

## REVIEWS

### Music

#### GOING ACROSS THE SEA, CARNEGIE HALL, DUNFERMLINE

ROB ADAMS

★★★

BILL Monroe's Scotland is a gift to any musical troupe looking to highlight the connection between the old country and the New World. The founder of bluegrass music's tribute to the land of

his ancestors, with bagpipe-like references, conveys a generations-deep sense of longing and it had a unifying effect on the transatlantic participants on this Scottish Arts Council Tune-up tour.

Being opening night, there was still an element of getting to know each other among the seven musicians and while the American trio, fiddler Betse Ellis from The Wilders and the Foghorn

String Band's multi-instrumentalists Caleb Klauder and Sammy Lind, tended to make the potent contributions, there were illustrations of their music's roots.

Klauder's high lonesome telling of a murder ballad suggested close kinship with our own The Wee Pen Knife. Orcadian Kris Drever sang Green Grows the Laurel from the great Aberdeenshire traveller Jeannie Robertson,

and fiddler Sarah McFadyen passed on to Ellis a waltz in which you could hardly see a join in its journeying from Glenfinnan to Missouri.

Possibly the richest example of this physical travelling came when fiddlers' favourite The Soldiers Joy, courtesy of Tim Matthew, and on to several states with noticeable changes of accent on the way before arriving in Ireland on Eamonn Coyne's

mandolin. Overall an enjoyable addition to the transatlantic sessions catalogue, with Klauder's soulfully delivered Carter Family songs and sensitively told The Beggar's Ring worth listening out for particularly.

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## MUSIC

**GOING ACROSS THE SEA**  
CARNEGIE HALL,  
DUNFERMLINE  
★★★★★

THE latest touring project under the Scottish Arts Council's Tune Up banner originally germinated during the 2007 Edinburgh Fringe, when a Scottish and an American fiddler, Tim Matthew of local underground heroes Mystery Juice and Betse Ellis of acclaimed Missouri quartet The Wilders, started trading tunes at the Spiegel tent one night. Given that the show embodies a kind of mini-Transatlantic Sessions concept, however, the actual seeds were sown a good century or two earlier, in the music that travelled with Scottish and Irish emigrants to the New World. The seven-piece line-up also features acclaimed singer-guitarist Kris Drever, fellow Orcadian Sarah McFadyen (fiddle, vocals), Irish banjo ace Éamonn Coyne and two more

US visitors, Caleb Klauder and Sammy Lind of old-timey favourites the Foghorn Stringband, juggling fiddle, mandolin, banjo, guitar, percussion and vocal duties.

After two years of transatlantic traffic in the form of e-mails and MP3 files, plus a few days of in-the-flesh rehearsal ahead of this first performance, the musicians' camaraderie and anticipation were palpable as soon as they walked onstage. The show's format and ambience highlighted its jam-session roots, but with this easy-going spontaneity complemented both by the ensemble's prowess and careful preparation. Ranging from Carter Family and Bill Monroe classics to contemporary jigs and reels, the material reflected either a seafaring theme or the peregrinations of tunes and songs – arranged for smaller groups as well as the full band – in a show that matched labour-of-love musicianship with excellent entertainment value.

SUE WILSON