



The esteemed winners of the 21st MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards have been announced at a celebratory ceremony at Dundee's Caird Hall.

The prestigious awards night saw 22 awards handed to a talented group of musicians, promoters, individuals and venues, who were honoured out of over 110 nominees for their valued contributions to Scottish music and culture.

This year a record number of over 100,000 votes were cast by fans and followers of the traditional music scene, illustrating the escalating popularity and support the genre commands within Scotland and beyond. Over the past two decades, its expansion has captivated broader audiences with new festivals and more events year on year.

Supported by Creative Scotland, the Trad Awards, or 'Na Trads', inaugurated in 2003, stand as a testament to the innovation and dedication of the individuals and organisations whose valuable contributions continue to enrich Scotland's vibrant musical landscape. Presented by Alistair Heather and Mary Ann Kennedy, the awards were broadcast live on BBC ALBA and can be watched back on BBC iPlayer.

One of the country's most recognised and accomplished fiddle players Duncan Chisholm won the award for Album of the Year, sponsored by Birnam CD, for his record Black Cuillin. Duncan's seventh studio album to date, the beautiful body of work draws inspiration from the mountain wilderness on the Isle of Skye.

Celebrated singer and multi-instrumentalist Julie Fowles was honoured as Musician of the Year, sponsored by University of the Highlands and Islands. A well-kent face on the Scottish music scene, Julie has been singing, dancing and piping since she was a child and has released six solo albums to date, and a further eight with various musical groups.

The talented Iona Fyfe was hailed City Finlayson Scots Singer of the Year, the award sponsored by Traditional Music and Song Association of Scotland, while acclaimed songstress Eilidh Cormack was named Gaelic Singer of the Year, sponsored by Highland Society of London.

West Coast natives Trail West were named Live Act of the Year, sponsored by Gordon Duncan Memorial Trust. A band renowned for their energetic performances, Trail West have continued to rise in popularity over the past decade, from their modest roots as a four-piece ceilidh band to a formidable live act, worthy of any festival stage.

Scottish Dance Band of the Year, sponsored by National Association of Accordion and Fiddle Clubs was awarded to Iain MacPhail; Scottish Folk Band of the Year, sponsored by Threads of Sound was won by Blazin' Fiddles, and Scottish Pipe Band of the Year, sponsored by National Piping Centre was awarded to The Peoples Ford Boghall and Bathgate Caledonia Pipe Band.

Up and Coming Artist of the Year, sponsored by Royal Conservatoire of Scotland was awarded to Dunfermline siblings The Shands. The talented trio have been playing together since a young age and have their sights set on a bright, musical future.

The Clearances Again by Donald Francis MacNeil and Skipinnish was named Original Work of the Year, sponsored by Musicians' Union. The powerful protest song was penned in response to plans to ban inshore fishing and all marine activities, and was Isle of Vatersay fisherman Donald's recording debut.

The Gaitherin South Sessions in Glasgow was named Club of the Year, while The Tolbooth in Stirling took home the title for Venue of the Year. Event of the Year, sponsored by VisitScotland was awarded to Orkney Folk Festival.

Community Project of the Year, sponsored by Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland, was awarded to Fèis Rois Ceilidh Trail for the organisation's ongoing support of young musicians in the trad scene.

BBC Radio Scotland's Travelling Folk took home the prize for Trad Music in the Media, sponsored by Glasgow Caledonian University.

Composer of the Year, sponsored by PRS for Music was named Heidi Talbot and Music Tutor of the Year, sponsored by Creative Scotland Youth Music Initiative, was awarded to Domhnall Bàn MacDonald.

A new award was created this year in honour of the late, beloved folk writer and critic Sue Wilson. The Sue Wilson New Writer Award, sponsored by Songlines Magazine, was awarded to Angus MacPhail of The Oban Times.

A number of special prizes were awarded, selected by a panel of esteemed industry judges, to those whose services to traditional music and culture have made significant impact.

John Urquhart received the Services to Gaelic Award, sponsored by Bòrd na Gàidhlig; Donald Smith was presented with The Hamish Henderson Services to Traditional Music Award; while Frieda Morrison received The Janet Paisley Services to Scots Language Award, sponsored by Creative Scotland.

A raft of industry awards which recognise those individuals and organisations who support the creative pipeline of the trad music sector were also awarded.

Somhairle MacDonald was named Graphics Designer of the Year; Mhari McLeman of Shetland Folk Festival took home the title of Traditional Music Enabler of the Year; Euan Robertson Photography was awarded Photographer of the Year and Gary at the Ceilidh Place was honoured as Venue Technician of the Year.



The MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards champion top Scottish traditional musicians of all genres and this year's ceremony both showcased and celebrated Scotland's flourishing music scene in style.

A host of incredible performances delighted the Dundee audience, with stand out sets from acclaimed Gaelic songstress Joy Dunlop and her band, Album of the Year winner Duncan Chisholm, legendary Skye folk-fusion group Peatbog Faeries and Scottish trad party-starters MÀNran.

Simon Thoumire, organiser of the MG ALBA Scots Trad Awards said: "I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making the 2023 'Na Trads' such a resounding success. From the passionate audience members and all of our incredibly talented performers to everyone who voted and our generous sponsors and supporters, we truly couldn't hold these awards without you. Congratulations to all the deserving award winners; your dedication and artistry continue to elevate and inspire the scene as a whole.

"Our 21st year has felt like a coming of age and it's been wonderful to celebrate this milestone with those across Scotland and beyond who share our love of Scottish traditional music and its profound cultural impact. The enduring appeal of our music is heartening to see, and I'm deeply grateful to be part of this vibrant community, celebrating the rich tapestry of our musical heritage while embracing new waves of creativity."

Margaret Cameron, Director of Content at MG ALBA said: "After another outstanding year for Scottish Traditional music, this 21st year of the 'Trads' has to go down as one of the best ever. Each of the winners are to be congratulated for their tremendous commitment to their craft, and for once again raising the bar for Scottish traditional music both at home and abroad.

“The MG ALBA team is delighted to be in a position to continue to sponsor the event and fund the BBC ALBA commissioned live programme showcasing Saturday’s awards ceremony. It’s clear the impact the awards have on the Scottish cultural scene, and we welcome the opportunity to celebrate our artists, amplify their successes and make the night available to our audiences.”

Head of Music at Creative Scotland, Alan Morrison said: “With fans casting more votes than ever before, the 21st edition of the Trad Awards has proven yet again that Scotland’s traditional music is a treasure to be cherished the length and breadth of the country, from Orkney and Shetland to Boghall and Bathgate. It’s testament to the strength of the sector that rising stars such as Iona Fyfe, Eilidh Cormack and The Shands can share the same spotlight as ground-breaking musicians such as Duncan Chisholm, Julie Fowles and Blazin’ Fiddles. Na Trads ensure that our rich heritage is passed on from generation to generation, keeping our indigenous languages alive, and so Creative Scotland offers special congratulations to the winners of our sponsored categories – Frieda Morrison, recipient of the Janet Paisley Services to Scots Language Award, and Domhnall Bàn MacDonald, the 2023 Music Tutor of the Year.”

Lyn Donnelly, VisitScotland Senior Responsible Tourism Manager said: “VisitScotland is excited to continue its sponsorship of the Event of the Year category at the 2023 MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards. Scotland’s proud cultural heritage and communities are a huge part of what makes us unique as a visitor destination. With responsible tourism our key focus, we are committed to promoting and enhancing these for future generations. Our outstanding trad music scene offers visitors an extra layer of authenticity – something we know is important to them – and remains a thriving, exhilarating experience embraced by Scots of all ages.”

Stuart Fleming, Senior Relationship Manager – NI & Scotland, PRS for Music said: “Congratulations to all the nominees and winners, including Heidi Talbot for taking home Composer of the Year supported by PRS for Music. This win is testament to your passion, creativity, and craft. We are delighted to continue our support of Hands Up for Trad and celebrate Scotland’s vibrant trad music community, who inspire us with their musical talent year after year.”

As well as all category sponsors and the event’s headline sponsor, this year’s MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Award took place with huge thanks to funding from Creative Scotland, The Northwood Trust and Dundee City Council.

The ceremony can be viewed on BBC iPlayer now.

For more information visit www.scotstradmusicawards.com.