



*Thursday 19 January to Sunday 5 February 2017*

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### **CELTIC CONNECTIONS 2017 PROGRAMME**

From **Thursday 19 January** to **Sunday 5 February** **2,100 musicians** from across the globe will take part in **300 events** at venues throughout Glasgow, Scotland, for one of the leading annual festivals of world, folk and roots music. The festival is supported by Glasgow City Council and Creative Scotland, and delivered by Glasgow Life.

**18 days** of concerts, ceilidhs, talks, art exhibitions, workshops, free events, late night sessions and a host of special one-off musical collaborations will once again light up the Scottish winter when Celtic Connections returns.

The **Opening Concert** will star award winning folk singer songwriter **Laura Marling** performing the world premiere of orchestrations of her songs by **Kate St. John** with the **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra** and special guests.

This concert begins Celtic Connections 2017's celebration of inspiring women artists, with performances by **Roberta Sá** – one of a number of leading Brazilian artists performing at the festival through a partnership with the **MIMO Festival** – **Olivia Newton-John** with **Beth Nielsen Chapman**, **Karine Polwart**, and legendary singer **Shirley Collins** among the other highlights.

The festival also focuses this year on artists who have lived through times of intense personal hardships and found success through their music and strength, such as world music star **Aziza Brahim** who grew up in an Algerian refugee camp.

**Margo Price, St Paul & the Broken Bones, Darlingside, Hurray for the Ruff Raff, the Mark O' Connor Band and Calxico** and are among the stars of Americana & Bluegrass who will be taking to the stage.

Travelling further down the path to explore connections between Scotland and the deep south of America, **Jon Cleary** and **Dirk Powell** will celebrate the Louisiana sound, inspired by Booker Prize winning author **James Kelman's *Dirt Road***

**Billy Bragg** and **Joe Henry** will perform classic railroad songs featured on their album ***Shine A Light*** which was recorded on a four day journey by train across America.

Traditional and Folk music remain at the heart of Celtic Connections with a dazzling line up that takes in **La Banda Europa** led by **Jim Sutherland**, star-studded folk orchestra **The Unusual Suspects of Celtic Colours**, fiddle super-group **Session A9**, Edinburgh's **Dallahan**, the premiere of piping project **Tryst**, Ireland's festival favourites **Sharon Shannon Band** and **Four Men & A Dog**, Gaelic rockers **Mànran** and a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary performance of **Phil Cunningham's Highlands & Islands suite**.

**Shooglenifty** and special guests will come together for ***A Night for Angus***, paying tribute to their friend, band member and inspirational fiddle player **Angus R. Grant** who so sadly passed away this year.

Celtic Connections 2017 will also bring the celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Confederation of Canada to Glasgow with shows by leading Canadian artists such as **Martha Wainwright, Le Vent du Nord, De Temps Antan** and **Russell deCarle**.

The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **partition of India** will be marked with a Celtic Connections premiere and commission, produced in India by Indianuance, for leading world percussionists **Trilok Gurtu & Evelyn Glennie** featuring classical Indian violinist **Kumaresh Rajagopalan** and top classical pianist **Philip Smith** from the UK.

The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Founding of Pakistan** will also be marked at this year's festival, with artists including the incredible **Sanam Marvi** performing.

Other artists appearing at Celtic Connections 2017 include **C Duncan, Pictish Trail, Fairport Convention, Liz Lochhead, Aidan Moffat, Seth Lakeman, Tom Paxton, King Creosote, Siobhan Miller, Orchestra Baobab, Robyn Stapleton, and Anna Meredith.**

As part of the middle weekend of Celtic Connections, musical directors and programmers of leading festivals and venues from around the world will attend performances by Scottish songwriters, bands and musicians as part of **Showcase Scotland**. The concerts along with a trade fair provide invaluable opportunities for Scottish musicians to gain new worldwide opportunities thanks to this leading industry delegate event.

More than **11, 000 children across Scotland** will take part in **Celtic Connections Education Programme** through five free morning concerts and school workshops led by leading Celtic musicians.

The Education Programme has reached more than **200,000 children** across the country since it began in 1999. Its work is supported directly by membership fees from the festival's **Celtic Rovers** patron's scheme – which gives discounted rates on bookings and exclusive experiences during Celtic Connections 2017.

The always popular programme of **public workshops** will give people of all ages and opportunities the chance during the festival to learn new musical skills and have fun along the way.

We're excited to be part of a new venture working with **The National Whisky Festival** which will offer a wide range of whisky tastings and music hosted at a new venue for Celtic Connections, SWG3, on Saturday 28 January 2017.

And to complete the banishing of the chilly temperatures of the air in Glasgow - for a few glorious evenings at least – Celtic Connections is delighted to be working in partnership with the **MIMO Festival** to **celebrate Brazil as the partner country for 2017**, with performances by some of the country's leading artists including **Hamilton de Holanda & Baile do Almeidinha, Yamandu Costa, Renata Rosa, Carlos Malta, Baby do Brasil** - and **Roberta Sá**. The partnership is also supported by the **British Council** and the **Brazilian Embassy**.

**Donald Shaw, Artistic Director of Celtic Connections**, said: "A breath-taking range of styles and traditions radiates throughout Celtic Connections 2017. Artists who have shaped the present day and artists who are re-defining music for the future will take to the stage.

Artists whose lives and cultures could not be more different will come together to share their stories, passion and skill.

“At the heart of it all is the simple life-affirming experience of being at a live music performance during a world leading festival. We can’t wait for Celtic Connections 2017 to begin.”

**Councillor Frank McAveety, Leader, Glasgow City Council** said: “Glasgow is a city for music lovers. We start the year, while it’s quiet elsewhere, with our fantastic celebration of the very best in world, folk and roots music, Celtic Connections. We welcome audiences and artists from around the world – some have been coming to the festival every year for more than 20 years, for others this will be their first experience of Glasgow during Celtic Connections. We can promise them a great time and 18 days of amazing shows and events.”

**Councillor Archie Graham, OBE, Chair of Glasgow Life**, said: “Each year Celtic Connections also creates fantastic opportunities for thousands of school children throughout the city and across Scotland to attend free concerts by world leading Celtic musicians, and to learn about Celtic music in their classrooms. This work to enrich the lives of young people is a vital part of a festival which celebrates and shares so much wonderful music each year.”

**Alan Morrison, Head of Music, Creative Scotland**, said: “Celtic Connections is now firmly established as the winter destination of choice not only for lovers of folk and traditional music, but also for anyone who wants to embrace culture on a global scale. This is the place where Scotland’s music connects to the world, and we welcome its greatest musicians to Glasgow, old friends and new, especially those from Showcase Scotland’s partner country Brazil. It’s also fantastic this year to see the spotlight shone on female artists, as women have long since provided a strong, defining voice in Scotland’s traditional music and national identity.”

### **Women of Music**

Inspiring women artists will be celebrated in a series of concerts at Celtic Connections 2017.

Mercury nominated and Brit award-winning singer songwriter **Laura Marling** makes her Celtic Connections debut leading an orchestrated performance of her songs at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Thursday 19 January for the **Opening Concert** of Celtic Connections.

With the **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra** and special guests and orchestration by composer, arranger producer and instrumentalist **Kate St. John** this world premiere performance promises to be an unmissable curtain raiser for the 2017 festival.

**Roberta Sá** is a Latin Grammy award winning pop icon in Brazil. Of Portuguese descent, Roberta performed in the closing ceremony of the Rio Olympic Games and made her UK debut this summer. She will make her first highly anticipated appearance at Celtic Connections at Drygate on Friday 27 January.

International superstar and multiple Grammy Award-winner **Olivia Newton-John** and Grammy nominee **Beth Nielsen Chapman** and SOCAN Award-winner **Amy Sky** will perform music from their collaborative album "**LIV ON**" live at the Main Auditorium of Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Tuesday 24 January. The music grew from three artists' personal experiences with loss and illness, and the artists' hope is that this music can uplift hearts burdened by grief while at the same time bringing comfort to the listener.

Following its critically acclaimed premiere at the **Edinburgh International Festival 2016**, Scottish singer, songwriter **Karine Polwart's** ***Wind Resistance*** will be presented at the Tron Theatre from Wednesday 25 to Saturday 28 January as part of Celtic Connections 2017. In a compelling combination of story and song Polwart celebrates Fala Flow, a protected peatbog south-east of Edinburgh.

The legendary song collector and singer **Shirley Collins** follows the release of her first album for more than 30 years this November with a performance at Celtic Connections at City Halls on Saturday 4 February. Shirley Collins was a hugely influential figure in the revival of English folk music in the 1960s and 70s through ground-breaking recordings, live performances and collaborations with artists including Davy Graham and the Albion Band.

On January 28 at The Main Auditorium, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall this year's **Roaming Roots Revue** will mark '**The Women in Song**' by featuring the work of the greatest female songwriters of our time, including Kate Bush, Joni Mitchell, Nina Simone, Aretha Franklin, Dolly Parton, Bjork, PJ Harvey, Gillian Welch, Joan Armatrading, and Tracy Chapman, through performances by artists including alifornia native **Jesca Hoop**, now based in Manchester, SAY Award-winner **Kathryn Joseph** and ex-Delgados anchorwoman **Emma Pollock**.

## Beauty in the Storm

This year's festival will also highlight extraordinary artists who have overcome intense hardships and found success through music.

**Aziza Brahim**, who will perform on Friday 20 January at Drygate, was born and raised in the Saharawi refugee camps lining the frontier between Algeria and Western Sahara. As a young teenager she fled these camps and the regime of political oppression that followed Morocco's 1975 invasion of Western Sahara to live in Cuba. As an adult she returned to the Saharawi camps and began singing and playing in different musical ensembles. She is now a best-selling world music artist whose work is infused with influences of her Western Sahara roots and Barcelona, where she has lived since 2000, and remains a spokesperson for the Saharawi people and their ongoing struggle.

## Americana

Celtic Connections is delighted to once again welcome leading Americana & Bluegrass artists to Glasgow. Traditional US folk and country is a stepping off point for these musicians who mix and drive forwards different styles and traditions to create their own unique music.

Tennessee-based singer songwriter **Margo Price** is one of the most exciting Americana artists performing today. Her first solo album released on the Third Man record label followed personal tragedies that have influenced her vivid and deeply moving sound. For those who don't yet know her work, discover her live in concert at Oran Mòr on Tuesday 24 January.

Fronted by the electrifying vocals and showmanship of ex-trainee preacher Paul Janeway, eight-piece Alabama soul sensations **St. Paul & the Broken Bones** splice classic Stax/Motown styles with modern-day influences from Sly Stone and Prince to Tom Waits and Nick Cave. The band, who recently supported the Rolling Stones, will be at the O2 ABC Glasgow on Sunday 29 January.

Uniting four superb voices around a single microphone, Massachusetts quartet **Darlingside's** collectively-written songs meld elements of folk, pop, bluegrass, classical and indie-rock, adventurously arrayed with guitars, banjo, fiddle, mandolin, cello, bass and subtle electronics. The toast of 2016's Cambridge Folk Festival following their last-minute main-stage performance, as replacements for an ailing headliner, the band take to the stage of Oran Mòr on Saturday 28 January.

Led by America's foremost fiddle virtuosos, the Billboard chart topping Bluegrass ensemble the **Mark O' Connor Band** take to the stage of the Grand Hall at City Halls on Sunday 29 January. As a solo artist Mark is a Grammy and CMA Award winner who has collaborated with iconic artists including Johnny Cash and Wynton Marsalis. In the tradition of many great US bluegrass acts, the line-up for his acclaimed six piece band includes son Forrest and wife Maggie.

Arizona-based Americana, Tex-Mex and indie rock band **Calexico** will be joined by Guatemalan singer-songwriter and guitarist **Gaby Moreno** and special guests for a classic Celtic Connections collaborative concert, **Crossing the Border**, at the Main Auditorium, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Friday 20 January.

### Tradition Now

Celtic Connections welcomes a fantastic line up of traditional and folk musicians to this year's festival.

Previously at Celtic Connections in 2008, a new line up **La Banda Europa** led by composer and musician **Jim Sutherland** has been specially assembled for this year's festival to perform on Sunday 29 January at the Main Auditorium, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. This extraordinary ensemble features 36 virtuoso musicians from 15 countries who play ethnic instruments indigenous to their own European country of origin, including hurdy-gurdys, nyckelharpas, the Armenian duduk, Slovakia's two-metre fujara flute, the ancient Celtic carnyx and bagpipes from seven nations.

**The Unusual Suspects of Celtic Colours** will be lining up on Wednesday 25 January at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. They were the toast of 2016's 20th Celtic Colours festival on Cape Breton Island in Canada, joining forces and repertoires with leading local musicians for a barnstorming sellout show, and now return that transatlantic line-up to the project's birthplace.

While another of Ireland's best-loved acts, **Four Men and a Dog** have an extra-special place in Celtic Connections' heart, having played the festival's very first opening night in 1994. Continuing their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, marked by 2016's brand-new album, *And the Band Played On*, the current five-piece line up are joined by guest pianist James Delaney in the New Auditorium at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Friday 27 October.

Legendary musician, composer, and producer **Phil Cunningham's** *Highlands and Islands Suite* received its world premiere as the Opening Concert for Celtic Connections in 1997. To mark its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this work, which combines folk and orchestral music to stunning effect, will be staged once again, in the Main Auditorium, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Sunday 22 January with a stellar cast of musicians and singers.

**Mànran** will lead a barnstorming bill at the Barrowlands on Friday 20 January that also features **Blazin' Fiddles** and Americana stars, **Lindsay Lou and the Flatbellys**. One of the most loved Scottish bands of today, Mànran's eclectic mix of influences built around the band's traditional Celtic roots make their music hard to define, but easy to love.

### Canada 150

In 2017 Celtic Connections joins in the celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of Canada by presenting an exciting range of Canadian musicians.

The startling musical and emotional range of **Martha Wainwright's** previous albums established her as one of today's most fearless and compelling singer-songwriters. Her new fifth release, *Goodnight City*, combines that full gamut of talent and experience, carried by her uniquely powerful voice, while returning to the rawness of her self-titled 2005 debut, in both fresh originals and bespoke compositions from brother Rufus, Beth Orton, Glen Hansard, Michael Ondaatje and Merrill Garbus. Festival audiences can immerse themselves in her live show at the O2 ABC Glasgow on Friday 3 February.

Renowned equally for their world-class musicianship and joyous live energy Québécois four-piece **Le Vent du Nord** and power-trio **De Temps Antan** will present a new collaborative set in the Main Auditorium of Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Friday 27 January featuring specially-created, seven-man arrangements of songs and tunes from their respective repertoires.

Former frontman of iconic Canadian country roots band Prairie Oyster, legendary artist **Russell deCarle** performs with **Denis Keldie** and **Steve Briggs** at this year's festival. Audiences at the Tron Theatre on 4 February will be treated to a fluent mix of blues, jazz and R&B-tinged western swing with a luxuriously laid back rockabilly edge.

### The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Indian Independence and the Founding of Pakistan



The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Indian Independence and of the founding of Pakistan will be marked with performances starring leading Indian and Pakistani artists.

A sixth generation musician who has been performing since the age of 15 **Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh** is one of the leading contemporary artists on the veena. She will be bringing her music blending tradition and innovation using one of the most expressive instruments used in Indian classical music, the veena - a plucked stringed instrument originating in ancient India - to audiences at the New Auditorium, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Saturday 28 January in a concert also featuring **Mark O' Connor** and **Yamandu Costa** entitled *Strings of the World*, as well as her own show at the Mackintosh Church on Friday 27 January.

The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Indian Independence will also be marked with a Celtic Connections premiere and commission, produced in India by **Indianuance**, for leading world percussionists **Trilok Gurtu & Evelyn Glennie** featuring classical Indian violinist **Kumaresh Rajagopalan** and top classical pianist **Philip Smith** from the UK.

The young Pakistani singer **Sanam Marvi**, who combines Sufi devotional songs and her native Sindhi folk traditions with classical virtuosity, will star among the performers at BEMIS celebrates Burns at the Old Fruitmarket on Wednesday 25 January.

### **Brazil**

Each year, Celtic Connections partners with a different country to create new international links and to present a selection of artists from our partner country with festival audiences. In 2017, our partner country is **Brazil**.

Leading artists who will be appearing as well as **Roberta Sá** include **Hamilton de Holanda**, whose ground breaking musical career has seen him reinventing the playing style of traditional Brazilian instrument the 10 string Mandolin, and bringing it to a global audience. He has been described in the press as the "*Jimi Hendrix of bandolim*". Celtic Connections audiences can experience him perform on Saturday 28 January at the Old Fruitmarket.

The music of **Renata Rosa** brings together indigenous Brazilian influences, African and Portuguese elements to create an irresistible, rich sound. A multi-instrumentalist she is best

known as a vocalist and virtuoso on the Rabeca - a traditional fiddle with 8<sup>th</sup> century Arabic origins which was brought to Brazil by the first Portuguese colonisers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Guitarist and composer **Yamandu Costa** performs a diverse range of styles that makes him impossible to categorise, including classical, tango, sambo, and chamamés. His main instrument is the violão de 7 cordas, the Brazilian seven-stringed nylon guitar.

### **Funders and Supporters**

**Glasgow City Council** and **Creative Scotland** continue to provide invaluable support to Celtic Connections.

**Culture Ireland**, the agency responsible for the promotion of Irish arts worldwide, is supporting the participation of some of the best emerging alongside established Irish artists at this year's festival.

Media Partners the **Sunday Herald**, **Evening Times**, **The Herald** and **Heraldscotland.com** continue to provide in-depth preview and review coverage of the festival. The titles provide valuable support to up-and-coming talent performing at Celtic Connections, with the Sunday Herald supporting the festival's **New Voices** commissioning strand, and the Evening Times supporting **the Danny Kyle Open Stage**.

**ScotRail** has supported Celtic Connections from the beginning, bringing artists and audiences from all over Scotland to Glasgow for the festival. 2017 continues Celtic Connection's travel sponsor partnership with **Caledonian MacBrayne**, Hebrides and Clyde Ferries.

The **BBC** has supported Celtic Connections since its very first year and the festival is pleased to collaborate once again with **BBC Radio Scotland**, **BBC Radio 2** and **BBC Radio 3** who will all be broadcasting live throughout the festival.

**Sharon Mair**, **Editor Radio Music, Events and Partnerships, BBC Scotland**, said: "We are delighted to continue our support in covering Celtic Connections across radio, television and online."

Ends

**For further information, images, or to request an interview with any of the acts performing at Celtic Connections 2017, please contact:**

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### **Notes to Editors**

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