

30TH SHETLAND FOLK FESTIVAL: 29TH APRIL TO 2ND MAY 2010

This year's Shetland Folk Festival, celebrating its 30th Anniversary, sees yet another eclectic and innovative line up of visiting artistes comprised of both first timers and festival favourites from the years gone by.

Often regarded as the granddaddy of UK folk festivals, the Festival is regarded as a prestigious event for performers, locals and visitors alike – and is 100% organised by volunteers! The "sessions" in the Festival Club, Islesburgh are often regarded as the best and most unique in the world whilst visiting artistes are regularly dumbfounded by the quantity and quality of local musicians that these remote isles have to offer.

The organisers are thrilled to announce a line up of eighteen visiting bands whose musicians hail from Scotland, USA, India, Germany, Sweden, Ireland, France, Slovenia and England.

Returning to the Festival are Sweden's leading acoustic band, **Väsen**, whose members are already legendary among string players all over the world. Their nyckelharpa supremo Olov Johansson has already worked closely with **Fiddlers' Bid**, global ambassadors for the Festival and leading exponents of Shetland's rich fiddle tradition, who have also been invited home to participate. **Ahimsa**, a four-piece ensemble based in India and Germany will be making their debut appearance with their captivating fusion of Indian Carnatic music and jazz. Two newcomers from the United States will be **The Wiyos**, a band said to be "full of surprises" by Seasick Steve with their original yet vintage sounding country blues, swing, jugband, hillbilly and ragtime tunes as well as the **Foghorn Stringband** who are guaranteed to thrill audiences with their interpretation of old-time American stringband music.

The 30th event will also see the long awaited return of **Simon Thoumire and Ian Carr**, the popular duo that were part of the 1991 line up filmed for the BBC's Shetland Sessions series. There will also be a return appearance by **The New Rope String Band** whose hilarious and talented members have been firm favourites at Shetland Folk Festivals throughout the last fifteen years.

Multi-award winning trio, **Lau**, currently one of the most sought-after acts on the folk music scene, will make their long awaited Shetland debut with further Scottish representation coming from the amazing festival band, **Session A9**. Orkney favourites, **The Chair** will perform for one night only at a special Inter-County gig on the Friday the 30th April whilst recent winners of the prestigious Scottish Folk Band of the year award at the Scots Trad Music Awards, **Bodega**, are also confirmed as appearing over the weekend. Also representing Scotland as a visiting session band is **Feolta**, Danny Kyle Award winners at 2008's Celtic Connections.

Other newcomers to Shetland will be Sweden's **Baskery**, comprised of a sister trio who describe their music as "high voltage" and with expressions like "killbilly", "banjo punk" and "mud-country." Their stunning harmonies, original compositions, distinctive character and unafraid punk attitude will be a guaranteed crowd pleaser. Slightly mellower performances can be expected by **Eva Hren & Sladcore** whose music represents a contemporary take on Slovenian folk heritage with its jazzy undertones and influences of ethno-folk, pop and even heavy rock.

Ireland is also well represented in the visiting artiste line up, but with three completely different musical outfits and genres. **The Unwanted** features three Sligo based musicians including Cathy Jordan, lead singer for acclaimed group Dervish. Along with Californian native, Rick Epping and Seamus O'Dowd, they combine traditions from Ireland to Appalachia and beyond. Fans of gypsy jazz are in for a treat with the **Paradiso Jazz Quartet**, a special assembly of fantastic musicians from France and Ireland including guitarists Youenn Derrien and Frank Kilkelly. Up and coming

band **Mórga**, will also be a guaranteed hit with audiences as they take listeners back to the sounds of the great traditional Irish bands of the seventies.

As is the established format, most visiting musicians will be in Shetland for the Festival's duration, playing at different venues throughout the isles alongside fantastic local acts such as **Hom Bru, Fullsceilidh Spelemannslag, Maggie Adamson & Brian Nicholson, Sheila Henderson, Bryan Gear & Violet Tulloch and Inge Thomson**. The Festival will conclude with the famous "Festival Foy" events on Sunday 2nd. These "Foy" concerts are unique to Shetland and give audiences an opportunity of seeing all visiting acts in one evening. Held over three venues in Shetland's capital, Lerwick, the visiting artistes are shuffled between halls by mini bus and perform in each venue for around 15 minutes. It sounds crazy but it works!

With the Festival selling out completely in recent years, the organisers are expanding ticket availability in 2010 with the support of Event Scotland. Also, to help ensure that younger audience members are entertained during the four day event, **The Singing Kettle** have been booked to appear for a one-off performance. BAFTA Award winning and decorated with MBE's for their services to children's entertainment, they have turned children's theatre into an art form.

So, if you're tempted to make your way up to the most far-flung folk festival in the UK, you may be interested in knowing that advance Festival memberships are on sale until the 26th February and that its unofficial opening will actually be on Wednesday the 28th April, on an overnight ferry somewhere in the middle of the North Sea. An event in itself!

For more information on this Festival, including all the visiting acts' biographies with sound samples please visit:

www.shetlandfolkfestival.com

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