

Media Release

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Celtic Connections 2025 closes on a high note

[Images from across the festival are available here](#)

Celtic Connections 2025 in partnership with **Innis & Gunn** has closed on a high note, marking another stand-out chapter in its storied history presenting the world's best trad, folk, world and roots music to Glasgow audiences each winter.

The 32nd edition of Scotland's premier winter music festival reached attendances of 110,000, with 125 sold out shows across its 18 days.

Despite a day of rescheduled events, the festival made a triumphant return from Storm Éowyn to match 2023 festival attendance figures and had been on track to surpass 2024 audience numbers.

Around 1,500 musicians and artists spanning 40 nationalities took part in around 300 events stretching out over 24 venues, all celebrating the unifying power of live music and vibrancy of Scotland's cultural scene.

The festival achieved its highest ever number of subscribers to its Celtic Rovers scheme, which rewards audiences' loyalty with access to exclusive benefits and deals, hitting 620 sign ups, while almost 3,000 tickets were purchased through the Under 26 Community, giving young people access to exclusive ticket deals.

A team of 120 volunteers supported the delivery of **Celtic Connections**, building new connections with like-minded people and getting first-hand experience in a live events environment, while 50,000 pints of **Innis & Gunn** were poured for gig-goers across the city.

More than 7,000 pupils travelled to the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall for the festival's Schools Concerts and music workshops were delivered to every primary 7 pupil across Glasgow.



Nearly 900 people of all ages took part in ceilidhs and family events, more than 120 benefited from free dementia-friendly concerts and almost 1,500 took part in music and song workshops.

The world-renowned festival, delivered by **Glasgow Life**, once again proved itself as a cornerstone of Scotland's events calendar and a much-loved cultural meeting place and platform for collaboration.

The festival's unique flair for uniting people and bringing soul-affirming joy to thousands could be seen, heard and felt in concerts, ceilidhs, workshops, exhibitions, screenings, showcases, book launches, sessions, dementia-friendly performances, recitals, talks and more.

For the past three weeks, Glasgow – a **UNESCO City of Music** – reflected the richness of Celtic traditions and demonstrated the power of global cultural exchange and innovation.

From a spectacular birthday celebration to mark **Glasgow 850** for the festival's iconic **Opening Concert**, to 300 community choir singers joining **Karine Polwart** on stage for an emotion-fuelled show celebrating community and an outstanding 25-year career, this year's festival took audiences on a remarkable journey.

Donald Shaw, Creative Producer for Celtic Connections, said: "As we reach the close of this year's festival we have to reflect on the countless moments of joy and connectedness that we're so proud to create. From piloting a major venue in the city to putting a smile on the face of someone seeing a musician live for the first time, it's the big and little moments that form the soul of this festival. I would like to thank everyone who makes Celtic Connections possible and pay tribute to the resilience of our hard-working team, the brilliance of our artists, the generosity of our audiences and the support of our funders and partners.

"Although we're bringing our 32nd festival to an end, these last few weeks have been a catalyst for fresh creativity, future collaboration and renewed friendship and community, generating a legacy that stretches far beyond our 18 days. We hope everyone who came into contact with the festival felt the spirited vitality that lives at its heart. See you next winter!"



Bailie Annette Christie, Chair of Glasgow Life, said: “Celtic Connections has kicked off Scotland’s cultural calendar in style and shown exactly why Glasgow is a UNESCO City of Music. The festival continues to thrive and shines a spotlight on our city’s reputation as a world-class events destination.

“Thousands of people have experienced magical musical performances from talented homegrown and international artists at Glasgow’s iconic venues. Once again, Celtic Connections has treated audiences to a diverse range of shows and events and unique collaborations, which the festival is renowned for.

“The 32nd edition will live long in the memory thanks to another exciting programme, a spectacular Opening Concert celebrating Glasgow’s 850th birthday and the Emirates Arena being turned into a music venue for the first time.”

Alan Morrison, Head of Music at Creative Scotland said: “From the opening concert’s first note to the closing night’s final chord, Celtic Connections 2025 has provided a superb soundtrack to our dark January days. Audiences turned out in their masses, artists performed at the top of their game and venues across the city rang with sounds old and new. This has been a fitting start to Glasgow’s 850th anniversary, as the city celebrated its home-grown talent and welcomed international guests with open arms. In the week that Celtic Connections secured financial support for a further three years through Creative Scotland’s Multi Year Funding programme, it’s fantastic to know that the festival will continue to be a beacon of cultural light in our winter months.”

Culture Secretary Angus Robertson said: “Congratulations to everybody involved in this year’s Celtic Connections; it was another fantastic celebration of Scotland’s cultural heritage, which brought together world-class talent and showcased our rich musical traditions on a global stage.

“The festival has once again demonstrated the unifying power of live music, the vibrancy of our creative sector, and reaffirmed Scotland’s status as the perfect stage for unforgettable cultural events.



“Well done to the organisers, artists, and audiences, who all contribute to make Celtic Connections such a resounding success every year.”

Dougal Sharp, Master Brewer and founder of Innis & Gunn, said: “Celtic Connections is Scotland at its best – world-class music, passionate audiences, and a real sense of community. This festival shines a spotlight on incredible talent while keeping our culture thriving, evolving, and reaching new audiences here and around the world. That’s something we’re proud to support – not just this year, but for the long haul.

“When businesses and festivals that make Scotland special are under real pressure, we’re standing up for what’s real. Innis & Gunn is a premium Scottish brand, brewed here and enjoyed everywhere, and like Celtic Connections, we’re all about celebrating what makes this country great.

“This year, more than 50,000 pints of Innis & Gunn have been poured as audiences soaked up some of the best live music experiences in Scotland, a particular highlight being the Gness gig we organised on an open top bus and in our Glasgow taprooms. That’s what this partnership is all about – bringing people together, lifting spirits, and keeping Scottish culture at the forefront, where it belongs. We’re raising a pint to an unforgettable festival, and to many more years of making magic together.”

Celtic Connections first began in 1994 and has grown in size and ambition ever since, building an international reputation and making an unmatched contribution to the prominence of folk, traditional and world music. The 2025 edition spanned 10 genres including acoustic, indie, traditional, Americana, jazz, folk, world and orchestral.

Showcase Scotland, the festival’s music industry event which introduces delegates from around the world to the Scottish music sector, this year celebrated the music of Ireland. **Quebec** has been announced as the 2026 partner, celebrating the French-speaking Canadian region’s musical heritage.

Next year will also see the second year in a five-year partnership deal with headline sponsor **Innis & Gunn**.



The festival is working hard to reschedule as many shows as possible following postponements from Storm Éowyn, with ticket holders set to be updated on a show by show basis as soon as possible.

Elephant Sessions' headline show at the O2 Academy will now take place on **Saturday 1 March**.

Celtic Connections 2026 in partnership with **Innis & Gunn** will take place from **Thursday 15 January – Sunday 1 February 2026**.

ENDS

Celtic Connections 2025 ran from Thursday 16 January to Sunday 2 February. Follow the conversation at @ccfest.

For further information, images, or to request an interview, please contact: Corrie Campbell, Innes and Campbell Communications, corrie@innesandcampbell.co.uk, 07900 981 073.

Notes to Editors

Celtic Connections began in 1994, when it offered 66 events at one venue. Since then it's grown more adventurous, experimental and diverse each year and now offers thousands of events in locations across Glasgow.

Celtic Connections is delivered with funding from **Glasgow City Council** through **Glasgow Life**. The festival receives invaluable support from **Creative Scotland**, **The Scottish Government Festivals Expo Fund** and **CalMac**.

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 us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#). Learn more about the value of art and creativity in Scotland and join in at www.ourcreativevoice.scot

Innis & Gunn: Since the company was founded in 2003, Innis & Gunn has been determined to do things differently in the world of brewing. Starting with innovative oak cask maturation for our flagship beer, 'The Original', we have 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.

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 Royal Highland Show, Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, Celtic Connections and Belladrum music festival in Inverness.

Glasgow 850 is a yearlong celebration in 2025 marking the 850th anniversary of Glasgow's establishment as a burgh in 1175. Throughout the year the city will mark its 850th birthday by delivering, with partners, a yearlong, citywide, programme that celebrates and reflects on our recent past, our present and future. The programme of new signature events, enhancements to existing festivals, and community-based activities is being curated in a way that lets all those with a connection to Glasgow, at home and abroad, get involved to tell their stories, honouring our rich heritage, reflecting on our transformational growth, and inspiring ambitious change for the city's next fifty years. Marking this milestone acknowledges the contributions of generations who have shaped the city, gives a platform to grow a shared sense of belonging and invites people to guide our future. It also helps raise Glasgow's profile on the global stage and encourage visitors to explore our unique city. For more information and to get involved visit glasgow850.com