

MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards announces 2020 winners



2020 saw the annual [MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards](#) broadcast on BBC ALBA on Saturday 12th December at 9pm in a special programme named [Na Trads 2020](#)

The usually live annual event was this year broadcast in a vibrant programme put together and aired exclusively on BBC ALBA. Hosted by Alistair Heather and Mary Ann Kennedy, award winners were announced along with specially-recorded music performances from some of traditional music's top luminaries, including The Iona Fyfe Trio, Project Smok, Deirdre Graham, Jarlath Henderson and Karen Matheson as well as Phil Cunningham and many more.

This year's event had been set to take place in Dundee's Caird Hall but with live music and event restrictions in place for the foreseeable future, Hands Up for Trad worked to support artists and provide an alternative platform, culminating in two special programmes of *Na Trads* on BBC ALBA.

Joy Dunlop presented the inductees to the Hall of Fame on Friday evening, followed by the MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards themselves on Saturday. The awards will be shown again on BBC ALBA at 9pm on Saturday 18th December 2020 and will be available on the BBC iPlayer for 30 days.

Ealasaid MacDonald, Director of Strategy & External Affairs at title sponsors MG ALBA, which operates BBC ALBA in partnership with the BBC, said: *"Once again, the Trads has showcased the best of creativity and talent across Scotland. MG ALBA would like to congratulate all those who have taken part, those nominated and the winners, as they have been part of a very different year where music has been an essential part of all our lives. We are delighted that Hands Up for Trad has brought us all together for this wonderful opportunity to celebrate the best of traditional music."*

Organising body, [Hands Up for Trad](#) funded by The National Lottery through Creative Scotland, was formed in 2002 and exists to increase the profile and visibility of Scottish traditional music through information, advocacy and education to artists, participants, and audiences.

Hands Up for Trad's founder and Creative Director Simon Thoumire thanked all involved: *"The arrival of Covid-19 has required a massive change for us all, impacted in so many different ways, and I want to thank MG ALBA and our sponsors, the artists and musicians and crew and everyone who voted. Everyone has worked together tirelessly to maintain, pivot and bring our music programme online right through this year, culminating in last night's fantastic BBC ALBA broadcast of the Na Trads 2020 programme of our annual MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards, the pinnacle of our year."*

Christine Halsall, Youth Music Initiative Officer at Creative Scotland said: *Throughout this difficult year Hands Up for Trad has brought the very best of trad arts to the living rooms of audiences across the world, and supported artists in the sector at an unprecedented time. This year's Na Trads is a very welcome celebration of the fantastic talent and rich variety that exists across the sector, and it's fantastic to be able to join the festivities from afar via BBC ALBA.*

Within the awards programme, three pillars of the Scots Trad Music community were recognised through special awards; the **Janet Paisley Services to Scots Language Award sponsored by Creative Scotland** awarded to **James Robertson**, the **Services to Gaelic Award sponsored by Bòrd na Gàidhlig** awarded to **John Smith**, and the **2020 Hamish Henderson Award for Services to Traditional Music** went to **Lisa Whytock**.

Daibhidh Boag of Bòrd na Gàidhlig said: *"We are proud to support this award once more and on behalf of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, I congratulate and thank John Smith for his dedication to the language through his work in television. His contribution to Gaelic culture has been invaluable and he continues to be an inspiration to young Gaelic speakers with his work at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Skye."*

Tweaked for 2020 to reflect everything the entire industry has created due to Covid-19, MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Award Winners & Sponsors reactions were:

- 1. Album of The Year, sponsored by Birnam CD**
The Woods by Hamish Napier
- 2. Original Work of the Year, sponsored by PRS for Music**
Everyday Heroes by Skerryvore

Award sponsor Stuart Fleming, Senior Membership Manager Scotland & Northern Ireland, PRS for Music said: *"Congratulations to all the nominees and winners recognised at this year's MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards, including Skerryvore for winning Original Work of the Year. The incredible Everyday Heroes, written to raise proceeds for the NHS Charities Together COVID-19 Urgent Appeal, will no doubt have brought hope to many in 2020. Congratulations too to Hands Up for Trad and BBC ALBA for putting together such a successful celebration of the Scottish traditional music community during these times."*

- 3. Community Music Project of the Year, sponsored by Greentrax Recordings**
Tunes in the Hoose
- 4. Event of the Year Award sponsored by VisitScotland**
BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician Award 20th Anniversary Concert
(Celtic Connections)

Denise Hill, Head of Engagement at VisitScotland said: *"VisitScotland is delighted to continue its sponsorship of the Event of the Year category at the 2020 MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards. This has been a difficult and remarkable year, during which time we have been able to celebrate exceptional music events- and the skill and ingenuity that has brought them to us- first live and then online. For visitors to Scotland, our vibrant and exceptional trad music scene has long opened the door to experiencing Scotland's culture – alive, exhilarating and embraced by Scots of all ages. This year too, virtual music events have taken that feeling into living-rooms around the globe, allowing future visitors to dream now for travel later – and we look forward to welcoming them back again to Scotland's events and festivals before too long".*

5. Gaelic Singer of the Year, sponsored by The Highland Society of London

Fionnag NicChoinnich (Fiona MacKenzie)

Duncan Byatt, President of the Highland Society of London, said: *“The Highland Society of London is delighted to continue our sponsorship of the Gaelic Singer of the Year Award at the 2020 MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards. Music continues to be an important factor in lifting spirits and supporting communities during this difficult year, and we are extremely grateful to Hands Up For Trad and BBC ALBA for (amongst their many other fantastic initiatives) providing this platform to recognise so many creative and inspiring musicians – particularly those that perform in Gaelic.”*

6. Musician of the Year, sponsored by the University of the Highlands and Islands

Tim Edey

Anna-Wendy Stevenson, Programme Leader, BA (Hons) Applied Music University of the Highlands and Islands said: *“The University of the Highlands and Islands is delighted to continue to support the Musician of the Year Award, in what has been an incredibly challenging year for the musical and wider artistic community. It is more important than ever to celebrate the contribution and positive impact our musicians have on our wellbeing, culture, communities and economy. It has been incredible to witness the adaptability and resilience of many musicians, skillsets we actively impart to our students, and we value the role of this event MG ALBA Scots Traditional Music Awards, in bringing together organisations across music in Scotland to support the development of and recognise the work and talent of our musicians.*

“It’s been wonderful to watch the incredible dedication Tim Edey has demonstrated to his art and to his worldwide audience during lockdown. Tim has inspired and soothed so many people with his warm and welcoming online performances – he is a wonderful ambassador for music. Congratulations to Tim Edey”.

7. Online Performance of 2020, sponsored by Gordon Duncan Memorial Trust

Duncan Chisholm’s Covid Ceilidh

Award Sponsor Ian (Duncan), Chairman of the Gordon Duncan Memorial Trust said:

“The Gordon Duncan Memorial Trust is delighted to sponsor the Online Performance of 2020 award, a new and until now, unique award, made to those musicians who presented many and various online performances to cheer up all those who listened to their music and patter during the difficult days of Covid-19 lockdown in 2020. Thank you to all of you who had the ingenuity, capability and good humour to share your talents with us, and we’re delighted to support the winner, Duncan Chisholm’s Covid Ceilidh.”

8. Citty Finlayson Scots Singer of the Year, sponsored by Traditional Music and Song Association (TMSA), for artists singing in Scots language

Siobhan Miller

Fiona Campbell, Convener of the Traditional Music & Song Association of Scotland (TMSA), said:

“The TMSA is pleased to support Na Trads in 2020, and appreciate MG ALBA and Hands Up For Trad are ensuring that recognition of talent, creativity and resilience continues in these uncertain times. We are delighted that Siobhan Miller has been awarded the Citty Finlayson Scots Singer of the Year Award for the fourth time at the Scots Trad Music Awards, as she is a great ambassador for the Scots language, a strong supporter of the TMSA, and also Citty was someone dear to her during her formative years.”

9. Trad Video of the Year, sponsored by Threads of Sound

Calum Dan's Transit Van by Peat & Diesel

Graham Collins, *Threads of Sound*, said: *"We're delighted to continue to support the MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards in this strange and challenging year. The new Trad Video of the Year Award recognises how important online video has been for connecting artists with their audiences this year and we congratulate all the nominees for the this and all the awards."*

10. Trad Music in the Media, sponsored by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Anna Massie - Black Isle Correspondent

Dr Gillian Rothach, Principal of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig said: *"Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is thrilled to celebrate the MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards, 2020 and send congratulations to winner Anna Massie. We have never needed traditional music, and the inspiration which Scotland's traditional musicians and singers bring us, more than in this extraordinary year of Covid. And this year's shortlists were eye-wateringly good!"*

11. Up & Coming artist of the Year, sponsored by Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Rebecca Hill

Award sponsor Professor Joshua Dickson, Head of Traditional Music at the Royal Conservatoire Scotland said *"We are delighted that RCS graduate Rebecca Hill has received this well-earned accolade. Becky has reached new audiences through her recent EP and continues to innovate as a traditional musician, artist, teacher, composer and youth ensemble leader."*

12. Music Tutor of the Year, sponsored by Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative

Josie Duncan

Morag Macdonald, Youth Music Initiative Manager, Creative Scotland added: *"The Youth Music Initiative is delighted to support the Music Tutor of the Year Award that recognises the ongoing dedication and enthusiasm of music tutors like Jodie Duncan who contribute so much to the music ecology of Scotland. This year more than ever we have witnessed musicians going the extra mile to ensure that children and young people have opportunities to engage with music making and we celebrate the commitment of these individuals."*

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