

ALEX GREEN



TIN WHISTLE

FESTIVAL

Aberdeen 1-3 March 2024

1495
 UNIVERSITY OF
ABERDEEN

ELPHINSTONE  INSTITUTE
studying culture in context

The Alex Green Tin Whistle Festival

In collaboration with our partners, Friends of the Elphinstone Institute, Aberdeen Performing Arts, TMSA Aberdeen, WayWord Festival, Fèis Rois, and SC&T Youth, the Elphinstone Institute is excited to announce the Alex Green Tin Whistle Festival, 1-3 March 2024 in Aberdeen. The first festival of its kind to be held in the North-East, it promises to be an inspiring weekend of multi-instrumental traditional music, featuring concerts, workshops, talks and sessions, and bringing together some of the most highly regarded tin whistle players from Scotland and beyond. Celebrating the musical legacy of much-loved North-East tin whistle virtuoso, Alex Green (1930-2017) its focus acknowledges the important place of the tin whistle to the North-East community, and the dedicated efforts of Alex Green to inspire young players, and to bring its uniquely expressive potential as an instrument to the foreground of Scottish traditional music.

The Festival

Featuring guests from the local to the internationally renowned, our exciting weekend programme exemplifies the rich diversity and stylistic flexibility of whistle playing traditions, whilst welcoming complete beginners, young musicians, and players of other instruments to come and take part. With something for everyone, daytime events include an afternoon conference, a young people's lunch time concert, 'artist in conversation' talks, and multi-level tin whistle workshops. Beginning with a festival launch hosted by TMSA Aberdeen at King's Pavilion, Aberdeen University, weekend concerts at The Lemon Tree will feature headline artists Fred Morrison, Claire Mann and Tom Oakes, and famed tin whistle legends Mary Bergin and Cathal McConnell. Evening performances will be followed by informal late night traditional sessions to be held at The Blue Lamp.

Booking information

Many festival events are free but ticketed. Please book quickly to guarantee a place. Weekend concerts, talks and workshops can be booked via Aberdeen Box Office. Tel: 01224 641122, or online at aberdeenperformingarts.com. Tickets are also available on the door at The King's Pavilion and The Lemon Tree. All tickets, including free conference registration, are also bookable via the QR code, or via our festival webpage:

www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/public-engagement/alex-green-whistle-festival-728.php
For any enquiries, please contact the Elphinstone Institute by email: elphinstone@abdn.ac.uk or by phone: 01224 272996.



Festival venues

Festival events will take place at the MacRobert Building and King's Pavilion, University of Aberdeen, and at city venues, The Lemon Tree and The Blue Lamp.



Alex Green (1930-2017)

Known locally for his colourful personality and for his self-created, unmistakably North-East ‘spit staccato style’, well-loved ‘tin whistle virtuoso’ Alex Green inspired a love of traditional music in multiple generations of young Scottish players. An accomplished soloist, television and showband performer, his iconic style tackled a wide Scottish repertoire, from the most challenging strathspeys and reels of fiddler and composer, James Scott Skinner, or the graced precision of Highland pipe tunes, to the joyful, upbeat tempos of traditional Scottish dance music. With their whistle and accordion duo, ‘Airs and Graces’, he and his wife Madeline Miller appeared regularly at sessions and folk festivals throughout the country. A dedicated teacher and supporter of young players, Alex brought recognition to the tin whistle as an accessible, versatile and expressive instrument, worthy of serious musical attention. For his invaluable contribution to traditional music Alex Green was inducted into the ‘Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame’ in 2017, an award he treasured. This festival in turn acknowledges his much missed local presence, and the importance of his contribution to Aberdeen and North-East traditional culture.

The Alex Green Tin Whistle Project

Acknowledging Alex Green’s commitment to encouraging young musicians, the project aims to enthuse new whistle players, and to strengthen musical confidence, participation and enjoyment of traditional music, from the earliest years on. Led by local tutors, our project partners SC&T Youth and Fèis Rois are currently providing whistle lessons to multiple primary schools in the Aberdeen and Fraserburgh area. It is hoped that this promising project will inspire new generations of young players and establish the tin whistle as a vital part of early musical education in North-East schools. Future plans include creating a North-East tin whistle tutor book, and new educational materials. The Elphinstone Institute and partners look forward to welcoming you to this unique festival weekend.
Sara Reith (Artistic Director)

Friday 1st March 2024

'BIG MUSIC BEGINS IN SMALL WAYS': A CONFERENCE ON SMALL INSTRUMENTS AND EARLY-YEARS TRADITIONAL MUSICALITY

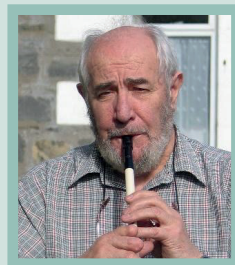
Time: 1:00pm – 4:00pm | Venue: Room MR055, MacRobert Building, King's College Campus, University of Aberdeen
Free Entry but Online Registration Required

All are welcome to register for this free afternoon conference, including afternoon refreshments. Hosted by the Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, with a keynote presentation to be given by Dougie Pincock, this conference explores the themes underlying early-years traditional musicality, in particular, the importance of small, easily accessible and affordable musical instruments in developing young people's relationships with music, instruments, and musicality. The theme draws upon Alex Green's personal story of how music turned adversity into a source of personal strength, upon the 'simplicity' and flexibility of his chosen instrument, and upon the existence of multiple exemplary figures and social, stylistic contexts for music making in his childhood surroundings.

A CELEBRATION OF ALEX GREEN: THE MAN, THE WHISTLE, AND MANY YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

Time: 7pm – 9pm | Venue: King's Pavilion, King's College Campus, University of Aberdeen
Price: £11.25 (Booking via Aberdeen Performing Arts)
Children must be accompanied by an adult

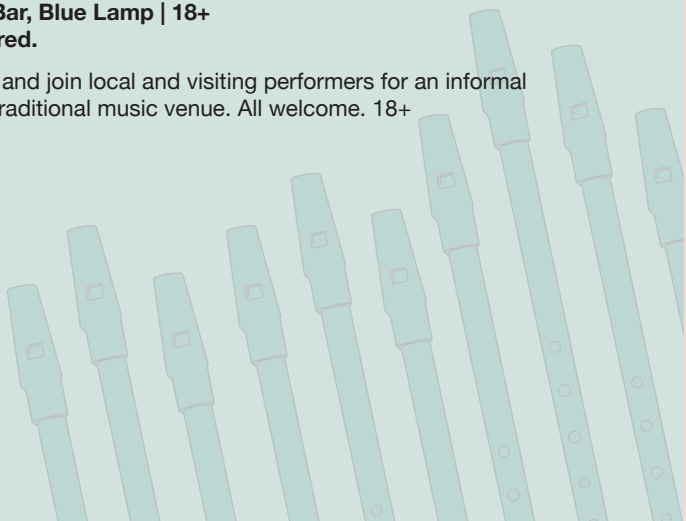
As a key festival partner, the Aberdeen branch of the Traditional Music and Song Association (TMSA) is delighted to bring you an evening of music, song and stories to celebrate the life of Alex Green featuring contributions from Sara Reith, Scott Williams, Kenny Hadden, Geordie Murison, Janice Reavell and many more. Please note there is no bar at this concert.



TRADITIONAL MUSIC SESSION

Time: 10pm | Venue: Sandy's Bar, Blue Lamp | 18+
Free Entry, No Booking Required.

Bring your instrument (or voice) and join local and visiting performers for an informal session at Aberdeen's premier traditional music venue. All welcome. 18+



Saturday 2nd March 2024

WORKSHOP: PLAYING FOR DANCERS

Time: 10am – 11:15am | Venue: Kate's Bar, Lemon Tree
Free Entry but Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts

Join whistle-player extraordinaire, Helen Lynch, for a workshop on playing for dancers. Drawing on long experience playing with ceilidh band Danse McCabre, she'll explore style, pace, rhythm, how to choose tunes and compile sets that work well for different dances. Come along and play/learn some melodies to make those dancing feet fly.

Players of any instrument and all levels are welcome to this workshop.



ALEX GREEN WEEKEND: CHILDREN'S TIN WHISTLE WORKSHOP

Time: 10am – 1pm | Venue: Kate's Bar, Lemon Tree
Free Entry but Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts

Children from Primary 4 to Primary 7 are very welcome to join visiting whistle tutor, Claire Mann, Fèis Rois tutor, Sharon Hassan, and festival Artistic Director, Sara Reith, for a morning of musical fun and learning followed by a chance to perform on stage.

Schedule

9:45am – 10am	Registration
10am – 11:40am	Warm-ups, workshops, and rehearsal
11:45am – 12:15pm	Time to eat your packed lunch
12:15am – 12:45pm	Line checks on stage
1pm – 1:45pm	Young People's Concert

Please Note: Parents are required to complete a consent form on arrival. Children must bring a packed lunch as food is not available. Please bring a tin whistle in D if possible. Visit our webpage for more details.

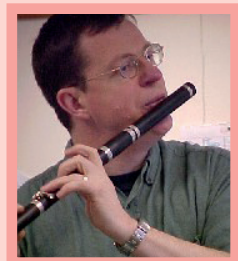


WORKSHOP: PLAYING THE WHISTLE WITH SINGERS

Time: 11:30am – 12:45pm | Venue: Kate's Bar, Lemon Tree
Free Entry but Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts

In this workshop, recently retired Director of the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music in Plockton, Dougie Pincock, shares his insights on playing with singers in a band context. He'll explore how to create suitable parts to play behind singers, how to follow a chord chart, and how to solo in a song. The workshop will be based around high and low whistles in the key of D but whistles in other keys will be discussed and incorporated.

Players of all levels are welcome to this workshop.



Saturday 2nd March 2024

ALEX GREEN TIN WHISTLE FESTIVAL YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERT

Time: 1pm – 1:45pm | Venue: Lemon Tree

Free Entry, No Booking Required

Led by festival workshop leaders, this lunch time concert will feature performances from young participants from Fèis Rois's Alex Green Young Musician's Project, SC&T Youth, and others. The concert will close with short performances from various guest artists. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

MASTERCLASS WITH MARY BERGIN

Time: 2pm – 3:30pm | Venue: The Studio, Lemon Tree

Price: £10/8 conc. (Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts)

Described by the Irish Times as 'just about the best Tin Whistle player this century', Mary Bergin is widely regarded as one of Ireland's most important musicians.

In this masterclass, Mary will explore aspects of the Irish whistle playing tradition and share her vast musical knowledge with participants.



IN CONVERSATION WITH CATHAL MCCONNELL

Time: 3:45pm – 4:45pm | Venue: The Studio, Lemon Tree

Free Entry but Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts

Join Festival Artistic Director, Sara Reith, as she interviews founding member of 'The Boys of the Lough', Cathal McConnell.

A major figure in the traditional music world, renowned singer, whistle and flute player, Cathal will talk about his life and music.



EVENING CONCERT: CLAIRE MANN & TOM OAKES AND FRED MORRISON PLUS SUPPORT

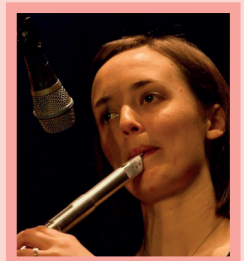
Time: 7:30pm (Doors 7pm) | Venue: Lemon Tree

**Price: £16; £14 concessions; £5 students
(Booking via Aberdeen Performing Arts)**

"Her sheer musicality – the beautiful feel in her playing – is what really sets her apart."

The Planet, National Radio, Australia

Regarded as two of Scotland's top flautists, Claire Mann and Tom Oakes also combine whistles, fiddle, and guitar as they join forces in this exciting and enthralling duo.



Both have long-established careers having performed with many of Scotland's top musicians: Claire, with bouzouki player, guitarist, and singer Aaron Jones (Old Blind Dogs), the quartet Litha, and her early collaboration with Aidan O'Rourke (LAU) in the band Tabache. Tom with celebrated Shetland fiddler Ross Couper, genre-bending pan Finnish act The Auvo Quartet, and new Scottish powerhouse, OBT.

"But it was Morrison who delivered the 'coup de grace' with a performance that was almost shocking in its mesmerizing subtlety and brilliance."

The Scotsman

"His virtuosity and instrumental skill are matched by few"
Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame



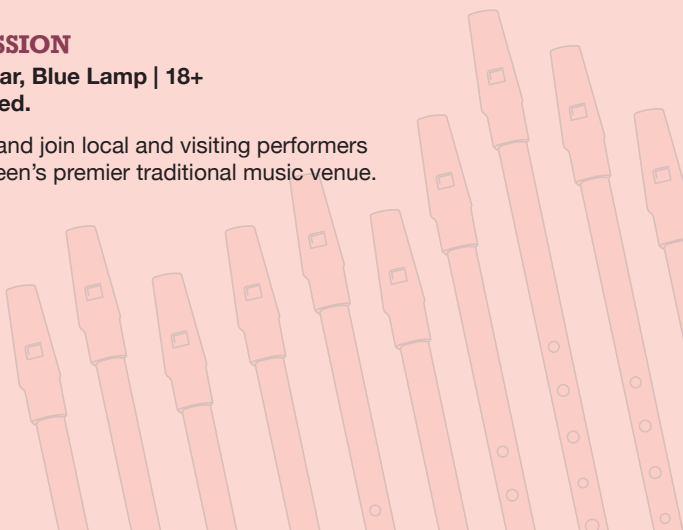
Voted 'Best Instrumentalist' in 2004 and inducted into the Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame in 2020, Fred Morrison is a major figure in Scottish traditional music. As a multi award-winning competing piper, member of influential supergroups Clan Alba and Capercaillie, and performer and arranger on the soundtrack of the Hollywood blockbuster Rob Roy his musical influence in Scotland and beyond has been profound. Fred's music is securely rooted in the exacting piping tradition of South Uist which he learned from his father, a noted player from a famous Uist piping family. Fred maintains a busy touring schedule, with performances and masterclasses throughout the world.

In anticipation of tonight's concert, Fred noted, 'I'm honoured to be part of the tribute to the great Alex Green - a master musician and inspirational character. He'll be long remembered.'

TRADITIONAL MUSIC SESSION

**Time: 10pm | Venue: Sandy's Bar, Blue Lamp | 18+
Free Entry, No Booking Required.**

Bring your instrument (or voice) and join local and visiting performers for an informal session at Aberdeen's premier traditional music venue. All welcome. 18+



Sunday 3rd March 2024

WORKSHOP: ORNAMENTATION AND IMPROVISATION IN TRADITIONAL STYLES

Time: 10am – 11:15am | Venue: Kate's Bar, Lemon Tree
Free Entry but Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts

Are you curious about improvising in traditional styles? Join whistle player Jarek Zelinski for a stimulating session on improvising and ornamentation. Players of all levels welcome.



WORKSHOP: ADVANCED FLUTE WORKSHOP

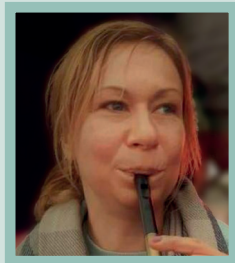
Time: 10am – 11:15am | Venue: The Studio, Lemon Tree
Free Entry but Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts

Celebrated flute player and multi-instrumentalist, Tom Oakes, will lead a session on the 8-keyed wind flute, exploring advanced technique, exercises, and tunes from Scotland, Ireland, and further afield. The session is also open to unkeyed flute, low whistle, and whistle players.

WORKSHOP: ALEX GREEN'S SPIT-STACCATO STYLE

Time: 11:20am – 12:35pm | Venue: Kate's Bar, Lemon Tree
Free Entry but Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts

Alex Green was well known for the unmistakably North-East sound of his self-created and aptly named 'Spit-Staccato Style'. Join his long-time student and accomplished whistle player, Sara Reith, to learn some distinctive features of Alex's iconic approach. Whilst this workshop will cover key aspects of Alex's style and ornamentation at an intermediate to advanced level, players of all levels are most welcome to come along to listen and join in where they can.



MASTERCLASS WITH CATHAL MCCONNELL

Time: 12:50pm – 2:20pm | Venue: The Studio, Lemon Tree
Price: £10/8 conc. Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts

This is a rare chance to learn from The Boys of the Lough founder and tin whistle legend, Cathal McConnell. Cathal will explore elements of the musical traditions with which he has been most associated over his very long and prestigious career.

IN CONVERSATION WITH MARY BERGIN

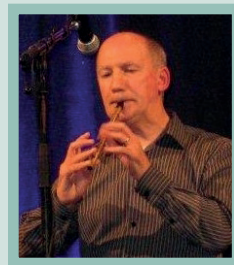
Time: 2:30pm – 3:30pm | Venue: The Studio, Lemon Tree
Free Entry but Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts

Marking her first visit to Aberdeen, Irish tin whistle legend Mary Bergin and local whistle player Kenny Hadden will discuss her enthralling whistle playing style and approach to traditional music. Come and hear about Mary's life and musical career in anticipation of her evening concert.

WORKSHOP: PLAYING HIGHLAND BAGPIPE TUNES ON WHISTLE

Time: 4pm – 5:15pm | Venue: The Studio, Lemon Tree
Free Entry but Booking Required via Aberdeen Performing Arts

Kenny Hadden, who was whistle and flute tutor with Scottish Culture & Traditions (SC&T) since its inception in 1997, will lead this workshop discussing and demonstrating styles and techniques used in playing music from the repertoire of the Scottish Highland bagpipes on tin-whistle.



EVENING CONCERT: CATHAL MCCONNELL AND MARY BERGIN & MICK CONNEELY PLUS SUPPORT

Time: 7:30pm (Doors 7pm) | Venue: Lemon Tree
Price: £16; £14 concession; Student £5
(Booking via Aberdeen Performing Arts)

Closing the Alex Green Whistle Festival, join Irish whistle giants, Mary Bergin and Cathal McConnell for a truly unique and unforgettable night of traditional music.

Described by the Irish Times as ‘just about the best Tin Whistle player this century’, Mary Bergin has toured extensively in Europe, America and Australia, both as a solo artist and with her band, Dordán. Her influential albums, ‘Feadóga Stáin 1 and 2,’ have attained legendary status in the whistle playing world. Winner of the prestigious ‘Traditional Musician of the Year’ in 2000, in 2022, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by University College Dublin for her contribution to the arts, and in 2023, was honoured by Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy for her lifelong contribution to Irish music. We are delighted to welcome Mary Bergin to make her first visit to North-East Scotland.

A major figure in the traditional music world, renowned singer, whistle and flute player Cathal McConnell is highly regarded as ‘a prodigious musical talent’, and ‘one of the most creative minds in Irish traditional music’. Perhaps best known as a founding member of internationally successful band, The Boys of the Lough, he has amassed multiple accolades, from All-Ireland Flute and Whistle Champion in 1962 and Traditional Singer of the Year, 2010, to The Herald Angel Award (Edinburgh Festival Fringe) in 2015. Much-loved for his legendary performance skills, Cathal has resided in Scotland for over 40 years, where he continues to sing, play and compose his vast repertoire of tunes and songs collected over a lifetime dedicated to music.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC SESSION

Time: 10pm | Venue: Sandy’s Bar, Blue Lamp | 18+
Free Entry, No Booking Required.

Bring your instrument (or voice) and join local and visiting performers for an informal session at Aberdeen’s premier traditional music venue. All welcome. 18+

Festival at a glance

Friday 1st March 2024

1pm-4pm	'BIG MUSIC BEGINS IN SMALL WAYS': A CONFERENCE ON SMALL INSTRUMENTS AND EARLY-YEARS TRADITIONAL MUSICALITY Room MR05, MacRobert Building, King's College, University of Aberdeen, AB24 5UA	All welcome. Free registration via webpage.
7pm-9pm	TMSA CONCERT: A CELEBRATION OF ALEX GREEN: THE MAN, THE WHISTLE, AND MANY YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP King's Pavilion, King's College Campus, University of Aberdeen, AB24 3FX	There is no bar at this concert.
10pm	TRADITIONAL MUSIC SESSION Sandy's Bar, The Blue Lamp, Gallowgate, Aberdeen, AB25 1BU	All welcome. 18+

Saturday 2nd March 2024

9:45am-10am	REGISTRATION CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP Lemon Tree, 5 W N St, Aberdeen, AB24 5AT	Parents to complete a consent form.
10am-11:40am 11.45am-12.15pm	CHILDREN'S TIN WHISTLE WORKSHOP LUNCHBREAK The Studio, Lemon Tree	Packed lunch required. Bring D tin whistle if possible.
12:15pm-12:45pm 12:45pm-1pm	LINE CHECK FOR CHILDREN'S CONCERT PRE-CONCERT REHEARSALS Lounge, Lemon Tree	Parents back by 1pm
10am-11:15am	WORKSHOP WITH HELEN LYNCH: PLAYING FOR DANCERS Kate's Bar, Lemon Tree	Open to all levels
11:30am-12:45pm	WORKSHOP WITH DOUGIE PINCOCK: PLAYING THE WHISTLE WITH SINGERS Kate's Bar, Lemon Tree	Open to all levels
1pm-1:45pm	YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERT Lounge, Lemon Tree	Children must be accompanied by an adult.
2:00pm-3:30pm	MASTERCLASS WITH MARY BERGIN The Studio, Lemon Tree	Intermediate to advanced
3:45pm-4:45pm	IN CONVERSATION WITH CATHAL MCCONNELL The Studio, Lemon Tree	
7:30pm (Doors 7:00pm)	CONCERT: FRED MORRISON, CLAIRE MANN AND TOM OAKES Lounge, Lemon Tree	With support from Rasmus Feld and Cailean McKerron
10pm	TRADITIONAL MUSIC SESSION Sandy's Bar, The Blue Lamp	All welcome. 18+

Sunday 3rd March 2024

10am-11:15am	WORKSHOP WITH TOM OAKES: ADVANCED FLUTE The Studio, Lemon Tree	Also open to whistle and low whistle players
10am-11:15am	WORKSHOP WITH JAREK ZELINSKI: ORNAMENTATION AND IMPROVISATION IN TRADITIONAL STYLES Kate's Bar, Lemon Tree	Open to all levels
11:20am-12:35pm	WORKSHOP WITH SARA REITH: ALEX GREEN'S SPIT-STACCATO STYLE Kate's Bar, Lemon Tree	Open to all levels
12:50pm-2:20pm	MASTERCLASS WITH CATHAL MCCONNELL The Studio, Lemon Tree	Intermediate to advanced
2:30pm-3:30pm	IN CONVERSATION WITH MARY BERGIN The Studio, Lemon Tree	
4pm-5:15pm	WORKSHOP WITH KENNY HADDEN: PLAYING HIGHLAND BAGPIPE TUNES ON THE WHISTLE The Studio, Lemon Tree	Open to all levels
7:30pm (Doors 7:00pm)	CONCERT: CATHAL MCCONNELL AND MARY BERGIN & MICK CONNEELY Lounge, Lemon Tree	With support from Sara Reith and Martin MacDonald
10pm	TRADITIONAL MUSIC SESSION Sandy's Bar, The Blue Lamp	All welcome. 18+



Thanks and acknowledgements...

We would like to thank our festival funders, Creative Scotland, Aberdeen Performing Arts (APA), The William Syson Foundation, Friends of the Elphinstone Institute, WayWord, and our project partners APA (Aberdeen Performing Arts), TMSA Aberdeen, WayWord Festival, Fèis Rois, and SC&T Youth, without whom this project would not have been possible.



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