Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) have announced a new investment package of £632,000 towards the development of the Fèisean movement over the next three years. It is envisaged that this will help the organisation expand, improve and build upon the success the movement has enjoyed over the last 25 years.

As well as supporting both Fèisean nan Gàidheal and local Fèisean, the HIE investment will be targeted towards some key projects and developments. These include expanding the Fèis Cèilidh Trails, allowing young and aspiring musicians the opportunity to tour and perform at local venues across the Highlands.

A Ceòl nam Fèis (Music of the Fèisean) tour is planned, showcasing the talents emerging from the movement, as part of the year in which Scotland celebrates Highland culture. The Gaelic drama sector will be developed as well as a Fèis training programme, whilst smaller-scale development grants will be made available for new and innovative projects.

Alasdair MacLeod, HIE Gaelic Policy Manager said: “HIE supports Fèisean nan Gàidheal as the umbrella organisation, providing access to resources that will allow the local fèisean to grow and flourish. The Fèisean provide a real opportunity for us to build on our cultural heritage and create real and tangible benefits for the cultural, creative and tourism sectors in the Highlands and Islands”.

Culture Minister Patricia Ferguson MSP, welcomed HIE’s funding announcement. She said: “Fèisean nan Gàidheal is an established and valued part of Scottish cultural life and we should all be proud of its success. It has made an immense contribution to the lives of many young people and has strengthened both traditional music and the Gaelic language throughout Scotland.”

HIE Funding Boost For Fèisean nan Gàidheal

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Fèisean nan Gàidheal’s Newsletter • Iris 24
A new book from Fèisean nan Gàidheal, which celebrates 25 years of the movement, was launched at the Scots Trad Music Awards in Fort William in December. The publication 'Fèis: the first 25 years of the fèis movement' tells the story of the people who have been involved in the fèisean, alongside views and opinions from those who have an interest in the movement.

The launch event featured contributions from Jim Tough, Director of Arts and Deputy Chief Executive of the Scottish Arts Council, and Kate Martin, the book’s editor and now lecturer in Community Education at the University of Dundee. Kate had previously been involved in establishing a number of fèisean in the Highlands during the mid-eighties and nineties. Performing at the launch were some talented young musicians from Fèis Lochabair.

The publication received financial assistance from the Scottish Arts Council, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig, The Highland Council, Pròiseact nan Ealan and Comunn na Gàidhlig.

Leabhar Fèis 25 air Fhoilseachadh aig na Duais an Cuil Traidiseanta

Dh’fhòilseachadh leabhar Fèis nan Gàidheal leabhar ur a’ comharrachadh cóig bliadhna thar fhichead de dh’iomairt nam fèisean aig na Duaisean Ciúil Traidiseanta anns a’ Gheàradaidh. Tha an leabhar ‘Fèis: the first 25 years of the fèis movement’ ag innse sgeulachd an fèisean air feadh na Gàidhealtachd anns na h-ochdadan agus na naochadan.

Chuala na bha an lathair iomradh bho Jim Tough, Stiùrcheann Comhairle nan Ealan, ceòl bhò luchd-ciùil òga Fèis Lochabair, agus òraid bho Cheit Mhàrtainn, a thà an-diugh na h-òraidiche ann an Olthigh Dhubh Deag, ach a bha an-sàs ann a bhith a’ stèidheachadh fèisean air fedadh na Gàidhealtachd anns na h-ochdadan agus na naochadan.

Chaidh an leabhar seo fhoilseachadh le taic bho Chomhairle Ealaín na h-Alba, Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd, Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig, Comunn na Gàidhlig, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd agus nan ilean agus Pròiseact nan Ealan.
Youth Music Initiative Reaches Every Primary School in Highland

This year, delivery of the traditional music aspect of the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) in the Highlands, which gives children in all Highland primary schools experience of traditional music, has reached its set target. Not only has YMI reached every primary school in the Highland Council area, it has also led to the creation of employment for the many talented and professional traditional musicians.

In 2004, the responsibility for delivering the traditional aspect of YMI was given to Fèisean nan Gàidheal by the Highland Council. This followed a pledge by the Scottish Executive which aimed to ‘ensure that by 2006, every primary school pupil should have access to at least one year’s free music tuition by the time they reach Primary 6’. Co-ordination of programming the initiative was then passed onto local fèisean in the Highland Council area, with every school from Eigg to Avoch and Wick to Glencoe experiencing traditional music from some of the most experienced and acknowledged artists in their profession, some of whom are graduates from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Tuition has also been offered through the medium of Gaelic in Gaelic schools, using tutors fluent in the language.

After running for three years, the goal of delivering a high quality traditional musical experience through the initiative to all 184 primary schools in the Highland area has been achieved.

Music Development Officer for the Highland Council, Norman Bolton hopes that this initiative will help pupils further on in their learning, saying “It is hoped that through time all these skills will enable pupils to build a high level of musical understanding as they move into Secondary education’.

Working on behalf of Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Rae MacEachern is the YMI Co-ordinator. She added “It’s thanks to the schools for taking this on and making this work into their own tight curriculum that has made the delivery of YMI such a success. Added to that, the quality of delivery through the outstanding tutors and local fèisean has been remarkable, and long may it continue”.

Contact details and more information can be found on page 4 of this publication.
The traditional music programme of the Youth Music Initiative covers all primary schools in the Highland Council area. Each school is given a 12-week programme broken into three 4-week blocks and with their choices being taken from the menu of options. In order not to duplicate or interfere with existing music provision in schools, the options offered are in four main areas; tin whistle, Gaelic song, children’s song and group music. Musicians and artists involved in the initiative have included such talents as Rachel Walker, Deirdre Graham, Louise MacKenzie and Bob Massie.

Tutor Focus: Darren MacLean, Tutor of Gaelic Song

Amazingly, all the pupils were really enthusiastic about the lessons and really enjoyed them. Hope to have the same again.

Teacher, Brora Primary School

Told them of my interest and that I could be available to them. A while later, I was invited to go along and do Gaelic Song in the schools.

From there, my name went onto the tutor list and tutoring through YMI became a more permanent part of my work. To do YMI makes it easier for musicians to make a living out of their art. It can often be flexible enough to fit in with other professional commitments.

The work has taken me all over the Highlands from Skye to Wick and Lochaber to Lochcarron. It’s really great to see different parts of the Highlands and experience the differing styles of culture and language across this vast area.

The children are really enthusiastic, not only because they get away from Maths or English, but they want to tell you stories, similar to the ones that lie behind the songs. And that’s the best thing about YMI. The children across the Highlands, and indeed Scotland, are getting a wee taste of our tradition and heritage. They remember what they have learnt and they want to learn more, so they go out to their own communities ready to learn.

I liked it very much. I was not into this kind of music but I am now!

School Pupil

Foreword

The Youth Music Initiative (YMI) is a welcome development in the education of young Scots, and Fèisean nan Gàidheal is particularly pleased to have had the opportunity to work with several local authorities in providing traditional music lessons as part of their YMI delivery.

We recognise that working in a school requires additional disciplines to a less formal Fèis, and we would like to keep all schools informed of what we offer as part of YMI delivery, and ensure that they know how to contact us if they have any concerns. We hope that this newsletter will be useful, and will help clarify our role.

Arthur Cormack
Director
Fèisean nan Gàidheal

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School Pupil
In Focus: Delivering YMI in North Highland and The Small Isles

The universal delivery of YMI effectively covers a large geographical region, equivalent to the size of Belgium. Here, we focus on the approach of two different areas in delivering YMI to schools in their locality.

North Highland
Covering both rural and urban areas, Fèis Rois co-ordinates the delivery of YMI in 104 schools in the Highlands. Since September 2006, over 3,700 children have received visits from their team of tutors. The Education Officer at Fèis Rois has organised a system whereby the focus rotates between the areas of Inverness/Nairn and Ross-shire/Caithness. The children are given a carefully-planned, lively and informative tuition programme of traditional Scottish music through a range of subject choices. Teaching staff and children have responded with wonderful enthusiasm and great progress is being made in the subjects offered. Particularly noteworthy is the all-inclusive nature of the scheme, which allows children of all abilities to benefit from the tuition. The YMI programme has made a notable impact on the career paths of many graduates and Highland musicians. Three of our original YMI tutors have now gone on to become Primary teachers, and others have been able to make a full-time professional commitment to music.

I liked the songs and now I’ve got more confidence in myself and enjoy singing out loud.

School Pupil

The Small Isles
Fèis Lochabair have been busy delivering their YMI programme to some of the remotest places in Scotland. The isles of Eigg, Muck, Rum and Canna all lie off the North West Coast of Scotland, where pupil numbers vary from one pupil on the Isle of Canna, to six children on the Isle of Muck. This may be rather low compared to some of the bigger schools found in the more populated areas of the Highlands, but that doesn’t mean they get left out. Delivery of YMI takes a different form in this area. Usually, the tutors will be based on the mainland in Mallaig and travel out to each of the Islands every day. Unlike the mainland schools, where tutors will come in for perhaps an hour every week for a set period, the small isles get just one visit per term, which normally lasts around three hours. By CalMac ferry or by Fastcraft Rib, tutors of the YMI traditional music programme make every effort to get to the schools in the islands to deliver YMI.

Tutor Training: Meeting the Needs of the Tutors
The success of YMI has opened up further opportunities for tutors to gain training specific to working in schools. Units have included class management and teaching strategies, preparation of teaching plans, along with child protection, equal opportunities and inclusion. Basic Gaelic for classroom use is also an essential ongoing class.

Throughout the year, training days are centrally organised and regularly take place in different areas throughout the region. Outside agencies have also been included in delivering training aimed at tutors involved in bringing the arts to children. These training events are complemented by tutor training sessions run by Fèisean nan Gàidheal. These two-level courses, covering all aspects of tutoring young people, have been well received by those who attended, including representatives from Edinburgh Youth Gaitherin’ and Glasgow Fiddle Workshop, as well as aspiring fèis tutors.

If you would like more information regarding YMI training, contact your local fèis or Rae MacEachern, YMI Co-ordinator for Fèisean nan Gàidheal: rae@feisean.org

YMI and Highland 2007
In the year that Scotland celebrates Highland Culture, the Fèisean have been asked to offer their services to the many Cultural Co-ordinators in the Highland area. If you are running an event in association with one of the co-ordinators in the area and think that the project would benefit from one of YMI’s many talented and experienced tutors, then do not hesitate to get in touch. Your local YMI representative’s contact details can be found on page 4 of this leaflet.
Each school is provided with feedback forms for teachers, pupils and tutors to complete at the end of each block of YMI. This initiative has led to many positive comments and responses appearing from schools across the area. Below are typical examples of the comments the project has received:

We really enjoy the input from YMI, and the pupils look forward to their visits. A number of our more musical pupils continue to play whistle from home and enjoy a new challenge.

**Head Teacher, Elgol Primary School**

Great class. Could do with more singing to boost confidence. Music good.

**Tutor**

The children gained so much from the four weeks. They thoroughly enjoyed the interaction and participation. It also gave me, as a teacher, an insight into a side of the children we don’t normally see. I thought it was extremely worthwhile and thoroughly rewarding for the school.

**Teacher, Mulbuie Primary School**

I really enjoyed tin whistle and I am going to try and get to the Fèis

**School Pupil**

I liked the songs so much that when I went home I was singing the songs all the time.

**School Pupil**

This was a most worthwhile project. I likes the way the pupils’ individual interests were included.

**Teacher, Rogart Primary School**

It was fun and it made me like Scottish music more

**School Pupil**

More of the same! As a Gaelic-medium teacher I particularly appreciate it when tutors use some Gaelic with the pupils. I felt that the groupwork classes were very well organised. There was a good balance of work on developing knowledge about Scottish music and developing playing skills in an inclusive way that catered for all abilities. Having gained new ideas for teaching group music I will try to do more myself with the pupils. Thank you Louise and Barry!

**Teacher, Ullapool Primary School**

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This newsletter has been published by Fèisean nan Gàidheal, on behalf of the traditional programme of the Youth Music Initiative in the Highland Council Area. Fèisean nan Gàidheal is a company limited by guarantee, recognised by Inland Revenue as a Scottish Charity, number SC130071, and is funded by the Scottish Arts Council, Bòrd na Gaidhlig and The Highland Council.
Dealbh-Chluich Ùr aig Meanbh-chuileag

Aig deireadh na bliadhna 2006 chaidh an dealbh-chluich ùr aig Meanbh-chuileag air chuairt ann an Uibhist agus Barraigh, às dèidh cola-deug de dheasachadh, le planaichean airson tuilleadh chuairtean a dhèanamh aig toiseach na bhliadhna ùire.

’S e ‘Le Meas’ an t-ainm a th'air an dealbh-chluich, a tha stèidhte an dá chuid ann an Glaschu agus ann an Afghanistan. Tha an dealbh-chluich ag inne sgeulachd Chris (Colla Dòmhnallach) agus Maram (Deirdre Ghreumach) a tha a’ coinneachadh air an eadar-lìon. ‘S e deugair doirbh gruamach a th’ann an Chris, agus tha e den bheachd gu bheil an saoghal na aghaidh, ach nuair a choinnicheas e ri Maram tha an fheallsanachd seo ag atharrachadh, oir tha e faicinn nach eil an suidheachadh aige cho dona ’s a tha e a’ smaoineachadh.

Tha an dealbh-chluich ri faighinn sa Ghàidhlig a-mhàin agus i bhfeidhm do chlas 4-7 sa bhun-sgoil. Tha bùth-obrach agus pasgan-taice a’ tighinn na cois.

Bidh a’ bhuidheann a’ taisbeanadh na deilbh-chluich ann a tri fichead sgoil eadar seo agus deireadh a’ Mhàirt 2007.

Airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, cuir post-d gu douglas@feisean.org

Iomairt nam Fèisean a’ faighinn urram aig na Duaisean Ciùil Traidiseanta

Thog na Fèisean duais aig na Duaisean Ciùil Traidiseanta anns a’ Ghaeilge anns an Dùbh-ladhdh. Fhuair Fèisean nan Gàidheal, an iomairt a thòisich ann an 1981 ann an Eilean Bharraigh agus a tha a-ris a’ toirt oideachadh ann an seinn Gàidhlig, ceol traidiseanta, dràma agus cànan dha timcheall air 13,000 neach gach bladhna, an duais airson na Pròiseact Còmhreachdachd as Fhèarr.

A’ togail na duais, thuirt Stiùiriche Fèisean nan Gàidheal, an seinneadair Art MacCormac: “S ann airson nam fèisean uile a tha an duais seo, agus is iad na daoine a tha ag obair gu saor-thoilteach agus na profèisentaich a tha ag obair cómhla riutha a tha airdh air urram agus tha mi a’ cur beanannach dhan a h-uile duine a tha an sás ann na fèisean. Bu mhath leam taing shònraichte a thoirt dha na buidhean a tha air a bhith gar maoineachadh thairs is air na bliadhnaichean: Comhairle Ealain na h-Alba, Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean, Bòrd na Gàidhlig agus Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd, a tha air taic ionmholta a thoirt dhuinn.”

Fèis Movement is Honoured at Traditional Music Awards

The Fèisean have picked up an award at the Scots Traditional Music Awards held in Fort William in December. Fèisean nan Gàidheal, a movement which started in Barra in 1981, and which now offers tuition in Gaelic song, music, drama and language to around 13,000 participants annually, was given the award for Best Community Project.

Accepting the award, the Director of Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Gaelic Singer Arthur Cormack said: “The award is accepted on behalf of all the Fèisean, and it is the volunteers and professionals who work together who deserve to be honoured. Their contribution remains huge, and I pay tribute to all those involved in the Fèis Movement. I would also like to thank the four main supporters of the Fèis movement over the years: the Scottish Arts Council, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and The Highland Council, whose support has been sterling.”

New Play for Meanbh-chuileag

Meanbh-chuileag has just embarked on a very busy tour which will see them take their new play Le Meas to 60 schools between now and the end of March. Based in Glasgow and Afghanistan, the play tells the story of a teenager who finds out that life could be so much worse for him.

This tour is supported by Bòrd na Gàidhlig

For more information contact douglas@feisean.org
Awards for All  
Success for Fèis Òigridh na Mara

Fèis Òigridh na Mara have been successful in an Awards for All bid to purchase instruments and run some new group work sessions in the Mallaig, Morar and Arisaig area. Accordions, fiddles and guitars have been ordered and this will make a great start to their local instrument bank and resources available to youngsters. Iain MacFarlane (Blazin’ Fiddles) is currently collecting and recording material for a group work resource which the Fèis youngsters will use in classes from January 2007. This all ties in well with the ongoing classes already running in the area and should complement the Gaelic song writing project which will run as part of their Highland 2007 events.

Pròiseactan Dràma

Bha na ciad bhùidhteann-obrach aig Pròiseact Dràma Leòdhais agus na Hearadh gu math soirbheachail le seachd sgòiltean a’ gabhail pàirt. Bidh luchd-teagaig a’ dol a-mach thuca airson an dàmra turas a dh’aitheann agus tha sinn air leith toilichte gu bheil An Lanntair ann an Steòrnabhagh air aontachadh oideachd a thoirt dhuinn air pròiseict acasan Mach ann an Deich a bhios a’ tachairt sa Mhòr. Bheir seo cothrom don chothrom na rinn iad san sgòil a tha is leanbhthadh don mhòr-shluagh.

Bidh Pròiseact Dràma Earra-Ghàidheal a’ tòiseachadh tràth ann an 2007, agus bidh sgòiltean bhon a h-uile ceàrnadh de dh’Earra-Ghàidheal agus Loch Abar a’ gabhail pàirt.

Drama Projects

Fèisean nan Gàidheal’s Gaelic Drama Festivals are proving to be very successful with seven schools in Lewis and Harris taking part. Schools from across Argyll and Lochaber are about to embark on their own projects.

Làithean-trèanaidh na Sgioba-G

Fèis na h-Óige participate in Highland 2007 Celebrations

Having been working hard throughout 2006 to complete their latest arts project in time for the official launch of the Year of Highland Culture in Inverness, Fèis na h-Óige participants took to their local train station to show off their works to the public. ‘Mìosan na Bliadhna’ sees each month of the year displayed decoratively on banners throughout the station. The project was officially launched in January and will continue to be displayed throughout the year.

The project involved participants working with fèis art tutor Karen-Anne Melville to produce twelve large banners depicting the months of the year in Gaelic. They are accompanied by a bilingual written and photographic display. Copies of the banners will also be gifted to the new Inverness Gaelic School.

The project has received funding and support from Highland 2007 and Fèisean nan Gàidheal.

G-team Training Days

At the beginning of November a training weekend was held for the G-Team. It is expected that the demand for G-team at Fèisean will increase and more G-team leaders will be needed. There were 15 people who took part in this training and they learned about the work of the G-team and the responsibilities they would have at a Fèis.

Am Mòd Nàiseanta

Bha Calum Ailig agus Dougie shios a’ Mhòd ann an Dùn Omhain anns an Dàmhair a’ nuith bhùidhteann-obrach airson na clòinnt a bhà a’ tighinn dhan mhòd.

Bha sinn ag obair còmhla ri Fay Ní Chhiarmhuidh bho Shradagan. Tha na ciad bhùithtean-obrach a’ chiontachadh chun na bhùth-obrach againn thairis air dha na fèisean.

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Chaidh dà latha-trèanaidh a chumail ann le Peairt a tòiseachadh na Samhna airson tuilleadh dhaoinne a thaladh gu Sgioba-G – iomairt a tha ag amas air barrachd Ghàidhlig a thoirt a-steach dha na fèisean.

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