

**OFFICIAL
PROGRAMME**

FREE



1st - 4th May 2025

www.shetlandfolkfestival.com

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and the following venues, community hall committees and volunteers at: Lerwick Legion, St Columba's Church, Hymhus, Brae, Tingwall, Ollaberry, Burravoe, Cunningsburgh and Walls - and anyone else who has helped in any way towards the success of this year's Festival.

Cover: Julie Alapnes.

Welcome to the 43rd Shetland Folk Festival!

We've got an exciting four days lined up, packed with live music sessions, workshops, and much more. We can't wait to welcome you to this incredible celebration of folk music!

This year, we're thrilled to host 15 visiting acts covering a wide variety of genres – including traditional folk, country, gypsy jazz, ragtime, Nordic folk, Americana, rock, and Celtic fusion – so there's truly something for everyone! Alongside our international line-up, we're just as proud to showcase a fantastic range of local talent, from rising stars to renowned musicians, all contributing to the electric atmosphere of our four-day feast!

Supporting and celebrating Shetland's rich folk traditions has been at the heart of our festival since 1981, and it remains a key part of our mission today. None of this would be possible without the incredible volunteers who dedicate their time, energy, and hospitality – our heartfelt thanks go out to every one of them for making the festival such a success year after year.

Once again, we have a full schedule of concerts across Shetland, along with both planned and spontaneous events at the Festival Club exclusively for 2025 Festival Members. The Festival Club is the ultimate hub, buzzing with live music, informal sessions, and workshops during the day – not to mention a well-stocked cocktail bar! Our ever popular ticketed Legion Late gig returns on Friday only this year. Saturday will see a brand new 'Late Lounge' concert with a more relaxed cabaret-style set up. We're also bringing back the ticketed late-night sessions at the Festival Club on Friday and Saturday, which have been a major hit over the past two years and removed the queueing issues of years before.

As we gear up for a whirlwind of spectacular performances, unforgettable sessions, and legendary late nights, get ready for an extraordinary few days of world-class music. Sleep when you can – you're going to need the energy!

Da Committee x

DRINKS

It is not permitted to bring alcoholic drinks to any of our venues. There will be a bar at all venues with the exception of the Big Kirk concerts on Thursday night and Saturday lunchtime. All Under 18s must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times.

PHOTOGRAPHY

No unauthorised audio or video recordings are permitted. Flash photography is strictly prohibited during all artiste performances for the comfort and enjoyment of all involved.

**Official
photographers only
in designated areas.**

SHOES

Flat, wedged or chunky heeled shoes must be worn at all concert venues including the Festival Club.

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Festival Club

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The Festival Club is a hive of activity all weekend. It's the place to be if you are interested in meeting and greeting Festival artistes, listening to live music, enjoying sessions, and participating in the various workshops and activities on offer. Food is served daily in the Central Café. Times will be displayed.

Festival Club Opening Times

Thursday, Friday, Saturday 11am-6.30pm and Sunday 11am - 5.30pm

Festival Shop Opening Times

The Festival Shop operates out of the Festival Club between 11am and 5pm from Thursday 1st to Saturday 3rd May.

Merchandise – During shop opening hours, Festival merchandise will be on sale in the Club. Some merchandise will be available at other concert venues.

Bar Opening Times

Thursday, Friday & Saturday 11am – 6.30pm. Sunday 11am – 5.30pm

Youth Programming and Community Projects

To help ensure that the Festival reaches as large a percentage of the Shetland community as possible, we also organise a number of extra non-ticketed events, many of them targeted at younger members of the Shetland populace. These include the Early Years Concert, an Additional Support Needs concert, and selected school visits.

Concerts and Club Performers

In addition to presenting this year's visiting acts, showcasing Shetland's rich musical talent and heritage is a fundamental objective of everything we do. Our gratitude is expressed to each and every one of the local musicians featured at the concerts, many having performed at numerous festivals over the years. Thanks also to The Plonkys who are scheduled to appear in the Legion Late Night Session on Friday.

In this official programme you'll find short biographies of all visiting artistes and a small selection of the vast number of local bands – just to provide a taste of what's on offer! Detailed biographies of all local acts performing are on our website www.shetlandfolkfestival.com

NOTES:

- 1) Entry to the Club is restricted to 2025 wristband wearing members only.
- 2) Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times. Under 14s are not permitted in the Festival Club after 1am, or at Club Late ticketed sessions on Friday and Saturday nights.
- 3) Please note that all of our Club bar staff and stewards are volunteers so please give them the respect they deserve, no matter how long the queues are!



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Local Artistes

Haltadans

Haltadans, a Shetland Folk Festival favourite, were nominated for Scottish Folk Band of the Year at the MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards 2024. Formed in 2012, they revive forgotten Shetland fiddle tunes while blending tradition with contemporary flair. Featuring Maurice Henderson, Ewen Thomson, Ella



Robertson, Lois Nicol (fiddles), Grant Nicol (guitar), and John Clark (bass), they deliver vibrant performances. Their name comes from a Fetlar stone circle tied to Shetland folklore. With intricate harmonies and dynamic arrangements, Haltadans captivates audiences with fiery dance tunes and thoughtful compositions, honouring their roots while pushing musical boundaries.

Da Loose Ends

Da Loose Ends are led by venerable guitarist and vocalist Norman "Girsie" Goudie who guides his band of esteemed musicians through an engrossing cocktail of swing, jazz and bebop. Not only are their songs very easy on the ear, Norman's



wonderful stage presence will have you chuckling along the way and he is joined by some of Shetland's finest and most intuitive musicians – Jackie Robertson on double bass, Douglas Johnstone on drums, Helen Tait on saxophone, father and son combo Alan Nicolson on accordion and Calum Nicolson on the fabulous vibraphone. This really is music to sit back and relax to!

Leap into a musical adventure!

With concerts across the islands, the Shetland Folk Festival will be a fantastic weekend of music and merriment. When the spree is over, head to shetland.org and watch Shetland Music Night – a celebration of the islands' diverse musical talent.

shetland.org/music



Treemandos

This exciting new collaboration of five seasoned island musicians will come together formally for the first time after years of enjoying informal sessions together. At the heart of this talented group is Jenny Henry (Shetland



Mandolin Band), whose inspiration has brought these musicians together for what promises to be a remarkable performance. Two of Shetland's finest mandolin players will join her – Gary Peterson (Hom Bru) and Kenny Johnson – alongside Grant Nicol on guitar and John Clark (both Haltadans) on bass. Expect a set with exceptional musicianship, spontaneity, and island flair, and knowing this bunch, a lot of laughs along the way!

Megan & Lauren

Megan & Lauren have been singing together since winning Shetland's Got Talent as a teenage duo in 2014. That same year, they were thrilled when Shetland Folk Festival gave them the chance to perform with one of their favourite influences, Madison Violet. After a break for education and



other commitments, they are back performing together again, having wowed audiences at a Christmas gig in 2024. Now, joined by musicians Bryden Priest and Seth Travins, they blend stunning vocal harmonies, fiddle, and double bass into a rich country and Americana sound.

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The Plonkys

The Plonkys, a dynamic and popular local party band, seamlessly shift from the likes of Eminem's rap to Lynyrd Skynyrd's Southern rock! Formed in a pub in 2022, they deliver high-energy performances with an eclectic repertoire that



keeps audiences on their feet! Featuring David Sandison (vocals/guitar), Taylor Pirie (lead guitar), Steven Anderson (bass), and Arron Peart (drums), they often team up with Faroese powerhouse Sigmund Danielsen. With their electrifying sound and unpredictable setlist, The Plonkys guarantee an unforgettable experience – so be ready to rock when you hear the monster's thunderous roar!

Stewart Hutchison

This year marks a debut performance at the Shetland Folk Festival for Stewart Hutchison who will showcase his own dialect songs. He describes his repertoire as having songs about waking up after a spree (party), delivering a baby, meeting his wife and various other “carry ons”! Many of his songs are drawn from real life



experiences – either his own or those of family and friends. Some parts are just made up for comedic effect (although we'll leave you to guess which!). We think Stewart will put a smile on your face and bring something a little bit different to the festival.



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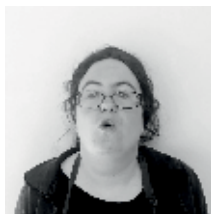
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Some audience members have to get on their feet for the Ross Couper Band at North Roe.

Kevin Jones



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Visiting Artistes

Michael Daves & Jacob Jolliff

Michael Daves and Jacob Jolliff, two of America's top bluegrass talents, have teamed up to create a dynamic duo. Their performances blend high lonesome harmonies, expert flatpicking, and a mix of traditional and innovative sounds. Daves, a New York-based guitarist, has played with legends like Chris Thile and Steve Martin, earning a Grammy nomination for *Sleep With One Eye Open*. Jolliff, a virtuoso mandolinist and National Mandolin Champion, has toured with



Yonder Mountain String Band and Béla Fleck. Together, they deliver electrifying bluegrass rooted in tradition yet full of fresh energy. Don't miss their captivating performances!

Margo Cilker

Margo Cilker, hailed as "country rock's new star" by *Uncut*, is a rising Americana artist known for her evocative and heartfelt storytelling rooted in nostalgia, family, and nature. Originally from California's Santa Clara Valley, she draws inspiration from its changing landscapes and her experiences living in the Pacific Northwest. Her music blends time-honoured country traditions with a modern indie-folk edge, creating songs that feel both timeless and fresh. Backed by Forrest VanTuyl and Tom Bailey, Cilker's richly layered sound infused with guitar and upright bass, will captivate our audiences and is sure to make a lasting impression in Shetland.





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Richard Wood

Fiddler Richard Wood makes his long-awaited return to the Shetland Folk Festival, last performing in 1997. Named one of MacLean's *Top 100 Canadians to Watch*, the five-time ECMA winner has wowed audiences worldwide with his fiery Celtic music. With a 30-year career, Wood has toured with Shania Twain and The Chieftains and played prestigious venues like Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Centre. He has performed for royalty, world leaders, and Canada's armed forces. A champion fiddler and step dancer, Wood is a proud ambassador of Prince Edward Island, bringing high-energy Celtic performances to global audiences. We're thrilled to welcome him back to Shetland!



The Traveling Janes

Led by acclaimed Scottish-American jazz vocalist Ali Affleck, The Traveling Janes is an international ensemble reviving the joyful roots of jazz and blues. Formed in London, the band unites five award-winning musicians from Scotland, the USA,



Singapore and France to bring early 20th-century American music to life. More than nostalgia, their performances honour jazz and blues pioneers like Louis Armstrong and Ma Rainey, channelling the raw energy of vaudeville and railroad tours. Featuring vocals, washboard, banjo, piano, bass, and reeds, The Traveling Janes promise a raucous, exhilarating time travelling celebration of prohibition-era jazz – vibrant, rebellious, and just as relevant today.

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Mec Lir

Celebrating their 10th anniversary in 2024, genre-busting Mec Lir has been electrifying festival crowds since their debut at Brittany's Festival Interceltique de Lorient. Shetland Folk Festival fans may remember their legendary late-night set in 2017 – and we're absolutely thrilled to have them back! Known for their lightning-fast



playing and fusion of trad with bold electro synths and drums, this Isle of Man/Glasgow-based band delivers high-energy performances. Led by virtuoso fiddler Tomas Callister, with Adam Rhodes (bouzouki), David Kilgallon (keyboard), Greg Barry (drums), and Paddy Callaghan (accordion), Mec Lir's live shows are legendary. Get ready for an unmissable, joy-fuelled folk explosion!

The Maes

Multi-award winning Melbourne-based folk duo The Maes, founded by sisters Maggie and Elsie Rigby, are a dynamic force in Australia's folk scene. Raised in festival culture from infancy, they've captivated audiences worldwide with their intricate arrangements, heartfelt song-writing, and seamless harmonies. The Maes have graced top festival stages, including Woodford, Cambridge Folk Festival, Celtic Connections, and Canada's Edmonton Folk



Festival. Accompanied by bassist Isaac Gunnoo, The Maes are set to bring their warm, authentic and intricate arrangements to Shetland. After going down a storm in Orkney in 2018, we're absolutely certain Shetland audiences will be wowed by their timeless folk music too!

Directions to country venues

TINGWALL (15 minutes) Take the main A970 road north driving for approx 5 miles. Turn right at the staggered junction (signposted to Gott Farm, Strand, Laxfirth) and you will find the red-roofed hall on the right hand side around 1 mile along this road (next door to the primary school).

BRAE (23 miles - allow 30 minutes) Take the main road north (A970) for 23 miles to Brae without any need to turn off. The large blue-roofed hall is situated on the left hand side coming into Brae.

BURRAVOE, Yell (Allow up to 2 hours travel time depending on ferry times) Ferry booking advised (tel 01595 745804). Take the A970 north for approximately 18 miles to Voe. Turn right onto the A968 for the 10 miles drive to Toft. Take the ferry from Toft to Yell which takes 15-20 minutes. Once off the ferry, turn right at the first junction onto a single track road (B9081) for the 5-mile drive to Burravoe with the hall, with a large glass porch, situated at the main road on a corner.

OLLABERRY (33 miles - allow 1 hour) Leaving Lerwick take the main road north following the A970 through the villages of Voe and Brae and passing Mavis Grind on the way. A further 10 miles north, the road becomes a single track road and take the junction on the right with signs for Ollaberry and North Roe. After a mile and a half, bear right onto the B9079 road towards Ollaberry - the hall is on the right about a mile and a half further along.

WALLS (25 miles - allow 40 minutes) Taking the road leaving Lerwick to the north (A970) there is a junction after approx 7 miles drive, turn left here heading west onto the A971. Pass through Whiteness, Weisdale and Bixter heading towards Walls with the last four miles on a single track road. On entering the village, the hall is on the left hand side across the road from the church.

CUNNINGSBURGH (15 minutes) Follow the signs south to Sumburgh on the A970 and drive for around 10 miles. The hall is first on the right with a green roof as you enter Cunningsburgh.

HYMHUS (BIGTON) (18 miles - allow 30 minutes) Leaving Lerwick, head south, following signs for Sumburgh (A970). Drive for approx 16 miles to Channerwick. Just past there, a junction branches off to the right onto a single track road for around 1 ½ miles to Bigton, then take the first road on your right, then first left and the Hymhus is in a small road next to the bus stop. It is on the right just before the Bigton Hall.



PULL OUT CONCERTS, VENUES, DATES & TIMES PULL OUT

Thursday 1st May

Festival Official Opening

(FREE and open to 2025 SFFS Members only) Starts 1.00pm in Festival Club Room 16. Your first chance to see some of the performing artistes at the Festival.

Mareel 7.30pm, doors open: 6.30pm

Margo Cilker - Richard Wood - Bryan Gear - Kansa

Legion 7.30pm, doors open: 6.30pm

Budapest Café Orchestra - TEHO. - CRAC - North Ness Boys & Family

Da Big Kirk Concert - St Columba's Church

7.30pm, doors open: 7.00pm

Good Guy Hank - The Maes - The Traveling Janes

Tingwall *Sponsored by ESPL Regulatory Consulting*

7.30pm, doors open: 7.00pm

Michael Daves & Jacob Jolliff - Julie Alapnes - Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe & Daniel Quayle - Treemandos

Brae 7.30pm, doors open: 7.00pm

Astro Bloc - The Hot Seats - Sheila Henderson Band - Mary Rutherford

Friday 2nd May

Afternoon Concert - Lerwick British Legion

2.00pm, doors open: 1.30pm

Duo Ruut - Julie Alapnes - TEHO.

Mareel 7.30pm, doors open: 6.30pm

Duo Ruut - The Traveling Janes - Julie Alapnes - Da AnnLynn Sessions

Clickimin Centre - Spangin' Spree! *Sponsored by Shetland Stays*

8.00pm, doors open: 7.00pm

Mec Lir - Elias Alexander - Astro Bloc

Burravoe *(FERRY CROSSING REQUIRED)*

7.30pm, doors open: 7.00pm

Michael Daves & Jacob Jolliff - Good Guy Hank - Richard Wood - Laeverick

Ollaberry 7.30pm, doors open: 7.00pm

Budapest Café Orchestra - The Maes - Margo Cilker - Da Langstrings

We reserve the right to alter concert line-ups, workshops and activities.

PULL OUT CONCERTS, VENUES, DATES & TIMES PULL OUT

Friday 2nd May (cont.)

Friday Legion LATE - Lerwick British Legion (over 18s only)

11.00pm, doors open: 10.30pm

The Hot Seats - The Plonkys

Friday Festival Club (Lates) - Islesburgh

11.00pm, doors open: 10.30pm

Performers top secret!

Saturday 3rd May

St Columba's Church - Ringin' Strings and Island Heritage

Lunchtime Concert 12.00pm, doors open: 11.30am

Richard Wood - Haltadans - Shetland Fiddlers' Society - Shetland's Young Fiddler(s) of the Year

Saturday Afternoon - Lerwick British Legion

2.00pm, doors open: 1.30pm

Margo Cilker - The Hot Seats - Megan & Lauren

Mareel Sponsored by North Sea Clams

7.30pm, doors open: 6.30pm

The Hot Seats - Astro Bloc - Finnish/Shetland student collaboration - Vair

Clickimin Centre Sponsored by RSM Chartered Accountants

7.30pm, doors open: 6.30pm

Michael Daves & Jacob Jolliff - The Maes - Budapest Café Orchestra - Gemma Donald and Shetland Swing

Walls

7.30pm, doors open: 7.00pm

Duo Ruut - The Traveling Janes - Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe & Daniel Quayle - George Spence and Fraser Jamieson

Cunningsburgh

7.30pm, doors open: 7.00pm

Richard Wood - Julie Alapnes - Shetland's Heritage Fiddlers - Sheep Dip

Saturday Legion - Late Lounge Concert

9.00pm, doors open: 8.00pm

Margo Cilker - Elias Alexander - TEHO. - Stewart Hutchison

Saturday Festival Club (Lates) - Islesburgh

11.00pm, doors open: 10.30pm

Performers top secret!

We reserve the right to alter concert line-ups, workshops and activities.

PULL OUT CONCERTS, VENUES, DATES & TIMES PULL OUT

Sunday 4th May

Peerie Spang (fur da bairns) - Clickimin Centre

Sponsored by Scottish Sea Farms

1.30pm, doors open: 1.00pm

Mec Lir - Elias Alexander

Sunday Afternoon - Lerwick British Legion

2.00pm, doors open: 1.30pm

Budapest Café Orchestra - The Traveling Janes - Da Loose Ends

Mareel - Foy

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7.00pm, doors open: 6.00pm

Clickimin Centre - Foy

Supported by Voar

7.00pm, doors open: 6.00pm

Lerwick British Legion - Foy

Supported by LHD Marine Supplies Ltd

7.00pm, doors open: 6.00pm

Resident Club Musicians

After their huge success last year, we are delighted to announce the return of our Resident Club Musicians! Baltic Crossing's Ian Stephenson and Andy May will once again be joined by Roger Peppe and Annie Jessop, and together they are tasked with keeping the tunes and atmosphere in the Club going!



Festival Club Daytime Events

For 2025 SFFS
Members Only

*The Festival Club is generously
supported by our Headline Sponsor:*



Thursday 1st May

Festival Club Official Opening

Live Music in Room 16, from 1pm to approx. 3.30pm. Opening speeches and a flavour of what Shetland Folk Festival 2025 has to offer. This opening will be live streamed to Room 10.

Sessions with Astro Bloc

from 12noon, Room 11

Sessions with Resident Club Musicians

from 3.30pm, Room 11

Friday 2nd May

Sessions with Resident

Club Musicians from 12noon, Room 11

Live Music in Room 16

1pm-2.15pm: Americana with Michael Daves & Jacob Jolliff and Margo Cilker.
3.45pm-5.45pm: Get your Friday Groove on with Astro Bloc, Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe & Daniel Quayle, The Hot Seats

Jonny on the Spot Cocktail Bar,

Room 12 (bar), 1pm-6.00pm

Shetland Fiddle Workshop

with Ross Couper, Room 10,
3.15pm-4.30pm (all ages welcome)

Sessions with Resident

Club Musicians from 4pm, Room 11

Saturday 3rd May

Looping Demonstration Workshop

with Elias Alexander 11.30am, Room 16

Children's Song Workshop

with Seth Travins, Maria & Lewis Barclay,
11.15am, Room 10

Manx Tunes Lunchtime Session

led by Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe &
Daniel Quayle, 12noon, Room 11

Jonny on the Spot Cocktail Bar,

Room 12 (bar), 1pm-6.00pm

Live Music in Room 16

1pm-5.30pm: with Traveling Janes,
Beltane Ree, Adam Guest Band,
Amy Laurenson, Esko Järvelä,
Good Guy Hank, North Country Fair

Sessions with Resident

Club Musicians, 2pm, Room 11

Bluegrass Session led by Michael

Daves & Jacob Jolliff, 3pm, Room 10

Sunday 4th May

Session with Resident

Club Musicians 1pm, Room 11

Live Music in Room 16

1pm-4.45pm: with Shetland Mandolin Band, Andy May Trio, Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe & Daniel Quayle, The Maes, Richard Wood and possibly some surprise guests!

Sunday Singers Workshop

led by The Maes, 1.30pm. Drama Room

Shetland Traditional Dance -

Get a taste of local dances with the band Filskit, Downstairs hall, 2pm

Nordic Session led by our guests from

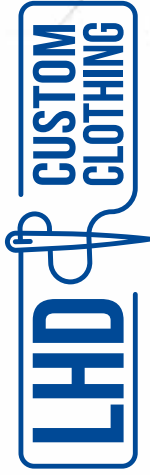
Kaustinen, 3pm, Room 10

All Club programming and access to Workshops is included as part of your Festival Membership. Spaces may be limited – first come, first served.

Venues

1. Clickimin Centre
2. Islesburgh (Festival Club)
3. Lerwick British Legion
4. Mareel
5. St Columba's Church





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The Hot Seats

For over 20 years, The Hot Seats have been a powerhouse in American and international folk music, blending hard-driving bluegrass, old-time, ragtime, jug blues, and country with humour and high-energy antics. Returning to the Shetland Folk Festival after 13 years, this band from Richmond, Virginia delivers a fast-paced, unpredictable show



packed with laughter and virtuosity, and we're delighted to have them back again! Described by *The Washington Post* as "old-time music with attitude", they've wowed audiences at Tønder, Celtic Connections, and Edinburgh Fringe (Herald Angel Award winners). Expect dazzling musicianship, theatrical twists, and pure fun from Ben Belcher, Josh Bearman, Jake Sellers, and Rudy Bee!

Julie Alapnes

Julie Alapnes is a dynamic violinist, singer, and composer who blends traditional North Norwegian folk music with modern influences. Learning fiddle on an instrument made by her grandfather, she has become a distinctive voice in Norwegian folk, praised for her cinematic, soul-stirring sound. A recipient of the Coop North Culture Prize and a UNESCO "Young Artist for



Intercultural Dialogue", Julie has performed worldwide, from the Cairo Opera House to Celtic Connections. Her remarkable ensemble includes Halvard Rundberg (harmonium, guitar), Petter Andreas Carlsen (multi-instrumentalist) and Aleksander Kostopoulos (drums), and together they reinvent folk traditions, earning themselves a Norwegian Grammy nomination for their second album *Helleristing* (2022). Expect a powerful, contemporary take on Norway's rich musical heritage.



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Budapest Café Orchestra

The Budapest Café Orchestra (BCO) is a dynamic four-piece ensemble founded in 2009 by British violinist Christian Garrick.

Blending gypsy, folk, and classical influences, they deliver an electrifying soundscape of Balkan rhythms, Russian melodies, and soaring Gaelic anthems. Despite their small size, they create the richness of a

full orchestra. The group features top musicians in accordionist Eddie Hession, string maestro Adrian Zolotuhin, bassist Kelly Cantlon, and Garrick himself, an acclaimed jazz violinist. Performing 60-70 shows annually, Budapest Café Orchestra is a favourite on BBC Radio 3. With 15 albums to their name, they continue to captivate audiences with virtuosity, passion, and boundless energy.



Duo Ruut

Estonian pair Duo Ruut, formed by Ann-Lisett Rebane and Katariina Kivi, create a unique sound by blending two voices with a single Estonian zither. Since 2017, their minimalist yet innovative approach has captivated global audiences, merging Estonian folk traditions with fresh, emotive song-writing. Praised by *MOJO*

for their “band-sized sound” and folk harmonies, they’ve performed at top festivals worldwide, from Celtic Connections to Womex. Their debut album *Tuule sõnad* (2019) won “Debut Album of the Year,” and their 2021 EP *Kulla Kerguseks* earned an Estonian Music Award nomination. With ethereal harmonies and rhythmic zither, Duo Ruut continue to enchant by creating a transcendent and unforgettable experience.





Closed on Monday 5th May
due to unforeseen circumstances.
Apologies for any
inconvenience caused.

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Good Guy Hank

From the harmonious heartlands of Scotland and the musical metropolis of Melbourne, Good Guy Hank brings a rich blend of soulful storytelling, powerful three-part harmonies, and masterful musicianship to the stage. Their electrifying sound fuses folk, bluegrass and country, drawing



influences from Hank Williams and Gillian Welch. The line-up of this alternative Americana act features Donny McElligott, Theo Barnard, Pepita Emmerichs and James Mackintosh (who has performed at the Festival with other outfits including Shooglenifty and Ciaran Ryan Band). Expect soulful vocals, blistering bluegrass and virtuoso fiddle playing as Good Guy Hank brings their unique Americana energy to Shetland – sure to be a storming success!

Astro Bloc

Astro Bloc is a bold new force in contemporary folk, blending deep-rooted tradition with cutting-edge creativity. With influences from Scotland, Ireland, and beyond, their electrifying sound reinvents the genre. Born from a late-night Celtic Connections jam, their chemistry was undeniable. Now, they're making waves with a powerhouse lineup: BBC Young Traditional Musician of the Year 2022 Eryn Rae (fiddle), award-winning Irish fiddler Éadaoin






Ní Mhaicín, Shetland-born percussionist Paul Jennings, and genre-spanning multi-instrumentalist Gillie Ó Flaherty. Astro Bloc's music fuses heritage with innovation, delivering soulful, dynamic performances that will have audiences dancing, cheering, and wanting more.



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Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe & Daniel Quayle

Blending the rich musical heritage of the Isle of Man with the dynamic sounds of synth pop and Eurofolk, Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe & Daniel Quayle bring a captivating energy to the folk music scene. Since their 2022 debut *The Coast Road*, they've enchanted audiences across Europe with a fusion of Manx, Irish, Scottish, and Estonian influences. Boston-born

fiddler Elizabeth and Manx multi-instrumentalist Daniel seamlessly shift from high-energy reels to reflective airs. With major festival appearances and a second album set for 2025, they continue to share Manx music worldwide, merging tradition with bold innovation in dynamic, ever-evolving performances.



Elias Alexander

Elias Alexander is a dynamic performer blending live looping and electronics with instruments like bagpipes, fiddle, guitar, whistle, and keys. Rooted in Scottish and American traditions, he crafts an electrifying fusion of traditional tunes, original songs, and danceable beats. His latest project, *Ramblxr*, defies categorisation – neither DJ nor band – showcasing his talent for captivating audiences. A standout in Scottish music, Elias has played major festivals like

Celtic Connections and Celtic Colours. Born from 2020's lockdowns, *Ramblxr* mixes folk with house, disco, and hip-hop, wowing crowds at festivals across North America. With more music on the way, Elias is set to make waves.





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TEHO.

TEHO. is a Finnish power-fiddle duo featuring virtuosos Tero Hyväluoma and Esko Järvelä. Rooted in Central Ostrobothnia's rich folk tradition, they push musical boundaries while staying true to their roots. Winners of Finland's prestigious Konsta Jylhä Competition (2016), their sound blends Finnish pelimanni fiddling with Norwegian halling, Swedish polska, bebop, and western swing-infused with improvisation. Both are leading figures in Nordic folk, known for genre-defying collaborations. They've played together in many projects, including Frigg, who performed at Shetland Folk Festival in 2009 and 2022. While in Shetland, Esko will also join a student tune exchange with young musicians from Kaustinen and Shetland.



Shetland/Kaustinen Tune Exchange

Every year the Festival strives to create opportunities for young musicians to showcase and develop their talent. This year four budding local musicians will be teaming up with peers from Kaustinen, Finland to exchange musical heritage and local tunes, culminating in a special collaboration at Mareel on the Saturday night.

The project group will also perform at Kaustinen Festival later in the year (the biggest in Finland and also famed for a rich fiddle heritage). Facilitating the groups are former Trad Musician of the Year, Amy Laurenson and Esko Järvelä (no stranger to Shetland having performed with various acts including Baltic Crossing and Frigg!).

Thanks to Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative and Nordic Council of Ministers for making this possible.





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Skelburn photos courtesy of Leading Lines Photography



Some 'skeklers' arrive at a late night gig at the Festival Club!

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An audience at Shetland's purpose-built music venue Mareel.

Niamh Wylie

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