

Week 3 Music Course Objectives:

Come and join us in beautiful St Andrews for what promises to be another highly successful Summer School Summer Musicians' Course. It is a unique opportunity to come together with like-minded people and make music.

The Musicians' Course is principally aimed at giving musicians grounding in good technique and style for playing for Scottish country dancing. The underlying philosophy for this course is to encourage musicians to understand and appreciate the unique style of Scottish country dance music and deconstruct the various genres, tune types and techniques to ensure that the music contains the necessary drive and lift to inspire the dancers. Although one of the main objectives is to have a working band for the final dance of the week in the Younger Hall, we also want to encourage those musicians who would like to learn about and understand the skill set needed to be a class musician. In doing this the course will cover the following:

- the characteristics of the different dance types: reel, jig and strathspey;
- the instrumental techniques that are uniquely;
- repertoire and arranging sets of suitable tunes, composition techniques;
- playing within the context of a band;
- playing for class.

It is anticipated that there will be an opportunity to explore tempos and genres that are not usually encountered on the Scottish country dance floor including slow airs, waltzes, two-steps, minuets, and the scope that these give bands and musicians to explore harmony and rhythm through arrangement.

It is intended that the morning sessions will focus on the above objectives and will prepare the ensemble for the Saturday night dance in the Younger Hall. The afternoon sessions will be drawn from the following specific themes:

- instrumental technique (Accordion, Fiddle, Piano);
- the difference between band piano and the demands of playing for class;
- repertoire and arranging suitable sets of music for dancing and listening;
- tune composition.

For those interested in playing for class, it is hoped to be able to provide the opportunity of observing one session of a class musician at work although there are a limited number of places available for this.

It is also hoped to provide some opportunities for playing together in smaller ensembles.

Participants do not need to have had previous experience of playing in a band, for class or for dancing but need a good grounding on their instrument. The focus will be on accordion, fiddle and band keyboard/piano but other instruments are welcome at the discretion of the Musical Director.

As a guideline the minimum standard is around the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music Grade 5 or equivalent. We would actively encourage younger players to apply for a place on the course. The course tutors are experienced tutors, band and class musicians.

There are various clips on YouTube from the last three courses. Links are:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlljm7ZaCio>
http://www.craigellachie-band.co.uk/summer_school_2018.html
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qe9-OIK6HTs>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOFn1Hz9TSo>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOLKbFLOouo>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPcT7YtaRAE>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ApjA3WuhTkw>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Q58gSdOTto>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F75r5gq2idg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGSoisb0iR0>

Ian Muir (Course Musical Director):

Ian started playing the accordion at school when he was 12 and playing for dances with his own band at the age of 14. At the age of 17 he was lucky enough to be invited to join McBain's Band, one of the South's most popular Scottish country dance bands at the time. In 1986 he formed his own band and since its inception the band has been well received both in the UK and abroad. The band has appeared twice on BBC television, and has broadcast twice on Radio Scotland's Take the Floor dance programme. Ian's philosophy for the band has always been that the musical arrangements the band uses in its repertoire must be as good to listen to as they are to dance to and that the future of the music lies in encouraging youngsters. Ian is also a keen composer and many of his compositions have been published and recorded by other Scottish dance bands, and several have been adopted as originals for dances. As a solo musician Ian has played the accordion for classes and day schools and has been a member of the Summer School staff for the last 7 years. Ian is currently the Musical Director of the RSCDS.

Gillian Stevenson (Fiddle):

Gillian grew up in the Highlands of Scotland and started learning classical violin at the age of 10. At the age of 13 Gillian gained her first experience in Scottish Country Dance music under the brilliant guidance of Ali McGregor – Lead Accordion player with the Tain Scottish Dance Band. She now plays with several Scottish Dance bands including Jock Fraser, Susie Simpson and she just recently took part in her first Take the Floor Broadcast with David Oswald's Scottish Dance Band. Gillian is a full time musician working for Fèis Rois teaching fiddle to adults and children as well as working in schools from Helmsdale to Nairn. Gillian is also a solo musician in her own right and regularly appears as a guest artist at Accordion and Fiddle Clubs across the country both as a soloist and as a band player.

Piano/keyboard:

Details to follow