Awards, and earned her a Saltire Award for the Highland Festival commission, 'Lasair Dhè'. Her radio work was most recently recognised with the 'Radio Presenter of the Year' Award at the international Celtic Media Festival 2007, for her ability to communicate her and others' passion for music to the listener.

Eilidh Mackenzie

Brought up in Lewis, Eilidh, along with her sisters, learned Gaelic songs from her father throughout her childhood. This interest continues and as part of the vocal group Mackenzie she still performs and records. However, her real passion lies in song-writing and she contributes many new Gaelic songs to the band's repertoire as well as writing for others. In May 2005, the first-ever Gaelic musical – Taigh Màiri Anndra – was staged and performed at Eden Court to a full house and the original concept, production and music writing done by Eilidh. Other commissions include Lasair Dhè, music writing for children's television programmes, the Brahan Seer Festival and a forthcoming collaboration with a New York Theatre Company, Parallel Lines. Living on the Black Isle, she is the Music Instructor at Bunsgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhirnis.

Marie-Louise Napier

Marie-Louise is a singer and harper from Grantown-on-Spey in the Scottish Highlands. She graduated B.Mus from Glasgow University and taught music in Glasgow before joining Scottish Opera. She performs at a wide variety of venues throughout the Highlands and plays for Weddings and Private Functions. She teaches at Feisean and at the Edinburgh Harp Festival and is a regular performer on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in the duo "No Spring Chickens" with her sister Kirsty! Last year she graduated B.A. in Language and Culture from the Gaelic College on Skye and has returned there to teach Theory of Music on their new music course. Her compositions have won prizes at the Rencontres des Harpes Celtiques at Dinan in France, and she has written music for the Highland Festival Millennium project, for the Clàrsach Society and for other local events.

Louis de Paor and John Spillane

Born in Cork in 1961, Louis de Paor has been involved with the contemporary renaissance of poetry in Irish since 1980, when he was first published in the poetry journal INNTI (which he subsequently edited). A four-time winner of the Seán Ó Riordáin / Oireachtas Award, the premier award for a new collection of poems in Irish, he lived in Australia from 1987 to 1996. He is a recipient of the 2000 Lawrence O' Shaughnessy Award and his most recent collection is "Cúpla Siamach an Ama", Coiscéim 2007.

John Spillane is a native of Cork, the County he lovingly describes as "the centre of the universe" and it has been a huge influence on this singer/songwriter. Before embarking on his solo career, John honed his live skills playing for seven years with Cork based The Stargazers and more recently toured the globe for five years with trad giants Nomos. John has won the prestigious Meteor Ireland Music Award in the Best Folk/Traditional category in 2003 and 2006, and has his own radio show on Raidió na Gaeltachta, from 9 to 11 pm every Sunday night.

Spillane and de Paor have often paired up on projects as The Gaelic Hit Factory and the album with the same title came out in 2006.

Allan Macdonald

Allan, raised in the Gaelic speaking community of Glenuig, Moidart, became immersed in piping at a very early age and has won premier awards over the years. He published some of his own compositions in 1990 in 'The Moidart Collection.' He was musical director of a number of Television series' including co-direction of the most recent 2006 award winning 'Highland Sessions' series between Ireland and Scotland. Recent commissions include 'The Wallace', a celebration of the life of William Wallace. He won the Angel Award at Edinburgh Festival in 2004 for the original concert series on Scotland's musical history in song and pibroch.

Blair Douglas

Blair Douglas is recognised as being one of the few island musicians who still retains his creative roots whilst travelling extensively throughout the world performing and absorbing music from many cultures. He has made numerous public performances, broadcast frequently on radio and television and toured as a member of Macmeanmna with their award-winning show "Skye – The Island". A founder member of Runrig, Blair is now acknowledged as one of the foremost composers working in the Scottish tradition today, and his solo albums showcase this beautifully.

Donald Shaw

Brought up in Taynuilt, Argyll, a part of the world steeped in Gaelic song and traditional music, Donald Shaw was involved in all styles of music from an early age.

In 2002, he was rewarded with two Royal Television Society awards for Best Soundtrack and Best Theme in UK television.

In January 2004, he composed 'Harvest', a commission for the opening night of Celtic Connections Festival involving 100 musicians from all Celtic regions of Europe. Also involved were some of the finest young traditional musicians from throughout Scotland from the ages of 13 to 18. 'Harvest' was also performed at the 2006 Celtic Connections Festival.

In 2006, Donald was appointed Artistic Director of Celtic Connections 2007, he also won the Scots Trad Music Composer of the Year Award in December 2006.

Allan Henderson

Allan is originally from the West Highland fishing village of Mallaig and now lives in Fort William. Primarily a fiddler, whose red-tassled fiddle bears witness to his years of study with the great Angus Grant, Allan also plays whistle, pipes and piano and is a founder member of popular band Blazin' Fiddles. He plays with the Fergie MacDonald Band and with Iain MacFarlane and was one of the first students to graduate from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama in Traditional Music. He also teaches and has done a bit of writing, having been involved in shadow-writing the autobiography of Highland music legend, Fergie MacDonald.

Kenneth Thomson

Kenneth has been conductor of the Glasgow Gaelic Musical Association for 24 years and won the National Mod Gold Medal in 1979. He released his long-awaited album 'Seòladh Dhachaigh' in 2004.

After a career in Health Service management, Kenneth took up the post of Project Director with An Lòchran, the Gaelic arts and culture organisation in Glasgow where he served for five years developing Gaelic arts in the city – including the hugely successful Flower of the West concert.

Kenneth has arranged many songs for choral singing and has composed a number of songs and tunes in recent years, including waltzes for his children's weddings.

Singers

Kirsteen MacDonald

Kirsteen MacDonald hails from Inverness. She attended local and National Mods and won her first 'gold' medal for solo singing at the National Mod in Golspie when she was 12. Since then, Kirsteen has proceeded to take part in various Mods and won the coveted 'An Comunn Gàidhealach Silver Medal' for junior, fluent, solo singing at the National Mod in Inverness in 1997. Kirsteen has been runner up in the 'Traditional Gold Medal' competition for adults twice and won the 'An Comunn Gàidhealach Gold Medal' for adults at Dunoon in 2006 under the tuition of Mod Gold Medallist Kenna Campbell. In 2004, Kirsteen won the 'Seo seinn' singing competition in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, in the Traditional category for adults.

Kirsteen is a graduate of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig BA (Honours) Gaelic Language and Culture.

Jenna Cumming

Jenna hails from the city of Inverness and has been a regular medal winner at the Royal National Mod. Her debut album, 'Kintulavig', was issued on the Macmeanmna label last year to great acclaim and in December 2006, Jenna was named 'Up & Coming Artist of the Year' at the Scots Trad Music Awards. Having completed her degree at the University of Glasgow this year, she hopes to embark on a career that will allow her to promote the Gaelic language and culture. Jenna won the Seo Seinn traditional singing competition this year.

James Graham

James graduated from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in 2003 with an Honours degree in Scottish Music. In 2004, he won the BBC Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year Award – the first male and first Gaelic singer to do so. He has since appeared in several successful and award-winning television and radio music series. He has released an acclaimed solo album and is currently working on his second album. He has completed two years at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, gaining an HND in Gaelic language and culture. James is currently employed by Comunn na Gàidhlig as a Gaelic co-ordinator to events for Highland 2007.

Alasdair Whyte

Alasdair was brought up on the Island of Mull. He completed a year at the Gaelic college, Sabhal Mor Ostaig in Skye and is currently studying at Glasgow University. He has been singing since the age of 4 at both local and national level. *(Continued on page 8)*

Programme

1 **Camhanaich (Dawn) – Blair Douglas**

Instrumental performed by the House Band

A deeply romantic poem in which the loved one is associated with aspects of a glorious summer's dawn over Skye. The final lines counteract the rapturous beauty with a chilling and shocking image of suffering.

2 **Am Mùr Gorm (The Blue Rampart) – Marie-Louise Napier**

Performed by Alasdair Whyte and Mary Ann Kennedy (Clàrsach)

If Eimhir, the loved one, did not exist, the glories of the natural world would be impersonal and abstract. Her existence gives human order to the world and he and she are brought together in the Tree of Strings, an image of music or poetry.

3 **Lionmhorachd (Multitude) – James Ross**

Vocal and instrumental performed by Na h-Oileanaich

To the agnostic poet, it is not the vastness of space, the unhuman and infinite scale of the universe, which impress; 'to us there is no miracle but in love' and it is this human love which gives meaning to the emptiness.

4 **Chan e àilleachd (It is not the beauty) – Kenneth Thomson**

Performed by the senior choirs

It is not the physical loveliness of his beloved but her spiritual radiance which has pierced him to the core.

5 **Aodainn (Faces) – 2 poems composed by Na h-Oileanaich**

A h-uile Uair – Every Time (Suzanne Houston)

Aodann òg – The Young Face (Coralea MacKay)

The motif of the face of the beloved runs through Dàin do Eimhir. The students at Plockton responded with their own poems on the theme of the face.

6 **An Cuilithionn (The Cuillin) – extract – Kenneth Thomson**

Performed by Jenna Cumming and Mary Ann Kennedy (Piano)

Who is this walking on the moorland? Footsteps on the mountain.

7 **Screapadal – Kenneth Thomson**

Performed by the junior choir.

The first few verses of a longer poem written in the 1970s where the poet looks across from the uninhabited township of Screapadal on Raasay to Applecross – called in Gaelic 'Sanctuary' – established by the early Celtic saint Maol Rubha.

8 **Caoidh na Banntraich (The Widow's Lament) – Words – Rachel Lincoln, Eve Pincock and Janet MacRae Music – Emma MacInnes and Suzanne Houston**

Performed by Na h-Oileanaich.

War and the threat of war is the backdrop to Dàin do Eimhir. The Iraq war inspired this strongly felt anti-war poem.

9 A Chiall 's a Ghràidh (Reason and Love) – Allan Macdonald

Performed by James Graham and the House Band

In love, passion and intellect seem irreconcilable but, at the end of the poem, there is some sort of a mingling of the two.

INTERVAL

10 Dàn do Shomhairle (Poem to Sorley) – Louis de Paor & John Spillane

A recording of a multi-media performance incorporating Sorley's poetry, original Irish poetry and Irish music as a tribute to Sorley MacLean, with visuals by Cailean Maclean.

11 Aodainn (Faces) – 2 poems composed by Na h-Oileanaich

Gun Tìotal – Untitled (Rachel Lincoln)

Aodann Athar – A Father's Face (Naomi Ballantyne)

The motif of the face of the beloved runs through Dàn do Eimhir. The students at Plockton responded with their own poems on the theme of the face.

12 Camhanaich (Dawn) – Eilidh Mackenzie

Another setting of this poem performed by Jenna Cumming, James Graham and senior choirs.

13 Muir-tràigh (Ebb) – James Ross

Performed by Na h-Oileanaich

Desolation and bitterness result from the impossibility of a relationship. The tide has ebbed but there can be no renewal.

14 Tha thusa 'g ràdh ruimsa, thasgaidh – Suzanne Houston, Coralea MacKay, Emma MacInnes and Lauren Weir

This is Na h-Oileanaich's response to Sorley's 'Gaoir na h-Eorpa (Dain do Eimhir 1V).

15 Tràighean (Shores) – Mary Ann Kennedy

Performed by James Graham, Mary Ann Kennedy (piano) and Gordon Gunn (fiddle)

He juxtaposes himself and his loved one with hugely impressive beaches in the West and he commandeers every drop of water and every grain of sand in a 'synthesis of love'.

16 An Roghainn (The Choice) – Donald Shaw

Performed by Kirsteen MacDonald and the House Band

An internal debate between his feelings and his reason is prompted by news that the woman he loves is going to marry someone else. He concedes that he had not suffered enough to entitle him to her love. If he could choose his direction again he would risk everything for that prize.

17 Gaoir na h-Eòrpa (The Cry of Europe) – Allan Henderson

Instrumental work performed by the House Band

Written in 1938, the poem puts the beauty of his loved one (represented in a very traditional way) and his love for her against the political atrocities and suffering of Europe in the 1930s, particularly the situation in Spain and the growing oppression of fascism. A series of questions weigh the two sides in his conscience but there is no conclusive answer.

Alasdair entered the Adult competitions for the first time at the Royal National Mod in 2005 in Stornoway and in the following year, he won the Men's Oran Mor and Gold Medal Final competition to make him the current Men's Gold Medallist. It has been a busy year so far for Alasdair and he has been singing at various events throughout the country. In September he has been invited – along with Kirsteen MacDonald – to attend Mod USA in Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

The Choirs

Dingwall Gaelic Choir – Conductor Hamish Menzies

Inverness Gaelic Choir – Conductor Jamie MacGregor

Lairg Gaelic Choir – Conductor Ken Black

Melvich Gaelic Choir – Conductor Raymond Bremner

Oban Gaelic Choir – Conductor Sileas Sinclair

Strath Gaelic Choir – Conductor Heather Harvey

Còisir òg Lochabair – Conductor Chrissie MacEachen

Còisir Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhirnis – Conductor Eilidh MacKenzie

Portree Primary School Choir – Conductor Kirsteen Graham

The House Band

Mary Ann Kennedy (piano and clàrsach) – see page two

Gordon Gunn (Fiddle)

Fiddler extraordinaire, Gordon is a rare maestro with terrific flair and reputation for excellence. His dynamic playing is key in his three current bands Gordon Gunn Band, Session A9 and Anam. With these bands, he has performed to audiences at the Cambridge Festival, Tonder Festival, Celtic Connections, Edinburgh Hogmanay, Shetland Folk Festival, Orkney Folk Festival, Highland Festival, Eastleigh Festival, Brigg Fiddle Festival, Blas Festival and festivals in Ireland, Italy, Spain & Canada.

Gordon has recently been commissioned to compose music for a suite of poems written by celebrated Caithness writer George Gunn entitled "Atlantic Forest".

Gordon has recorded many radio broadcasts with The Gordon Gunn Band and Session A9 including BBC Radio Scotland's "Take the Floor", "Live at the Lemon Tree", "Celtic Connections", "Travelling Folk" and "Mr Anderson's Fine Tunes", plus live work on BBC Radio two & four. TV work includes the TV series Tacsì, Northern Nights, Ceol Aig A Chisteal and Ceòl na fìdhle.

Jack Evans (Guitar)

Jack is best known for his adventurous guitar work with the likes of The Easy Club and The Cauld Blast Orchestra (plus his own highly-rated album on Greentrax, *Once Upon a Time in the North*, featuring Mairi Campbell and Jenny Gardner). Now resident in Pitlochry, he's the principal guitar tutor at Sgòil Chiùil na Gàidhealtachd in Plockton, and on the Scottish Music course at the RSAMD in Glasgow, while also finding time to produce albums for Greentrax, Bodega and The Cast.

Christine Hanson (Cello)

Edmonton, Alberta-born Christine Hanson has extensive experience in traditional music, theatre and television – and as well as touring in North America and all over Europe – she has toured the High Arctic as part of a Canadian government program to bring music to remote communities. Presented with CBC's Galaxie Award for Best New Artist at Canada's Juno Fest 2004, she has worked with Martin Carthy, Eddi Reader, Justin Currie, and Karen Matheson of Capercaillie. She was the first non-Scot to receive a New Voices commission from Glasgow's prestigious Celtic Connections festival, resulting in "The Cremation of Sam McGee's" premiere in January 2005. Christine most recently was commissioned to write and perform her piece "Dochas na Sithe" at the Loch Sheil Festival 2007 in Glenfinnan.

Dougie Pincock (Pipes & Whistles)

Dougie started piping at primary school in Barrhead, where his head teacher was Iain MacFadyen's brother John. After a successful career in junior competition, he became involved in the traditional music scene in 1979 when he joined the Glasgow band Kentigern. This led to a seven year stretch with leading traditional group Battlefield Band, during which the band toured extensively throughout the world as well as fulfilling extensive recording, radio and TV commitments. Dougie left the band in 1990 after the birth of his daughter and spent the 1990s teaching and playing on other people's albums. He worked at various times for the National Piping Centre, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and the Easterhouse Arts Project as a freelance tutor on the Feis circuit and on other projects throughout Scotland. He was appointed Director of the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music in May 2000.

Brian McAlpine (Accordion)

Brian McAlpine is well known for his work with Session A9, Maggie MacInnes, The Gordon Gunn Band and The Unusual Suspects. Whether producing or arranging, playing piano or accordion, Brian has earned the highest reputation among his peers for his professionalism and creative style. Musical Director of highly acclaimed "Flower of the West", Brian will be Musical Director of the Gordon Duncan Memorial Concert in Perth Concert Hall on 29th Sept 2007.

Residencies

Myles Campbell (Gaelic)

Maolios Caimbeul from Staffin, Isle of Skye is the author of five collections of Gaelic verse. He retired from full-time teaching two years ago and now does a mix of work – writing, teaching and research. His work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, including *An Tuil*, *An Leabhar Mòr* and *Scotland's, Poets and the Nation*. His poetry has won many awards, among them first prize in the inaugural Scottish Gaelic Section of the 1998 Dunleary International Poetry Competition, otherwise known as the *Féile Filíochta*, and for which he is this year's Gaelic Judge. He has also written teenage and children's fiction, including *Clann a' Phroifeasair* (1988) and has a regular column in the periodical *Cothrom*.

A current poetry project is a collaborative work with Mark Goodwin, an English poet who lives on Skye. The long-term objective is to produce a book called *Dà Thaobh a' Bhealaich* (*The Two Sides of the Pass*), the pass being a symbol for all that potentially unites as well as divides.

James Ross (Music)

James Ross, from Wick, began playing music at the age of eight, studying under respected musician and composer, the late Addie Harper. He went on to study at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Glasgow, from which he graduated with a BA in Scottish Music in July 2000.

He subsequently gained an MA in Traditional Irish Music Performance in June 2001, studying piano under Professor Mícheal Ó Súilleabháin at the Irish World Music Centre, University of Limerick. James released his debut solo CD with Greentrax in January 2006. As part of the prestigious Celtic Connections New Voices series, James's commission 'An Cuan' written for piano with string quartet, soprano saxophone, double bass and percussion was performed at Celtic Connections 2005 to critical acclaim. He is currently composing a three movement work which was commissioned by The Caithness Orchestra. James was invited by Distil to compose a piano pibroch with string ensemble for their showcase concert. He teaches traditional piano at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and at the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music in Plockton. Since November 2001, he has been part of the late Yehudi Menuhin's Live Music Now! scheme, which takes live performances to a wide range of community venues.

Na h-Oileanaich (The Student Group)

Suzanne Houston

Suzanne is originally from Sutherland but is currently living in Nairn. She is a piano player and also studies whistles and Gaelic song. She is in her third and final year at the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music in Plockton and has been lucky enough to perform in Italy and at the first Showcase of the combined Scottish Centres Of Excellence in Music. She is now going on to do a degree in Traditional Music at RSAMD, and about to release her first solo album "Stay Tuned".

Lauren Weir

Lauren plays the piano and fiddle and is from Lesmahagow. She won the BBC Radio 2 Most Up-And-Coming Traditional Musician in South Lanarkshire award in 2005 and has been involved in the Aberdeen International Youth Festival for the past two years. She has been at the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music for two years and also played at the first Showcase. She is going to RSAMD to study Traditional Music.

Coralea McKay

Coralea is a promising fiddler and piano player from Angus. She has been at the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music for a full four years and is heading over to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig next year to study Gaelic for a year before pursuing a career in traditional music. She was involved in Donald Shaw's Harvest in 2004 and her music has also taken her across to Norway for the Valende Seafood Festival.

Emma MacInnes

Emma is a Gaelic singer from Cairnish in North Uist. She has been at the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music for two years now and also performed in Italy and Norway. She is leaving this year to study Gaelic media at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. She has been singing in local and National Mods for many years and was a gold medallist in 2002 and 2004. Emma has sung in Donald Shaw's Harvest in 2004, for BBC's Songs of Praise and at the Scottish Tattoo at various venues across the UK.

Rachel Lincoln

Rachel plays the clàrsach and piano and lives in Killin. She has been at the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music for two years and is also in her final year. She is going to Edinburgh to study Scottish Ethnology and Celtic Studies. Rachel performed at the second Showcase of The Centres Of Excellence. She was also involved in The Wallace 700 Project and The Host of Harps to mark 25 Years of the Edinburgh Harp Festival, and has performed on BBC's Songs of Praise.

Urras Shomhairle

The Sorley MacLean Trust

The Trust exists to perpetuate the memory of Sorley MacLean, who is widely recognised as one of Scotland's most influential literary figures and a poet of world stature, his work and the Gaelic language.

Its aims are:

- 1 To promote all aspects of Gaelic culture
- 2 To promote the study, appreciation and use of the Gaelic language
- 3 To commission and make available through information technology, oral and written Gaelic material of the highest quality
- 4 To encourage young poets and writers to continue the Gaelic renaissance which Sorley MacLean inspired
- 5 To do such other things, charitable in law, as the trustees may think appropriate to perpetuate the memory of Sorley MacLean

This project has been a hugely ambitious undertaking for the Trust. If you have enjoyed this showcase concert and would like to support the on-going work of the Trust you are invited to send a donation to: The Secretary, Urras Shomhairle/ The Sorley MacLean Trust, c/o Sabhal Mor Ostaig, Sleat, Isle of Skye, IV44 8RQ.

All donations will be gratefully acknowledged.

The Project

The project evolved from an idea of the Trustees that some of Sorley's work should be set to music and his life and poetry should be used as an inspiration to create new poetry and musical works.

The Trust established two residencies at the Centre of Excellence in Traditional Scottish Music at Plockton High School. The residents, Myles Campbell and James Ross, worked with a group of students to create new poetry and music.

The Trust also commissioned new compositions from some of the most accomplished composers of traditional music in Scotland.

The results of these two elements of the project will be performed for you tonight in a programme of unique importance in the development of Gaelic music.