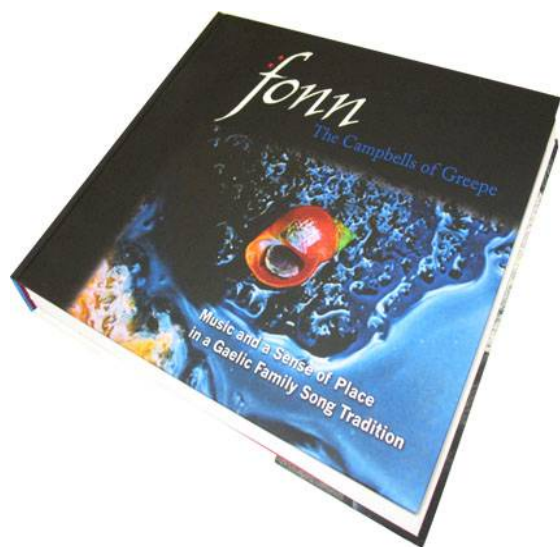


Fonn Book Released



## **Fonn: The Campbells of Greepe**

**(Music and a Sense of Place in a Gaelic Family Song Tradition)**

**Book and Archive Audio CD**

### Details

by Katie Laing

A CELEBRATORY new book documenting the lives of a famed family of Gaelic singers will be officially launched on Saturday, January 19, to coincide with a special concert at Celtic Connections.

Fonn: The Campbells of Greepe (subtitled Music and a Sense of Place in a Gaelic Family Song Tradition) tells the story of a Hebridean family with a gift for music which goes back generations – and pays tribute to the place and culture that allowed them to flourish.

A quick glance at their family tree reveals seven Mod medallists, including several winners of that prestigious ‘double’ in traditional Gaelic singing: the Gold Medal and the Traditional Medal.

Many of the Campbells, who hailed from Skye and latterly Glasgow, are household names throughout the Highlands and Islands and in the world of Scottish music. One of them, Kenna Campbell, famously sang the 23rd Psalm at the memorial service for the late Labour leader, John Smith.

Kenna, honoured with a doctorate from RSAMD in 2009, was part of folk group Na h-Eilthirich (The Exiles) in the 70s, along with her sister Ann and brother Seumas, while, in more recent years, other members of the family have sung together in Clìar.

The first of the Mod Gold Medal winners in the Campbell family was Kenna’s aunt, Seonag, who won in 1957. Other winners were Kenna’s sister Ann, Ann’s daughter, Maggie MacDonald, and Kenna’s two daughters, Mary Ann and

Wilma Kennedy. They were both double medallists, just as their uncle Seumas was in his day.

Fonn, which is being launched at Sabhal Mor's 40th Anniversary Festival Concert in Glasgow's City Halls, tells the story of the family in their own words and those of their friends.

The main part of the book is recollections based on interviews by journalist and broadcaster Morag Stewart. There are also pictures from the family albums, family trees, maps of the area of Skye they came from, press cuttings and record cards.

Fonn is completely bilingual, being presented in Gaelic and English throughout, and also features a large collection of traditional songs from the family's repertoire, transcribed by Mary Ann.

There is also an accompanying CD featuring rare recordings of older family members, including some from the archives at The School of Scottish Studies dating back to the 50s.

A CD of the same name, Fonn, is available separately and features new recordings of the family together. It was produced by Jerry Boys to coincide with the book and is available from Watercolour Music.

A large number of people were involved with Fonn. The book's introduction was written by Dr John Macinnes, formerly of Edinburgh University, while the project was initially co-ordinated by Skye-based photographer and broadcaster Cailean Maclean. The photographic images used for the cover designs were by Phil Gorton from Skye.

The idea itself came from the former manager of Lewis-based publishers Acair. Norma Macleod, who is now retired, also edited the book in close co-operation with members of the family. She described the finished product as "a magnificent record of a family who contribute such an amazing amount to Gaelic tradition, music and song".

Acair manager Agnes Rennie said Fonn was "for anyone with an interest in Gaelic music and heritage", adding: "It pulls together a lot of things that we, as a company, value and work to promote."

Mary Ann Kennedy said: "If it weren't for Norma Macleod at Acair, this would never have happened. We are incredibly grateful because various people have taken an interest in our music and our story.

"We really don't regard ourselves as being special. The reason the family are who they are and do what they do is because of the community that they grew up in."

Fonn: The Campbells of Greepe (Music and a Sense of Place in a Gaelic Family Song Tradition) is available from the shop page or from Acair - [www.acairbooks.com](http://www.acairbooks.com) - and all good book shops, priced £30.

Trad Singer of the Year and Times Top Five CD



### **Double Awards Success for Watercolour Music**

#### Details

The champagne corks are popping this week at Watercolour Music, the Highlands' legendary recording studios in Lochaber. The team are celebrating double recording awards success with Sunday Times World Music Album and Gaelic Singer of the Year accolades rewarding the year's releases.

Watercolour artist, Riona Whyte, scooped the Gaelic Singer of the Year award at the Scots Trad Music Awards in Fort William on Saturday night. Riona released her debut album 'Bunachas' (Roots) on Watercolour's Stòras imprint, celebrating her own Argyll roots and featuring guest musicians including Phil Cunningham, Caithness fiddler Gordon Gunn (Session A9, STMA Live Act of the Year) and Aaron Jones of Old Blind Dogs, as well as three generations of her family. The album was produced by Watercolour's in-house team, Mary Ann Kennedy and Nick Turner.

And Mary Ann's own family, The Campbells of Greepe from the Isle of Skye, are also celebrating this week with the publication of the Sunday Times 100 Best Recordings of 2012 which picked out their debut album, 'Fonn' as No.2 World Music album of the year. 'Fonn', a celebration of the Skye dynasty's music and song, was recorded at Watercolour and produced by the multi-grammy-winning Jerry Boys of Buena Vista Social Club fame. The album featured a stellar cast of guests, including Scots fiddle guru Alasdair Fraser, US cellist Natalie Haas, bassist James Lindsay (Breabach, STMA Band of the Year), 'Brave' piper Lorne MacDougall, and guitarist Finlay Wells.

Mary Ann Kennedy, who was presenting the awards live on BBC Alba on Saturday night, said: "We're really delighted that Riona is getting the recognition she deserves. Her album Bunachas was a joy to work and play on, and we hope it will give many more folk the chance to hear a special voice. I always ask not to be told who has won what beforehand, so it was as much a surprise for me as for Riona on the night – she was speechless!"

Nick Turner said of The Campbells success: "It's important to us that we are able to share the music and the story of The Campbells far beyond these shores, and the Sunday Times

recognition at such a level is a big step in that direction for us. 'Fonn' was very much part of the move to our new studios here in Ardgour. Jerry Boys was working on the development of the album around the time we made the move, and he took a real interest in the fine tuning of the recording rooms, so he's helped us make a really fine album, and left his Grammy-winning mark on our studio too!"

Watercolour Music is currently developing several new releases which will be recorded early in the New Year, including debut albums from stunning North Uist seann-nòs singer, Linda MacLeod, and Swedish-Gaelic duo Marit Falt and Rona Wilkie, the BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year.

And work has also finally begun on the long-awaited solo album from Mary Ann, who is currently Musician-in-Residence at the University of the Highlands and Island's Gaelic college, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Mary Ann's career has garnered numerous awards as producer, performer and broadcaster, and this new release promises to be amongst the most eagerly anticipated roots releases of 2013.

Legendary Highland Piper House Concert



**Fred Morrison and Matheu Watson**

**In Concert**

Details

**SUNDAY 25th NOVEMBER 2012 – 3pm**

**FRED MORRISON & MATHEU WATSON IN CONCERT**

**WATERCOLOUR MUSIC STUDIOS, ARDGOUR**

**(3 miles north of Corran Ferry)**

**DONATION £10 (KIDS FREE)**

**Email: [mak@watercolourmusic.co.uk](mailto:mak@watercolourmusic.co.uk) Tel: 07918-618374 – BOOKING ADVISABLE!**

Our last House Concert of 2012 is a real stormer – we are delighted to welcome an old friend of Watercolour Music, the legendary piper Fred Morrison, and his award-winning multi-instrumentalist duo partner, Matheu Watson. This is one not to miss, so do join us if you can!

This is one of the most uplifting live experiences you're ever likely to encounter - truly awesome musicianship. For those of you that don't know of this duo, Fred has been described as the "Jimi Hendrix of the bagpipes" and Matheu was crowned Instrumentalist of the Year at the 2012 Scots Traditional Music Awards - this gig will be a busy one!

Fred Morrison is one of the world's leading pipers and is a globally renowned composer of music for the bagpipes, known for his unique, powerfully exuberant, virtuosic and highly improvisational style which combines the Gaelic piping tradition of South Uist with contemporary and eclectic influences. One of the few pipers to have achieved success in both the competitive piping and folk music scenes, Morrison is a virtuoso of the Great Highland Bagpipes, the bellows-blown reel pipes, the Irish Uilleann pipes, and the low whistle.

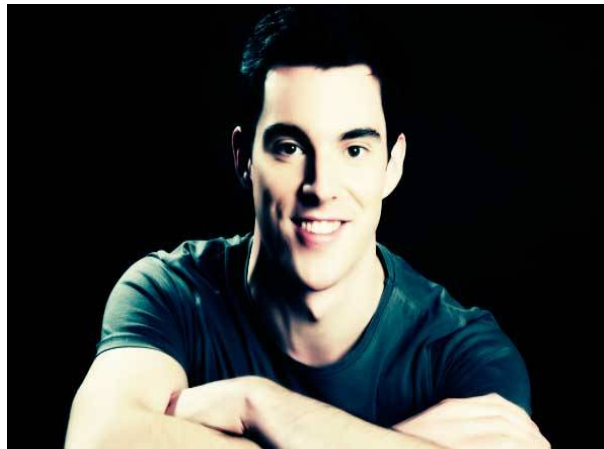
Inverness-born Matheu Watson is one of the UK's finest young musicians, with an international reputation that has seen him collaborate with a stellar cast of roots musicians, from Zakir Hussain to Tim O'Brien to Salsa Celtica and the Treacherous Orchestra. Fred and Matheu will be playing music from their award-winning blue-grass infused album, Outlands – "...I heard this Uist-Irish-bluegrass connection in my head, and I knew I could make it work." Fred Morrison.

You can read more about them at [www.fredmorrison.com](http://www.fredmorrison.com) – and you can reserve a seat at the House Concert by emailing us on this address or giving us a call on 07918-618374. Please do pass the info on to anyone you know who might be interested, especially young musicians – it's a rare opportunity to be able to watch these two guys playing 'up close and personal'.

Thanks as ever and hope to see you on the 25th!

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Watercolour Music Releases debut CD from Alasdair Whyte



Details

**Alasdair Whyte – 'Las' (Watercolour Music WCMCD048)**

**Release date Monday 3rd December 2012**

*"The best debut album from a Gaelic artist in years, Las is a beautiful, beguiling and irresistible mix of tradition and innovation. Alasdair writes with rare depth and integrity. Eloquent, impassioned and powerful, Las is a landmark recording that will*

*appeal to fans of Runrig and Julie Fowlis while smouldering with a heartwarming intensity that's all its own."*

Kevin MacNeil (*Love and Zen in the Outer Hebrides, A Method Actor's Guide to Jekyll and Hyde*)

Watercolour Music is delighted to announce the release of one of the most significant Gaelic albums of the year. **Alasdair Whyte** was brought up on the Isle of Mull surrounded by the Gaelic music and song that have become his passion. He is at the forefront of a new wave of Gaelic songsmiths, writing with a sophistication and depth that belies his young age.

'**Las**' was recorded in the inspirational surroundings of Watercolour's studios in the West Highlands, looking down Loch Linnhe towards Alasdair's native island. It was produced by the highly respected husband-and-wife team of musician and broadcaster **Mary Ann Kennedy** and producer-songwriter **Nick Turner**. Nick said: "It was important that we got the right contemporary setting for Alasdair's songs – he knows where his roots are for sure, but he's definitely looking to the future with his own songs." The album was recorded by Alasdair's own band, fellow *Muileach* **Ross B. Wilson** on piano, and **Allan Nairn** on guitar, with special guests **Louis Abbott** and **Joe Rattray (Admiral Fallow, Rachel Sermanni Band)** on bass and drums, **Megan Henderson** on Fiddle, **Gordon Gunn** on Mandolin, **Robert Robertson** from Lochaber and members of Alasdair's very musical family on backing vocals.

The ten songs on the album are a mix of rare and popular traditional Gaelic songs from Alasdair's own background in Mull and Morvern, but the four songs written by Alasdair himself set the album apart as something of a special event. The tumult of young love, fulfilled or disastrous, a passionate attachment to place, and a rare ability to play with the richness of the Gaelic language mark him out as a significant new writer in the language. **Eilean na h-Òige** (The Island of Youth) is set to become a classic in the mould of Calum and Rory MacDonald, while **Tuathal** – a tale of love going off the rails - is an indie hit in the making.

"It was a real honour to be invited to record this album as one of the first projects that Stòras Watercolour supported. I was fortunate enough to receive Nick's encouragement and insight with regard to my songwriting whilst working together with the support of **Creative Scotland's** Demo Fund and it was pretty exciting to see this project come to fruition within the unique environment at Watercolour."

The album was made possible through **Stòras Watercolour**, a not-for-profit enterprise set up by Mary Ann and Nick specifically to encourage new Gaelic music.

Alasdair, who is currently a PhD student at the University of Glasgow, will be performing at:

Glasgow Skye Association Gathering, Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu – Fri 7th Dec (7.30pm)

Gaels Le Chèile, St Peter's Hall, Hyndland St, Sat 8th Dec (8pm)