



Media release

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Celtic Connections 2026 unveils packed programme of unmissable world and roots music

Festival to set the tone for Glasgow's year of unforgettable international events

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Glasgow's world-renowned **Celtic Connections** festival – one of the brightest highlights of Scotland's cultural calendar – is set to get 2026 off to a spectacular start with a packed programme of superb entertainment from an incredible line-up of global talent, setting the tone for Glasgow's year of unforgettable international events.

From **Thursday 15 January to Sunday 1 February 2026** the award-winning festival will bring over 300 events – from major music gigs to intimate performances – to more than 25 venues across the city. Over 1,200 artists will take part and audiences of around 110,000 are expected to attend.

General tickets for the 2026 festival's first tranche of confirmed shows go on sale at 10am on Thursday 16 October 2025 at www.celticconnections.com. Scores of gigs will be added to the programme in the run-up to the much-anticipated event.

Globally acclaimed as a dynamic showcase of trad, folk, roots and world music, Celtic Connections has grown over three decades to become Europe's biggest winter music festival. It now spans a wide range of genres – from blues, soul, Americana and indie to acoustic, orchestral, jazz and electronic.

Delivered by **Glasgow Life** in partnership with **Innis & Gunn**, the 2026 festival – its 33rd edition – will be an expansive, exciting showcase of outstanding talent from Scotland and almost every corner of the world.

Featuring unmissable performances from established and emerging talent and bringing together big-name headline acts and rising stars, it will offer something for everyone who loves music.

Venues across the city – including the Barrowland Ballroom, Old Fruitmarket, King Tut's, Pavilion Theatre, Óran Mòr, Saint Luke's and SWG3 – will be warmly welcoming Celtic Connections audiences to banish winter blues. The newly-refurbished Citizens Theatre will make its debut as a festival stage, and following the success of its first-ever music event at the start of this year, the Emirates Arena joins the programme again with another major show which will feature Scottish folk-rock pioneers **Skerryvore**.

Celtic Connections 2026 kicks off with an exciting **World Connections Opening Concert** at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. Kick-starting an important year for international events in Glasgow, with the city hosting the Commonwealth Games and more, the 15 January launch show celebrates music's global links and power to unite people all over the planet.

With an impressive line-up of international artists, the unmissable concert also features an incredible array of homegrown talent as well as high-profile surprise guests to produce a vibrant showcase of unique creative collaborations.

Just one of the inspirational and innovative partnerships sees iconic Malian singer **Rokia Koné** – famed for her work with feminist supergroup Les Amazones d'Afrique – performing with one of Scotland's leading instrumental folk bands, the multi-award winning **RURA**.

Exceptional international talent is highlighted and honoured across the whole festival programme with a wealth of wonderful worldwide acts and artists.

Highlights include celebrated Cuban collective **Buena Vista All Stars** (featuring master musicians from the famous Buena Vista Social Club of 30 years ago); Senegal orchestral sensation **Baobab**; Mexican drumming dynamo **Antonio Sanchez**, who appears alongside harpist **Edmar Castañeda** and American Banjo icon **Bela Fleck**; also from the States, Grammy-winning Americana singer-songwriter **Lucinda Williams**, alternative country and folk star **Dylan LeBlanc**, and celebrated indie duo **Watchhouse**; and from Québec – overseas partner for Celtic Connections 2026 Showcase Scotland industry initiative supporting international cultural collaboration – traditional Québécois music bands **Le Vent du Nord**, **Germaine**, **Cecilia**, **E.TE**, **La Déferlance**, **Bon Débarras**, and **Paruline**.

The very best of talent from Scotland, as well as across the UK and Ireland, will be proudly represented too by a diverse range of acts – such as showstopping Celtic rock/pop band **Skerryvore** and fusion favourites **Shooglenifty**, Orcadian bands **The Chair**, **Fara** and **Gnoss**, and Highland band **Dàimh**.

Included in unique collaborative shows is a tribute to one of the world's most influential folk singers – Scotland's **Dick Gaughan** – featuring a large cast of artists. The festival will also welcome performances from rising Scots stars such as acclaimed singer-songwriter **Katie Gregson-McLeod** and indie accordionist **RuMac**.

The rich cultural traditions of our nation's song and storytelling are also highlighted and celebrated across many of the programme's events, including a special interpretation of the songs of Robert Burns, the Scottish ballads, and two special nights of Gaelic song including Òran Ùr – celebrating 25 years of new Gaelic songs.

Many traditional and international orchestral highlights are featured too, including the world premiere of the *Arabic Symphony* by **The Ayoub Sisters** – a duo from Egypt who grew up in Glasgow, with the **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra**, as well as the rarely performed Polish work, *Symphony of Sorrows* by Henryk Górecki, marking the 50th year of its composition.

The packed 2026 festival programme also sees the return of many regular firm favourites, including the **Danny Kyle Open Stage** showcasing new talent, the popular **Transatlantic Sessions** exploring the rich musical connections of Scotland, Ireland and the US, and the renowned **Roaming Roots Revue** curated by Emmy Award-winning Scottish musician, composer and broadcaster **Roddy Hart**.

A sell-out every year, Roaming Roots celebrates its 14th outing. Following the success of its last edition *Icons Vol. 1*, is the 2026 edition *Icons Vol. 2* show. Backed by Roddy Hart & **The Lonesome Fire** and joined by a 60-piece orchestra from **The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**, it gathers together a global line-up of artists for two unforgettable nights of creative collaborations. Featured are Elbow's **Guy Garvey**, award-winning composer **C Duncan**, acclaimed American artists **Dylan LeBlanc** and **Amythyst Kiah**, emerging soul talent **James Emmanuel**, rising UK voices **Rianne Downey** and **Alice Faye**, and many more.

Festival-goers can also look forward to the usual mix of late-night sessions and pop-up performances at the **Festival Club**, which returns to the Art School, as well as the ever-popular **Glee Club** nights. And once again the acclaimed **Celtic Connections education programme** will give thousands of children across Glasgow a chance to experience music workshops and special schools concerts.

The **Under 26 Pass** makes a welcome return too to offer the age group discounted entry to a range of gigs, ensuring the festival is as accessible as possible to younger audiences.

Celtic Connections Creative Producer, Donald Shaw, said: "At the very heart of our 33rd festival are celebration, collaboration and connection. We are very excited that our 2026 edition will bring together such a wealth of talented musicians from Scotland and all over the world – from award-winning performers to young newcomers. And we can't wait to welcome so many fantastic artists and acts to Glasgow in the new year to perform for our audiences in every corner of the city.

"Celtic Connections is a celebration of the boundless power of music to connect and inspire; to transcend borders and provide a platform where Scotland's own musical might is matched by global talent.

"Our diverse programme showcases a wealth of musical genres and styles, and we hope as many people as possible will take advantage of the opportunity to experience and enjoy all that's in store. As we champion the universal language of music, we invite lifelong music fans and curious newcomers to join us as there's something magical waiting for everyone at Celtic Connections 2026."

Bailie Annette Christie, Chair of Glasgow Life, said: "Glasgow is immensely proud that Celtic Connections continues to be such an incredible success in Scotland's cultural events calendar, and every year shines a global spotlight on our vibrant UNESCO City of Music and its legendary reputation for audiences which are among the world's best.

"The joyous celebration that Celtic Connections always is will really set the tone for what will be a year of thrilling international events for Glasgow as we look forward to the Commonwealth Games and much more ahead, and to welcoming visitors to our city from near and far."

Culture Secretary Angus Robertson said: "Celtic Connections continues to innovate and inspire musical and cultural collaboration. As one of Scotland's foremost festivals showcasing the very best in folk, roots and international music, its outstanding and well-earned global reputation continues to grow.

"The Scottish Government is proud to support this ambitious programme with increased funding through our Festival EXPO Fund and I am excited to see what is on offer during Celtic Connections 2026."

Alan Morrison, Head of Music at Creative Scotland said: "Celtic Connections' annual showcase of the world's best traditional music is second to none. It's a city-wide celebration of what cultural heritage means in 21st-century Scotland – a chance to embrace the combined sounds of our past, present and future, as Scotland's own distinctive history is enriched by the different communities who have chosen to make this their home.

"Supported by the Scottish Government through Creative Scotland's Multi Year Funding programme and the Festival EXPO Fund, Celtic Connections gathers every sort of musical genre under its welcoming banner. As we look towards 2026, we realise that, now more than ever, so much can be gained by sharing and cherishing other cultures. It's inspiring to know that here in Glasgow, at this home-grown but globally renowned festival, we can make the world a better place."

Innis & Gunn Master Brewer and Founder, Dougal Sharp, said: "Celtic Connections brings such a brilliant energy to Glasgow at the darkest time of year. It's not just the talent on stage that makes it special but the way the festival fills the city with music, conversation and that unmistakable Glasgow buzz.

"There's something truly joyful about catching a show in one of the city's great venues then sharing a pint afterwards while the night is still going. It's a brilliant way to enjoy Glasgow and we'd encourage anyone thinking about it to grab a ticket and soak it all in.

"We're proud to support a festival that celebrates Scottish culture and welcomes the world in; that combination is what makes Celtic Connections so unique and why we love being part of it."

Celtic Connections 2026 takes place from **Thursday 15 January to Sunday 1 February 2026.**

General tickets go on sale at **10am, Thursday 16 October 2025**, with advance tickets for Celtic Rovers festival supporters available from tomorrow, Wednesday 15 October 2025.

The programme can be viewed at www.celticconnections.com and many more gigs will be added to it in the run-up to the event in the new year.

Ends.

For further information, images, or to request an interview:

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Media accreditation: opens at 10am, Tuesday 14 October and [you can apply here](#).

Launch image: 'Trad on tap': Trad trio Madeleine Stewart (fiddle), Heather Cartwright (guitar), and Juliette Lemoine (cellist), aka Swinging on Birches, with piper Ross Miller, aboard Celtic Connections sponsor's Innis & Gunn truck, in front of Saint Luke's – one of the festival venues.

Follow the conversation at @ccfest.

Notes to Editors

Celtic Connections began in 1994, when it offered 66 events at one venue. It has since grown more diverse, adventurous and experimental each year, offering hundreds of events in locations across Glasgow.

Renowned internationally, and Europe's biggest winter music festival, it has an unwavering ambition to showcase the very best traditional folk, roots, Americana, jazz, soul, indie and world music and nurture unique local, national and international cultural partnerships.

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.

For more information, see www.glasgowlife.org.uk.

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports culture and creativity across all parts of Scotland, distributing funding provided by the Scottish Government and The National Lottery. Further information at creativescotland.com. Follow Creative Scotland on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

Innis & Gunn, since its establishment in 2003, has been determined to do things differently in the world of brewing. Starting with innovative oak cask maturation for award-winning flagship beer 'The Original', Innis & Gunn has gone on to create a whole line up of boundary-pushing beers, including distinctive, limited edition and rare beers, and the Innis & Gunn Lager Beer which recently won gold at the World Beer Awards for the second year running.

Innis & Gunn is now one of the UK's most successful beer brewers. Still pioneering, still innovating and still doing things differently, to excite and intrigue beer lovers all over the world. Innis & Gunn is the official beer sponsor of many iconic events including The Edinburgh Fringe, Royal Highland Show, Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, Celtic Connections and Belladrum Music Festival.

Follow Innis & Gunn on Instagram: @innisandgunn and www.innisandgunn.com