Welcome to the

Princess Margaret of the Isles Memorial Prize for Senior Clàrsach (UK)

Armadale Castle Stables, Saturday 8 June 2019, 2.30pm

Programme

Welcome and opening remarks by Jack Evans

Competitors: Pippa Reid-Foster, Rebecca Hill, Karen Marshalsay, Elinor Evans

Adjudicator: Mary Ann Kennedy

There will be a short break (approx. 5 minutes) between each performer while the adjudicator makes her assessment.

The performance will be live streamed via the Armadale Castle Facebook page and made available for viewing after the event on our Vimeo channel. Please visit our website at www.armadalecastle.com for links and to sign up to our newsletter.

Acknowledgements We would like to thank Skye tutors, Mary M. Strachan and Christine Martin of Scotlandsmusic.com, for their assistance in organising this competition and for undertaking the first stage judging. We also offer a special welcome to adjudicator Mary Ann Kennedy and to Fear an Taighe Jack Evans of the National Centre for Excellence in Traditional Music, Plockton.

Clan Donald Lands Trust is grateful for the generous support of donors who make our sponsorship of the Gaelic performing arts possible. This event this year is part of Clan Donald Gaelic Arts Week, supported by EventScotland’s Scottish Clan Event Fund.
Programme notes

Candidates were required to prepare a 20 minute recital, including a variety of traditional and contemporary Scottish styles and a new composition by themselves.

Each year we also ask candidates to include an arrangement from a selected collection of tunes. For 2019 we selected the Collection of Highland Gaelic Airs by Patrick McDonald. First published in 1784 this collection contains the tunes to many Gaelic songs of that period from all over Scotland. The book’s two introductions give invaluable descriptions of both the music and way of life at this time. McDonald gives reference to tunes in the collection which he remembers as being the ancient harp music played in the Highlands. The clàrsach had already fallen out of use by this time but it was still within living memory, so the references are invaluable today to harp players seeking original tunes.

The following notes have been provided by the performers.

Pippa Reid-Foster

1 Allt Crioch – Pippa Reid-Foster

The opening piece I wrote after being asked to write a piece of music for the 60th birthday of a friend who lives by Allt Crioch, which is a stretch of burn running through the hills of the Loch Ard Forest.

2 Thig am Bhata – Traditional Gaelic, arr. Pippa Reid-Foster

One of my most favourite Gaelic melodies. *Thig am Bhata*, which translates as ‘The Boat will Come’, tells the haunting story of two women; the jealous one leaves the other to drown. The song is told from the drowned sister. Very haunting and beautiful.

The Ewe wi’ the Crooked Horn – Traditional, arr. Pippa Reid-Foster

A traditional strathspey re-written by John Skinner, originally a traveller’s song about a man who owns a much-appreciated ewe with a crooked horn until it is stolen by a nicken [rascal].

Dancing Feet – Pipe Major G.S. MacLennan, arr. Pippa Reid-Foster

I came across this piece through good friend and piper Colin Lawrie who recommended this to follow on from the strathspey. A fun Scottish reel which, supposedly, MacLennan spontaneously composed while playing a dance in Inverness. He was piping out the reel ‘Sandy Duff’ when he found himself playing this tune, which he called ‘dancing feet’ in honour of the dancers. MacLennan’s son has said this was the tune his father was playing on a practice chanter at the time of his death, from lung disease.

3 ’S neonach le Clann donail mi – Patrick McDonald, arr. Pippa Reid-Foster

This piece is taken from The Patrick McDonald Collection of North Highland Airs and translates as ‘I am a stranger to Clan Donald.’ The collection is very valuable as it is ‘probably the most genuine remains of the ancient harp-music of the Highlands’.

www.armadalecastle.com
4. Elements One – Pippa Reid-Foster

Earth, air, fire, water. Sinuous layers of elemental textures. Exploring composition incorporating electronic looping techniques.

Rebecca Hill

1. The Marquis of Huntly’s Farewell / Mrs Thom’s
A strathspey I learnt from pianist and composer James Ross during my time at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. William Marshal’s The Marquis of Huntly’s Farewell has been a hugely popular strathspey for generations and I was instantly drawn to this tune’s graceful and flowing melodic patterns. I will follow this with a contemporary jig written by Glasgow based composer, Mike Vass, which I learnt from his album Notes from a Boat.

2. Newark Seaglass
This is a composition of my own inspired by the natural process of polishing glass in the seas around the Orkney Islands. The opening of this piece was created to introduce the idea of flowing water which then transitions into a passage of intricate crossing melodic lines and hectic harmony resembling the tumbling of the glass under the still ocean surface.

3. Sleep Quietly
Sleep Quietly is a traditional tune I learnt from fellow former Royal Conservatoire of Scotland student, Rachel Clemente.

4. The Sheriff / Lady Montgomery
I first heard Chris Stout’s ‘The Sheriff’ on his album, Devil’s Advocate. Stout wrote this tune for fellow harpist and duo partner Catriona Mckay while touring and coming across a rather stubborn Sheriff. I follow that with a second reel, called ‘Lady Montgomery’, which is an 18th century tune written by Lord Eglintoun. I first heard this melody played by Session A9 in concert at Celtic Connections.

5. Dán Dheirg Dargo
As part of this project, we were each asked to arrange a piece from the Patrick McDonald Collection. I chose this haunting Traditional Argyllshire Air as it felt appropriate due to my upbringing in Oban. The Gaelic lyrics are from the ballad of Dearg, who was slain in battle by Goll.

Karen Marshalsay

1 The Road to Kennacraig  An rathad gu Ceann na Creige  (K. Marshalsay)
Written on Islay in 2013 to explore theme and variation using pipe ornamentation on the wire-strung clarsach, the more ancient instrument of Highland and Gaelic culture.

2 Greenwoodside / Isabel Gow’s Welcome to Edinburgh  (Trad/K. Marshalsay)
Two pipe marches on the gut-strung harp, the first a traditional 2/4 followed by a 6/8 which I wrote for my mother who left school at 14 and travelled into Edinburgh daily to work at the biochemistry labs in Forrest Road.

3 Skye Air, from the Patrick McDonald Collection
I have played several tunes from this important collection over the years and have chosen and arranged this one (number 160) specifically for this recital.

4 Jane Pickering’s Lilt / MacKinnon’s Brook / Andrew’s Smiles / The Forth Bridge Reel (Trad/Trad/K. Marshalsay/K. Marshalsay)
The first tune comes from an early 17th century lute manuscript which bears the arms of James I (VI of Scotland) and was likely to have been played by one of his court musicians who moved south with him; the second is a strathspey I learned from some of the pupils when teaching at the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music at Plockton; the third I wrote for my nephew when he was a wee baby, and the last reel comes from a longer piece I wrote for a Distil showcase with Mr McFalls Chamber.

5 The Battle of the Bridge of Perth Ceann Drochaid Pheairt (pibroch)
I learned this pibroch from Allan MacDonald and play the urlar, dithis & trebling, taorluath, and crunluath on the wire-strung clarsach. The battle, at North Inch in 1396, saw 30 warriors, selected to represent clans Chattan and Kay, fight before King Robert III.

All tunes arranged by Karen Marshalsay.

Elinor Evans

1 Lines on a Map – Fiona Rutherford
A minimalist piece that uses the lever harp to its full potential, it was written by contemporary Scottish harpist and composer Fiona Rutherford.

2 Barncleupedie – James MacMillan

Barncleupedie is written by the great Scottish composer James MacMillan who is celebrating his 60th birthday this year. This piece has the Burns’s tune Will Ye No Come Back Again at its heart, with more than a nod to French composer Erik Satie in the title and rhythmic patterns.

3 Ten Years ‘Till Your Bus Pass/Bedging – Elinor Evans
I wrote the first tune for my mum’s significant birthday, and the second following a winter walk; Bedging literally means ‘bottom sledging’!

4 The Cuillin – Elinor Evans

This piece, loosely based on serialism, uses the height of each of the 12 Munros on Skye to get the 12 notes required to create the piece.
5 A bhannarach dhonn a’ chruidh (The Brown Milkmaid) – Patrick McDonald

A simple short tune from the Patrick McDonald Collection which fits perfectly on the clarsach, lending itself to a gentle introduction with harmonics that melds perfectly to the melody.


The first tune was written by James Scott Skinner for his friend Dr Keith Norman MacDonald known to be from the Isle of Skye; the second, also by Scott Skinner, was written for his iron magnate benefactor; and Itchy Fingers is just a great traditional tune!

Biographies

Pippa Reid-Foster

Rebecca Hill

Karen Marshalsay

Elinor Evans

Pippa Reid-Foster

Born and having lived most of her life on the West Coast of Scotland, Pippa sees Scotland’s beautiful and dramatic landscape as home territory and essential inspiration for her music.

A graduate of 2014 from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Pippa is known for her innovative contemporary clàrsach music, showcasing the instrument’s varied tonal palettes. Since releasing her first solo album, Driftwood Harp, in 2016, Pippa’s focus has moved towards a more minimal compositional style incorporating electronic looping and effects whilst still retaining strong references to her Scottish roots. Her composition ‘Murmurations’ was premiered in the Distil Showcase concerts, giving her the opportunity
to perform with renowned ensemble McFall’s Chamber. She has performed at many festivals including the Edinburgh International Harp Festival and Glasgow’s Celtic Connections. Her ability to adapt comfortably to a wide range of musical disciplines has resulted in stage performance and studio work with a number of Scottish contemporary rock bands.

Pippa has adjudicated at The Royal National Mòd, and she teaches courses at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival each year. She was nominated for Tutor of the Year at the MG Alba Scots Trad Music Awards in 2017.

**Rebecca Hill**

Originally hailing from the West Coast of Scotland, Glasgow-based harpist, pianist and composer Rebecca Hill comes from a family steeped in traditional Scottish music.

She began her musical education at an early age studying under the tutelage of Sileas Sinclair and Toni Russell. Finding she had a natural aptitude for music, Rebecca discovered her love for the traditional lever harp through the Fèisean nan Gàidheal programme. In July 2017 Rebecca graduated from the prestigious Royal Conservatoire of Scotland’s Bachelor of Music (Traditional) course with an Honours Degree of the First Class.

Starting off with the local Argyll Ceilidh Trail, Rebecca has gone on to develop as a performer appearing at a range of high profile events including at St Giles Cathedral for HRH Prince of Wales, and at Edinburgh Castle for the Scottish TV and Scottish Women’s Awards Ceremonies. Rebecca has also reached the semi-finals of the BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award 2016 with harp and fiddle duo alongside BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year 2017 Charlie Stewart. Rebecca can be heard on Ohio based harpist Rachel Clemente’s debut EP *Quiet Uniqueness* and is currently working towards releasing her own new EP in August 2019.

**Karen Marshalsay**

Karen Marshalsay plays all three Scottish harps – gut-strung, wire-strung and the buzzing, sitar-like bray harp. Deeply influenced by the piping tradition and particularly pibroch, Karen has honed her style through playing with Allan MacDonald of the famous Glenuig piping family, and in Boys of the Lough founder Cathal McConnell’s trio.

Currently wire harp tutor at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Karen taught for seven years at the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music at Plockton where she received a Distinction in the LTCL diploma, the first person to do so with an all-traditional repertoire. She has performed and conducted workshops at many major festivals worldwide, and has worked with African, Paraguayan and Indian musicians on multi-cultural projects, including *Yatra* for the Edinburgh Mela. In 2018 she guested with the Russian String Orchestra during the Edinburgh Festival playing her own compositions. She has published many of these along with her arrangements of traditional tunes in a series of books. Her first solo album, *The Road to Kennacraig*, has just been released.
**Elinor Evans**

Born in Scotland of Welsh parents, Elinor is a hybrid of two Celtic cultures. In 2014 Elinor completed her degree at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, going on to gain her Post Graduate Diploma in Composition at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 2016 whilst also gaining her ARIAM (Teaching) from the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin.

She has competed successfully in many festivals and in 2015 won the prestigious Trophée Camac de Harpe Celtique in Lorient, Brittany, being the first Scottish harpist to do so. She has released a CD and an EP showing her distinctive style and featuring her own compositions alongside sensitive arrangements of traditional pieces. She is a natural teacher and performer and believes music should be available to all.

**Mary Ann Kennedy** (Adjudicator)

A Glasgow Gael with Hebridean roots, Mary Ann Kennedy’s whole life has been music. Part of the Skye tradition-bearer family, the Campbells of Greepe, her earliest memories are of a home filled with song. A hothouse classical training – and a brief diversion running the BBC’s Gaelic news service – led to a career as musician, broadcaster, composer and producer, based in the West Highlands where she runs Watercolour Music with husband and fellow musician-producer Nick Turner. She studied harp with Sanchia Pielou in Glasgow at Douglas Academy and RSAMD, and with Eira Lynn Jones at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, where she became the first harpist to be awarded their highest performance diploma.

Most of her life has been making music with others – collaborating, nurturing, inspiring. A founder member of Cliar, ‘All-time Best Album’ winners at the first Scots Trad Music Awards, she’s also twice winner of the Lorient Concours International de l’Harpe, double Gaelic Mòd gold medallist, and Saltire Award winner for ground-breaking choral work, Lasair Dhè. Commissions include the first PRSF New Music Biennial (Glasgow Commonwealth Games) and Musician in Residence at Scotland’s Gaelic college, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

In 2017, she stepped forward as soloist and writer, with her debut album on ARC Music, ‘An Dàn’ (The Song), a unique collection of new Gaelic songwriting. The follow-up – ‘Glaschu’ – a love-song to her Glasgow home-town, was released early in 2019.
About us

The Princess Margaret of the Isles Prize is named after Princess Margaret of Scotland, the daughter of King Robert II and the wife of John, Lord of the Isles. Princess Margaret was a great patron of the arts, and through this prize for senior clàrach playing, Clan Donald Lands Trust seeks to perpetuate and honour that reputation.

Armadale Castle, Gardens & Museum of the Isles is owned and managed by Clan Donald Lands Trust, a Scottish Registered Charity. We are proud to be a 5 Star Visit Scotland Visitor Attraction, with an award-winning Museum which is Accredited by Museums Galleries Scotland. We welcome tens of thousands of visitors each year from around the globe.

Clan Donald Lands Trust was formed in 1971 to save the last remaining remnants of the once vast clan lands as a focal point for clan history and activity worldwide. The Trust is dedicated to promoting the history and traditions of the clan and the Highlands & Islands. We work with young people and local partners to promote Gaelic traditions and ensure they are passed to future generations as a living heritage. Through the generosity of donors we are pleased to support local clàrach tuition and provide 12 clàrachs on long term loan to local schools. We also support the Kate MacDonald Memorial Prize for Junior Clàrach as well as piping and Gaelic poetry competitions. For more information see the Cultural Heritage section of our website.

Gasta at Armadale Castle We are pleased to host this afternoon’s event in the Stables building, which is managed by Gasta at Armadale Castle. Gasta is open 7 days a week offering daytime light refreshments and lunches. On Thursdays, Friday and Saturdays Gasta is also open from 5pm for dinner, and there’s also a separate bar. (However please note that due to the clarsach competition Gasta is operating as a bar only this evening.) Gasta hold regular live music sessions too. More information: www.gastaarmadale.co.uk

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Why not join as a Friend? As well as providing valuable support to our work you will enjoy free entry all year and a range of other benefits. More information on our website.

If you would like to find out more about how you can support our work through donation, legacy and sponsorship please contact Sue Geale, Museum Manager at: museum@armadalecastle.com or 01471 844 305.

We look forward to seeing you at Armadale Castle, Gardens & Museum again soon. Follow us on:

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