

Kris and Sarah are coming *Across the Sea*

PREVIEW

TWO Orkney musicians are part of a project bringing together traditional musicians from both sides of the Atlantic, to celebrate and explore the music that travelled with the emigrants from Scotland and Ireland to America – and back again.

Named for a traditional fiddle tune and song, *Going Across the Sea* features Orcadians Kris Drever and Sarah McFadyen, Eamonn Coyne from Ireland, Tim Matthew from the Isle of Mull, Betse Ellis from Missouri and Caleb Klauder and Sammy Lind, both from Oregon.

The group will be performing in Orkney on April 25 and 26, as part of their two week tour of Scotland.

Kris Drever, the son of singer-songwriter Ivan Drever, moved to Edinburgh at the age of 17 but has remained a regular visitor to his home island, especially at Folk Festival time.

A guitarist and singer, he is in near-constant demand as a session player. In 2005 he joined forces with Aidan O'Rourke and Martin Green to form the trio Lau and released his debut solo album *Black Water* in 2006.

Hailing from Hoy, Sarah McFadyen puts her own stamp on Orcadian Swing Fiddle.

Since moving to Edinburgh in 1994 she has also been involved in the session scene and plays regularly with Kris. She has recorded two albums and toured extensively with Harem Scarem, plays with Scottish pop band Aberfeldy, The Nuggets, The Squashy Bag Dance Band, The Highfield Dance Band.

As musical collaborations go, this one's as hot

as it gets. And it all started with a session.

In Edinburgh in 2007, Betse Ellis of award-winning Kansas City hillbilly band The Wilders traded fiddle tunes with Tim Matthew backstage after her appearance at The Famous Spiegelent. The pair enjoyed the moment so much that they wanted to share the experience with others, spawning the idea of putting together a cross-cultural touring package that would feature some of the best players on the circuit.

The multi-talented Kris Drever, renowned for his solo projects and appearances with top band Lau, agreed to come onboard and brought legendary Irish tenor banjo player Eamonn Coyne and Sarah McFadyen to join the party.

Across the Atlantic, Betse invited her favourite jam-session friends Caleb Klauder and Stephen 'Sammy' Lind – both former members of the fabled US-based Foghorn Stringband – to complete the super group.

This became such a seriously-exciting 'live' music prospect, that The Scottish Arts Council agreed to make funding available through its 'Tune Up' programme to take the show on tour.

These concerts will feature the best of Scottish Trad alongside its American counterparts, and a look at Appalachian old-time music that influences modern Scottish performers. Old tunes mingle with the best of the new from both sides of the Atlantic as *Going Across the Sea* celebrates an extraordinary musical interchange.

The process began in Edinburgh last year as Kris, Eamonn, Sarah and Tim got together to



JOINING FORCES: The seven performers who are *Going Across the Sea* are, from left: Sammie Lind, Betse Ellis, Caleb Klauder, Kris Drever, Eamonn Coyne, Sarah McFadyen and Tim Matthew.

gather tunes and songs and to record material for the forthcoming project. At the same time in Portland, Oregon, Betse, Caleb and Sammie sat down and recorded a selection of American music they knew had Scottish origins.

Once recorded, the music was emailed back and forth with musicians in each country

learning the others' tunes and playing on each others recordings.

A truly transatlantic session.

The Orkney concerts are taking place at the Gable End Theatre, Hoy, on April 25 and at Woodwick House, Evie, on April 26. Both concerts start at 8pm, tickets cost £10 or £7 concessions.

Shetland's Revellers and Stallions to play in Orkney this weekend

PREVIEW

TWO bands are making their way from Shetland to Orkney this weekend; a Levellers tribute band and a band that performs classic rock and heavy metal covers.

The Revellers and Stallions of the Highway will be performing at The Royal Hotel in Stromness on Friday April 17 and The Auld Motor Hoose in Kirkwall on Saturday April 18. Each gig will start at 10pm, the Stallions will be taking to the stage first, followed by the Revellers.

This is the first time the bands have been to Orkney, although members from each band have played in Orkney before.

"We had a good laugh last time we were down and got a good response, so it'll be good to come down again," Kevin Tulloch, lead singer of Stallions of the Highway, told Orkney Today. "We're really looking forward to it. Both bands know each other well and because we're coming down with our cover bands this time, it will be a bit more lighthearted and even more fun."

The Revellers formed in 2007 and have been gigging for about a year now; their reputation took off very quickly and they are in great demand. As well as Levellers classics, they also throw in a few Waterboys covers and a couple of Steve Earl songs for good measure.

Stallions of the Highway also formed in 2007, primarily for the Simmer Dim Bikers Rally. They play a mix of songs by bands such as AC/DC, Thin Lizzy, Saxon, Judas Priest and Black Sabbath to name a few.

They have supported Iron



LEVELLERS TRIBUTE BAND the Revellers have also been known to get out their didgeridoo on occasion.

Maiden tribute band Maiden Scotland and their last gig was supporting The Revellers at a sold out Mid Yell Hall at New Year.

The Revellers are: Magnus Bradley, lead singer/guitarist with the band. He was the bass player for Ten Tonne Dozer when they toured Orkney with Bitumen River in October 2007.

Andrew Clubb, guitarist and most 'senior' member of The Revellers, previously played in Orkney with Bitumen River.

Craig Birnie, bass player, also played with Bitumen River in Orkney.

John William Halcrow, drummer, played with Bitumen River on that same tour and also played with Suppository Business at a mart dance about ten years ago.

Mandolin player Erik Peterson is the multi-talented son of Shetland legend Gary Peterson of Hom Bru fame.

Daniel Gear is a fiddler player

and the Revellers the first band that Daniel has played in.

Stallions of the Highway are: Kevin Tulloch, lead singer, was also the lead singer with Bitumen River when they joined Ten Tonne Dozer on the October 2007 tour.

Kevin was also in another band with Magnus and Craig of The Revellers, so knows them all well and has been known to do guest vocals with them on occasion.

Jamie Duncan, a veteran of the Shetland music scene and drummer with 'The Stallions', was the lead guitarist with Ten Tonne Dozer on their previous trip to Orkney.

Michael Anderson, guitarist, played bass with John William Halcrow in Shetland rock legends Suppository Business in the early 2000s.

Adam Priest, bassist, also used to play in Bitumen River. He also plays with Shetland blues/funk band Jamieson's Big Pockets.

On this Orkney tour, the band will be playing as a four-piece as John Arthur Polson, nicknamed 'Heavy Metal', unfortunately can't make it.

Kevin added: "A lot of folk came out to see us last time which was very encouraging, especially since we weren't playing any covers. Folk in Shetland seem to just want to hear covers, which can get a bit demoralising, but it does get everyone going. It's good to see people enjoying themselves."

"Both bands play very different songs, folk rock and heavy metal, so there should be something for everyone."



STALLIONS OF THE HIGHWAY play rock and heavy metal covers.

Competition Entry Form

ORKNEY Today have teamed up with Tune Up (www.tuneup.org.uk) to give away a pair of tickets for each *Going Across the Sea* concert, one set for the Gable End Theatre and one for Woodwick House.

To be in with a chance of winning, just answer this question:

WHICH TWO ORCADIAN MUSICIANS ARE INVOLVED IN THE GOING ACROSS THE SEA PROJECT?

Send your answer on the form to: *Going Across the Sea* Competition, Orkney Today, Kiln Corner, Ayre Road, Kirkwall, KW15 1QX, to arrive by Wednesday, April 22.

Name Answer

Address

Tel No

Preferred Venue: Gable End Theatre Woodwick House

Margaret Tait on show at the Tate

FILMMAKER

THE FILMS of Orcadian artist Margaret Tait were shown at Tate Modern in London last week to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the filmmaker's death.

The special screening included an early film made in Orkney, *A Portrait of Ga* (1952) and her last film also made in Orkney, *Garden Pieces* (1998). Also featured was one of her rarely screened longer works, *On the Mountain* (1974), which has at its centre the changes to Rose Street, Edinburgh where she had a base for many years. *Happy Bees* (1955), filmed from child height including some of the artist's nieces and nephews, was also screened.

The programme of films opened with a fleeting image of Margaret Tait herself filmed in 1995 by the visiting filmmaker Ute Aurand.

To resonate with the films, a selection of Margaret Tait's poems was read by the writer Ali Smith at the event. She commented on Margaret Tait: "A unique and underrated filmmaker, nobody like her. Born of the Italian neo-realists, formed of her own Scottish pragmatism, optimism, generosity and experimental spirit, and a clear forerunner of the English experimental directors of the late twentieth century. A clear example of, and pioneer of, the poetic tradition, the experimental tradition, the democratic tradition, in the best of risk-taking Scottish cinema."

The Pier Arts Centre in Stromness has been developing an archive of the films of Margaret Tait and currently holds six of her films in their original 16mm format as well as all her complete films on DVD.

Andrew Parkinson, Exhibitions Officer at the Pier Arts Centre said: "There is a growing interest in Margaret's work and we are pleased to have staged screenings of her films in St Margaret's Hope, Hoy and in Lerwick. I think the screening at Tate Modern will further establish that she



A STILL taken from *Portrait of Ga* by Margaret Tait.

was not only an important artist for Orkney and Scotland but is regarded internationally as a pioneer in contemporary filmmaking. I know that many younger artists working with film cite her as an important influence which is great."

A Portrait of Ga was also shown to Chinese film lovers last month, at a prestigious film festival celebrating Scottish film at Beijing's China Film Archive.

The Scottish Cinema of Dreams in China, was organised by the Scottish Government and the British Council and co-curated by acclaimed actress Tilda Swinton and writer, broadcaster and film critic Mark Cousins.

Tilda Swinton and Mark Cousins said in a joint statement: "We're here in Beijing because of the brilliance of Bill Douglas, Lynne Ramsay, Norman McLaren, Margaret Tait and other great Scottish directors. Each night here, thanks to these artists' work, Chinese people are seeing the hopes and fears, comedy and sadness, romance and longing in Scottish life. We love this and we are thrilled to see it happen."