

Cash offer for artists to develop their work

Shetland Arts, in partnership with Creative Scotland and Shetland Islands Council, are inviting applications from artists and makers for funding of up to £1,500 towards their creative and professional development.

Whether the medium is paint, clay, ink, film, silver, textiles, glass or something else entirely, and whatever stage in an artist's career they are at, if they think Shetland Arts can help them advance their creative and professional skills they should get in touch.

Lyndsay Cheyne, a previous recipient, said: "The award was a great opportunity for me to explore new aspects of making. I would recommend anyone considering it to go for it."

Avril Thomson, who received an award to help her develop her artistic skills in a new area, said: "I've always been interested in lino printing, but I hadn't had the opportunity to learn the new skill due to lack of funds, and lack of opportunity."

"The fund allowed me to purchase printing inks, equipment and research materials. I was then able to practice the technique and produce a portfolio of work that otherwise would never have been possible."

The first deadline for applications is 31st October and there will be a second round of funding early in 2017, with a deadline of 28th February.

If anyone would like an informal chat about the awards and eligibility they can phone (01595) 743843 or email admin@shetlandarts.org

A major survey has been launched to gather the public's views on the future of the Garrison Theatre in Lerwick.

Earlier this year a steering group was formed, comprising representatives of regular users including Islesburgh Drama Group, Shetland County Drama Festival Committee, Open Door Drama and Shetland Country Music Club, as well as Shetland Charitable Trust, which owns the building, and Shetland Arts, which manages it.

The purpose of the group is to explore options for the 112-year-old theatre amid significant funding constraints.

It is due to report its initial findings to the boards of the charitable trust and Shetland Arts in October.

The survey, which will inform this report, asks the public questions on a range of issues, including how important the theatre is to them; whether the programme of events caters for their tastes; if they would be prepared to pay higher prices to attend events; and whether they would be willing to volunteer to help out with productions.

Shetland Country Drama Festival Committee president Izzy Swanson said: "I would appeal to everyone to take a few moments to complete the survey about the Garrison, which to me and hopefully many others is a fundamental part of cultural life in Shetland."

"We have a shared pride in the theatre and all that we have been able to do on the stage, and now need to draw on that to maintain our strong tradition of drama."

Islesburgh Drama Group vice-president David Grieve said: "There is no other space in Shetland with the backstage facilities and wing space to put on a major show – panto, musicals, bigger plays, so it's vital that we find ways to keep the Garrison going."

According to Shetland Arts head

of creative opportunities Bryan Peterson, a survey carried out last year highlighted that, together with continued support for youth drama activities, a well run, well maintained theatre space was the top priority for respondents.

Mr Peterson added: "Financial pressures mean we are having to think how best to achieve that, and the steering group is hoping to be able to galvanise members of the community into helping us find a way forward. This survey is just the start of that process."

The Garrison Theatre was opened in 1904 as an army drill hall but was converted into a theatre in 1942. Repairs and refurbishment were carried out in 1989 and then again in 1995/6.

Activity in the theatre has reduced in recent years with film

screenings moving to Marcel and a reduction in touring theatre productions coming to Shetland due to the high cost of travel and accommodation. Increasing operating and maintenance costs together with decreasing public funding are also major challenges for the future.

Shetland Charitable Trust commissioned a recent report which indicated that the building is in relatively good condition with no major structural issues.

However, a building of such age requires significant ongoing maintenance, without taking into account refurbishments or improvements.

The cost of operating the building is in excess of the hire and ticket income, and the balance is met from Shetland Arts' annual budget.

Survey seeks people's views on what to do with Lerwick's landmark old theatre

- Steering group behind survey
- Over 6,000 attend every year



Consultation will be carried out over the future of the 112-year-old Garrison Theatre in Lerwick.

Photo: Kenneth Shearer

Shetland Arts grant income from Shetland Charitable Trust will reduce from £695,000 in 2016-17 to £603,000 in 2019-20.

Hire charges are relatively cheap when compared to other similar theatres on the mainland. The Garrison works out at £240 per day to hire compared (including rehearsal time) to An Lanntair in Stornoway at £300 per day and the Gardyne Theatre in Dundee at £450 per day.

Usage of the building by local and national groups has remained

fairly consistent for the past four years with an average of 36 events with 180 attendances at each, totalling an average of 6,480 attendances per year.

• The online survey can be found at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/FutureGarrison

• The results from the 2015 survey on the future of theatre in Shetland can be found at http://issuu.com/shetlandarts/docs/future_in_theatre_survey



Stranrair

Ne

Cleeves joined by expert at latest launch



Forensic pathologist James Grieve explains his involvement and amusing relationship with Ann Cleeves at the launch of her new book *Cold Earth* at Mareel on Saturday. Dr Grieve appears in the book as himself. For Ann Cleeves murder-mystery tea report, see *South Notes* on page 26.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

Turner talk

Artist Amy Gear will lead a five-week block of informal evening sessions at Marcell exploring the work of this year's Turner Prize nominees.

Know Your Arts From Your Elbow will take place in the green room on Monday evenings at 7pm, starting on 7th November.

During the sessions Gear aims to decode the mystery that is contemporary British art, exploring the work that has been shortlisted for the prestigious national prize.

Each week she will focus on the work of one of the shortlisted artists and the final session on 5th December will coincide with the live television screening of the award ceremony.

Each session will last two hours with a break, and is suitable for anyone – no previous knowledge or expert vocabulary is required.

Diverse folk acts provide cornucopia of entertainment at Mareel concert

Last Thursday night's concert at Mareel, headlined by Orkney band Fara, proved to be a three-pronged blockbuster lasting three and a half hours.

The unknown quantity for many in the audience was the Danish band Himmerland, although it might be more accurate to describe them as musicians who live in Denmark. The superb drummer, Ayl Solomon, hails from Ghana. His drum solo came out of the blue and was one of the most memorable spots in the whole show.

The rest of the line-up were fiddler Ditte Fromseier, guitarist Sigurd Hockings, and Eskil Romme who played a small, fun-sized saxophone. Guest performer was none other than Scottish fiddler Eilidh Shaw of Poozies fame who also contributed backing vocals.

Together they made a most pleasing, if unusual, sound. At the start they announced that the material they used came from many sources. They describe themselves as playing world, traditional and roots music.

Fiddle player and singer Ditte has a beautiful voice and sang several, really old, Danish folk songs, mostly ballads that a Shetland audience were at one with.

There were stories about men being lost at sea, a girl who wanted a husband, determined to go out into the world against her mother's wishes, and another girl who married a merman and lived at the bottom of the sea watching the fish and the whales



Fara headlined the concert at Mareel last Thursday.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

swimming above her. Also included was a lullaby written by Han Christian Anderson.

Tunes ranged from the old to the contemporary including one from the wonderful accordion player Karen Tweed. One well-known local musician described this band in a single word – "fun".

First on stage was local band Haltadans and it is hard to imag-

ine how the concert could get off to a better start. The group consists of three great fiddlers, Maurice Henderson, Lois Nicol and Ewen Thomson supported by Grant Nicol on guitar and John Clark on bass.

They need no introduction to a Shetland audience but, as always, they sounded fresh and came up with a selection of music that would be new to many. Maurice is

also a great storyteller and his tales about the tunes was entertainment in itself.

He told of a trip to Foula before they played weird sounding, wild tunes inspired by the awesome cliffs that Foula is famous for.

There were pipe tunes heard from long-haired piper Fred Morrison and tunes that recall the days of the Greenland whaling and the contact that Shetland whalers had with the native folk that they referred to as Yakkies. This super band could have done the whole show themselves. Their time on stage flew past – it seemed far too short.

The second half of the show was given over to the top-of-the-bill band Fara, from Orkney. The four lasses performed at the 2015 Shetland Folk Festival and they were in North Roe where they learned *Fishers Hornpipe* from the Shetland group Tyunes while sitting outside the hall.

They were so charming and friendly that they endeared themselves to everyone who met them. Combine that with their brilliant music and you have something quite out of the ordinary.

They are a fairly recent band, formed to play at the Orkney Folk festival just a few years ago. They

have a debut album and the gig in Mareel was part of a promotional tour.

They opened their innings with a slow strathspey that soon blossomed out into an energetic reel. At every break between sets they established contact, banter and audience participation.

The band has three fiddlers – Kristan Harvey, Jeana Leslie and Catriona Price – and pianist Jennifer Austin.

If anyone expected Jennifer to be seen and heard very little then they were in for a surprise. She was assertive in her accompaniment, at times almost Cape Breton in style. There was a moment of concern in the audience when all three fiddlers left the stage and left Jennifer by herself but it was to allow her the play one of her own compositions, a beautiful tune commissioned for Orkney science festival. When the fiddlers returned normal service was resumed.

The lasses are all vocalists but Jeana usually takes the lead and is backed by the others. Some of the tunes were played at what my granny would have called "a rate of no allowance", but never, for a moment, did they lose the lift and bounce that makes difference between the mundane and the superb.

No-one would even guess that they were near the end of a very long tour. Fara are four lovely lasses, they have fallen in love with Shetland and those of us in Shetland, lucky enough to hear them, have fallen in love with them.

Please come back as often as you can Jennifer, Jeana, Kristan and Catriona. You will always be welcome.

Lawrence Tulloch

Pelagic sculpture unveiled



The "Lightsome Buoy", a bronze sculpture celebrating Shetland's pelagic fishing industry, was unveiled on Saturday by former Burra gutting girl Rosabell Halcrow and young Whalsay fisherman Callum Irvine. They are pictured with artist Jo Chapman, who designed the sculpture. Full story on page two.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

From drifters to huge trawlers – bronze buoy marks progress of pelagic industry

- Large crowd watch unveiling in the sun
- Oldest gutting girl reveals sculpture

BY ROSALIND GRIFFITHS

The sun shone on Da Lightsome Buoy as it was unveiled on the south end of the Esplanade on Saturday morning.

The bronze sculpture, created by artist Jo Chapman to celebrate the pelagic industry, met with universal approval from the invited guests who saw it for the first time.

Engraved with images of fisherfolk and studded with quotes from the community, the huge spherical structure proved irresistibly tactile and created a lightsome feel.

The sculpture was commissioned to convey the continuity of the pelagic industry, the hardworking past, prosperous present and hopefully bright future. Berthed near the Small Boat Harbour were the former *Fifie Swan*, a living legacy of the herring heritage, and the modern pelagic vessel *Adenia*, both dressed overall.

The project stemmed from an idea of Shetland Catch chairman John Goodlad, who was also the chairman of the partnership project.



A large crowd turned out for the unveiling of Da Lightsome Buoy.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

land acquired its first vessel of this type in 1966.

By the 1980s Lerwick Harbour was full of klondykers, and by the

said of the sculpture: "It's very fitting for the industry." But, he added, some of Ms Chapman's comments had not been used on the lightsome

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said, had been a "fantastic opportunity", and she had enjoyed travelling all over the isles speaking to all generations.

The project stemmed from an idea of Shetland Catch chairman John Goodlad, who was also the chairman of the partnership project.

He gave the event's opening speech, recalling the proud history of the industry over the last 200 years and its heyday in the early 20th century.

In 1905, Mr Goodlad said, 113,000 tonnes of herring were landed in Shetland, a record which still stands. There were 100 curing stations in the isles creating work for thousands of people.

Sail gave way to steam but the boom years were over. In 1965 the first Norwegian purse seine vessel arrived in Lerwick, and proved more efficient than drift nets. Shet-

land acquired its first vessel of this type in 1966.

By the 1980s Lerwick Harbour was full of klondykers, and by the time Shetland Catch opened in 1989, the isles had become home to one of the most modern pelagic fleets in the world.

Lerwick Port Authority chief executive Sandra Laurenson praised the "tremendous creativity" of Ms Chapman's work, and the partnership which made it possible – LPA, fish agents LHD, Shetland Catch and Shetland Fish Producers Organisation, together with help from engineers Arch Henderson.

Special guests were 19-year-old pelagic fisherman Callum Irvine, a deckhand on the Whalsay trawler *Zephyr*, who said he was "surprised and honoured" to be asked to the unveiling, and former gutting girl Rosabell Halcrow.

Mrs Halcrow said: "I'm the oldest one [gutting girl] left in Burra. A crowd of us would work in Lerwick and Lowestoft in the mid-1950s.

"We didn't worry about the work. The camaraderie and company were good. It was cheery work."

Mrs Halcrow said she too had been honoured to be asked. And there was a family connection with the buoy – it had been protected prior to unveiling with a sail from the *Elsi Arrub*, the boat belonging to her son Andrew and another from his father's dipping lug boat *Flying Enterprise*.

The sculpture was dedicated by fishermen's mission superintendent Aubrey Jamieson, who recalled the labour and sacrifice of previous generations in the industry, and described the finished article as "stunning".

No celebration would be com-

said of the sculpture: "It's very fitting for the industry." But, he added, some of Ms Chapman's comments had not been used on the lightsome buoy – it had been a rough trip.

Ms Aldington said the project had cost £90,000 for "everything", including materials, the casting, done in a foundry in Surrey, transport, installation and Ms Chapman's fee.

And as for the end result, Ms Aldington said: "It's been part of my life for the last six years since the idea first came from John Goodlad."

Some questioned the hole in the top of the structure, but rain would find its way out thanks to hidden drainage holes, and any rubbish could apparently be removed through a service hatch.

Ms Chapman said she was "relieved" her work was finally finished and was so well received. It had been the unanimous choice of the partnership out of three possible designs.

She had used a "lost wax" process and carved all the text and drawings into wax panels which were replicas of the panels on the buoy – these acted as moulds which then disappeared during the casting process.

The drawings on the panels represent the past and present – behind

the herring gutters on the "lasses side" is imagery from a modern fish processing plant, such as Shetland Catch. Behind the guys pulling in the nets on the "lads side" is the hull of a contemporary pelagic trawler.

Making the buoy, Ms Chapman

said, had been a "fantastic opportunity", and she had enjoyed travelling all over the isles speaking to all generations.

She added: "Everyone was so open and enthusiastic. I've had a wonderful time in Shetland."

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No celebration would be complete without a fiddle tune, and one called *Da Lightsome Buoy* had been commissioned from Hannah Adamson, who said she was "privileged" to have been asked.

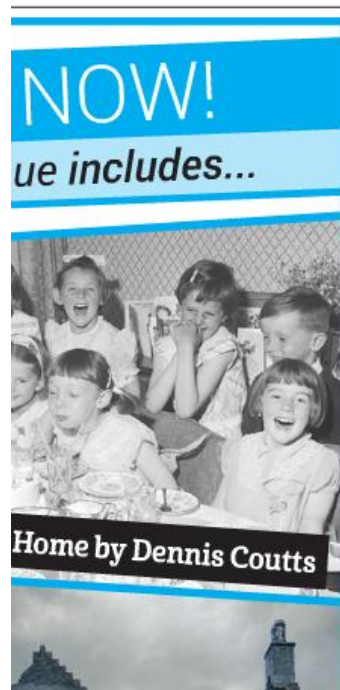
She played her cheerful solo with aplomb, and said the slower passages were to evoke trawlers' engines, and the faster ones the work of the gutters.

The whole project was co-ordinated by Clair Aldington, who was responsible for recruiting Ms Chapman and setting up an advisory group to help her gather material to inform her work.

That had included Ms Chapman braving an outing on the trawler *Adenia*. Skipper George Anderson

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John Goodlad, who had the idea for the sculpture, of Shetland's fishing industry.



Mareel beats Garrison hands down, report finds

BY RYAN TAYLOR
REPORTER OF THE YEAR

Events and visitor numbers to the Garrison Theatre in Lerwick are far outweighed by the corresponding figures for Mareel, according to statistics released by Shetland Arts.

The organisation is celebrating after announcing a small operating profit in its latest annual summary – the first time Shetland Arts has reached a surplus in several years.

But key facts have also been listed showing audience numbers at the long-running theatre stood at 6,915 for 2015/16. The corresponding figure for Shetland Arts' flagship venue is far in excess of that, however, with 125,570.

During the same period Mareel staged 3,483 concerts, screenings and exhibition days. But the Garrison pales into insignificance with just 45.

The figures come after a major survey was launched to gather the public's views on the future of the Garrison, following the formation this year of a steering group.

Concerns have recently been voiced about the future of the theatre, which has been hailed as an "iconic" local attraction.

Shetland Arts general manager Graeme Howell said a venue such as Mareel, with extensive exhibition space and two cinema screens, was a "different kettle of fish" to a proscenium arch theatre.

Asked about visitor numbers to Mareel, he said: "Of that three and a half thousand, two and a half thousand are cinema screenings.

"There are two exhibition spaces in Mareel as well, so those figures also contribute.

"We aim to do about 100 events a year in the Mareel auditorium."

Mr Howell said he was looking forward to seeing what recommendations might come from the steering group regarding the Garrison.

Mareel is also well ahead of the Bonhoga Gallery in Weisdale. Its attendances stand at less than 27,000, while events, such as exhibitions, reached a tally of 570.

Mr Howell welcomed the news of the surplus, insisting it marked a turn around for the organisation which saw "unsustainable losses" over the previous three years.

He said: "The last 12 months have been a time of considerable change within Shetland Arts and this along with the diligence of staff has been what has enabled us to deliver

a small surplus on the year, reversing three years worth of unsustainable losses.

"This is only the beginning of what we need to do as funding continues to tighten and the organisation looks to the future. I would like to thank all our partners, stakeholders and customers for their support over the last 12 months."

Income for the year reached £2,509,000 – up a small amount on last year – while expenditure was brought down from just above £2.6 million to £2,491,000, giving the agency an operating surplus of £18,000.

The agency made £1,448,000 from "earned income", while £725,000 came from Shetland Charitable Trust, and a further £264,000 from Creative Scotland.

Other public bodies gave £62,000, while the SIC supplied £8,000. A further £2,000 was made from donations, gifts and legacies.

Under expenditure, Shetland Arts spent £932,000 on artistic and creative programmes, £790,000 on trading costs and £336,000 on building costs.

Administrative costs reached £334,000, while marketing and communications came to £99,000.

Top line-up will take in the bells

Acclaimed band Fiddlers' Bid, along with other top musicians in the isles, will be teaming up with Shetland Arts to host a special Hogmanay party at Mareel.

The band, who are celebrating their 25th year together this year, will be part of a concert also including Vair, Norman Goudie and Friends, Bryan Gear and Violet Tulloch and Alec Couper.

The current Fiddlers' Bid line-up includes fiddlers Chris Stout, Kevin Henderson, Andrew Gifford and Maurice Henderson, Scottish harpist Catriona MacKay, guitarist Jenn Butterworth and Newcastle bassist Neil Harland.

Between the concert and dance, partygoers can refresh with complimentary supper and a dram, while enjoying the glamour and the glitz of the 1920s-inspired cafe bar or relax in one of the cinema spaces where music films will be showing.

Fiddlers' Bid will kick off the countdown at 11pm for everyone to take in the New Year, then dance the night away with musicians on the Mareel stage, with concert performers joining the Alan Nicolson Dance Band for the celebration.

Chris Stout of Fiddlers' Bid said: "We're all hugely excited to be sharing this special concert and dance with this all-star cast of some of our all-time favourite Shetland musicians.

"It means so much to us to have the chance to celebrate Hogmanay and our 25th year together among friends."

Two ticket options are available, one including the seated concert at 7.30pm and one with later entry from 9pm, to the cafe bar only until concert is finished. Tickets will be available to book from today.



Fiddlers' Bid will be part of a special Hogmanay celebration at Mareel.

Wordplay is back with a wide-ranging list of authors, and the focus is on the 'play'

The Wordplay festival, run by Shetland Arts, returns next month after a one-year break to make way for last year's crime writing festival Shetland Noir.

The programme, which runs from 16th to 27th November, has been put together with a steering group made up of stakeholders from the local literary scene.

It is being held in conjunction with Shetland Library and timed around the Book Week Scotland celebrations.

This year the focus is on putting the "play" into wordplay, highlighting the range of things that can be done with the written word.

This year's festival features an exciting mix of local and national names including Scots makar Jackie Kay, much loved children's author Debi Gliori and "between islands" authors Kevin MacNeil (Western Isles), Alison Miller (Orkney) and Roseanne Watt (Shetland).

The wide-ranging programme celebrates the diversity of the written word with a variety of events, talks and workshops for all ages.

Other highlights include a comic book creation masterclass with Edward Ross, creator of the graphic novel *Film-ish: A Graphic Journey Through Film*, networking events for local writers, the award winning *Aubrey and the Terrible Yoot* by Horatio Clare, illustrated by local artist Jane Matthews, an exploration of film poems with Roseanne Watt, novel-writing workshops with Orcadian author Alison Miller, a songwriting workshop with Carol Jamieson and the return of the ever popular "poetry skelp".

Sunday 27th November also sees launch of *Bobby the Birdman*, a new work compiled by Mike McDonnell and Jonathan Wills celebrating the extraordinary life of Bobby Tulloch.

The son of a crofter in the island of Yell, Tulloch started his working life as a baker only to become the renowned field ornithologist, tour guide, author and wildlife photographer.

As well as the talks and workshops, Shetland Library will be running a series of free events throughout Book Week Scotland, which runs from the 21st to 27th November.

This will include a series of workshops for schools with visiting children's author and illustrator Shoo Rayner, a special evening celebrating reading in the library with local writers, a variety of "love your library" events as well as the popular "the book group that's not a book group but kinda is a book group", which will also be meeting in the run-up to the festival.

The programme of events in Shetland Library has been organised by library staff along with their resident reading champion Jacqui Clark.

Steering group member and Shetland Arts creative projects manager Cara McDiarmid said: "We're so happy to reveal our programme for Wordplay this year; there are just too many exciting events to talk about.

"From meeting incredible authors to a variety of workshops and lovely events for children and families, our celebration of literature has something for everyone.

"We have events covering poetry, prose, songwriting, graphic novels, illustration, travel writing, island writing, film poetry and more, plus amazing showcases of local writers."

A full programme will be available at www.shetlandarts.org/wordplay.



Western Isles author Kevin MacNeil.



Scots makar Jackie Kay.

Stray Birds soar with high class display of American roots music

■ Triple-bill is a treat as Kansa kickstart the night in style ■ Glaswegian Meade's Flying Mules belt out blues tunes

Glorious harmonies and mesmerising musicianship were lapped up during a triple bill of country, blues and top-drawer American songwriting on Saturday night.

The cosy affair in Marcel's auditorium opened with isles' six-piece Kansa, delivering a polished collection of bluegrass and Americana numbers and sharing vocals round an old-school microphone.

Bearded, and waistcoat-booted members Adam Priest, Adrian Wishart and Robert Wishart were slick in their accompaniments, with Lynda Anderson adding extra spice with lead lines on fiddle.

Karlyn Grains' and Norma Wishart's voices melded together beautifully, with the rich deeper tones of Grains' voice complemented by rousing, rising harmonies from Wishart.

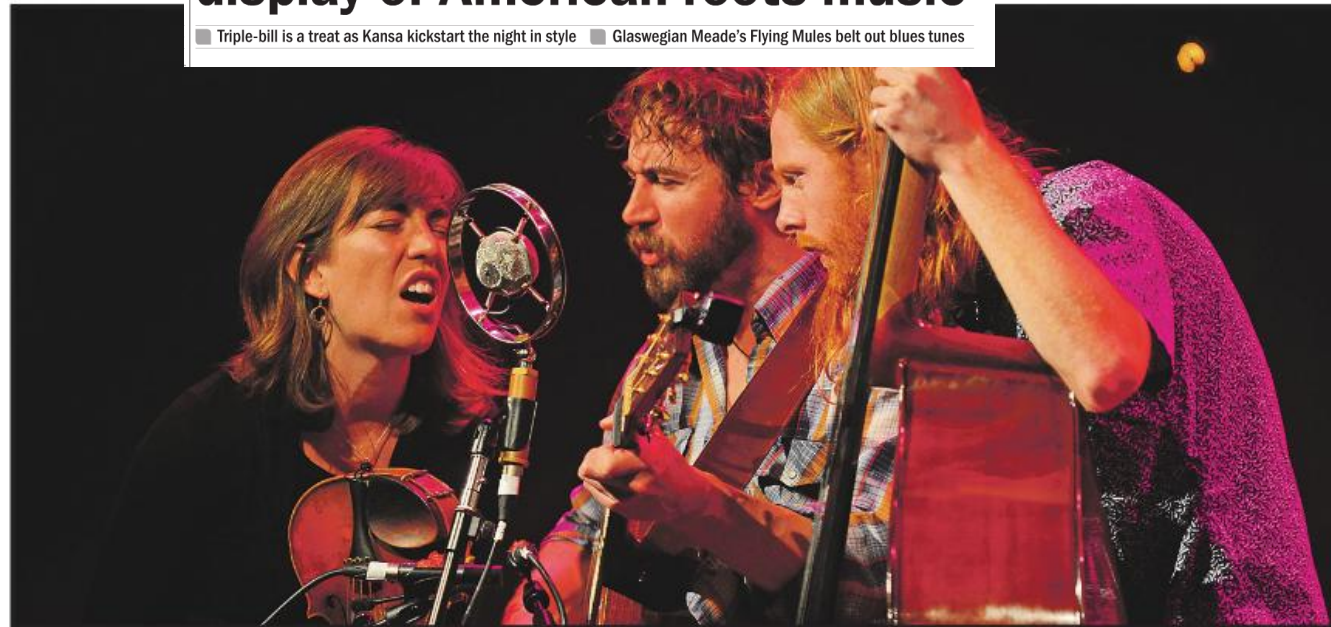
From Hank Williams' *Why Don't You Love Me* to Lead Belly, and the Steve Miller Band it was a tour through time, and a brilliantly crafted setlist.

Their final number, a rendition of Andrew Bird's *Three White Horses* was a real standout, with an eerie intro on mandolin and fiddle opening up to stunning, three-part harmonies and pounding bass.

Glaswegian four-piece Daniel Meade & The Flying Mules were the next to tread the boards.

Having had a night on the boat from Aberdeen, Meade said the band were "a bit ferry lagged".

Not that you could tell, as they



The Stray Birds Maya de Vitry, Oliver Craven and Charles Muench gather around the microphone for some harmonising.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

launched into thunderous double bass-slapping blues, razor-sharp vocals and hollow-bodied loveliness – which brought several cheers from the crowd for guitarist Lloyd Reid.

Back To Hell with chugging, train track-like rhythms was undeniably catchy, with sparkling guitar interludes from Reid.

Lyrically Meade is top-drawer, recounting tales of love, loss and regret.

As Good As Bad Can Be with

"honey coated tears" and its finger-picking guitar, subtly pulled in the listener.

There's also a humour to the band's music with belting song *Please Louise* and tales of a woman with "a big behind" bringing whistles and cheers from the crowd.

Meade hailed the friendliness of the locals and how everyone left their doors unlocked.

"We're going to come back...and rob you," he quipped.

It was a performance bursting with feel-good blues and country tunes and kicked off the weekend in style.

After a few microphone tweaks, The Stray Birds burst into a stun-

ning three-part harmony for opener *When I Die*, nearly lifting me from my seat.

With an array of instruments and lead vocals being passed between the band it made for a varied and enthralling collection of songs.

Third Day in a Row packed plenty of punch, with Oliver Craven this time on guitar duties and lead vocal.

Harlem, a tale of tears, insomnia and city life, was delicate and moving and the resonator guitar tones from Craven dovetailed the smooth and warming qualities of Maya de Vitry's voice.

Shining in the Distance from its humble acoustic guitar intro

flourished into an ear-worm refrain which long left playing in my ears.

A yodelling Jimmy Rodgers cover saw Craven tear into a blistering blues guitar solo, pulling every note from his hands with soul and feeling.

For me their real strength lay away from the more bluegrass, 'hoedown' numbers, which while excellently executed felt at times a bit predictable. However, there were no fancy pedals, no fancy effects just outstanding talent. It was a superb night of music with a hunger for roots in the isles which is showing no sign of letting up.

Adam Guest