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THE WHISTLEBINKIES



Peter Anderson
Scottish side drum / bodhran

Iain Crawford
double bass

Anna Dagg
fiddle / viola

Stuart Eydmann,
fiddle / concertina / vocals

Mark Hayward
fiddle

Rhona MacKay
clarsach / vocals

Eddie McGuire
flute

Rab Wallace
lowland pipes / Scottish smallpipes

What a joy to hear each of these instruments played so beautifully ...

It was like the sun coming out ... a group that wanted to play traditional tunes but also wanted to be contributors to a living tradition; this evening's performance of outstanding music making by The Whistlebinkies was proof that they are both
L.Macleod, The Orcadian

They are an outstanding group
Michael Tumelty, The Herald

Binkies keep traditional flame alive ... Traditional music might have become a dying form, if it weren't for bands like The Whistlebinkies
Edinburgh Evening News

Well, they're just lovely
John Cage

THE WHISTLEBINKIES

BIOGRAPHY

Formed during the great surge of interest in traditional and Celtic music and song in the late 1960s, the group quickly evolved into a leading force in the field. **The Whistlebinkies** led the revival in the use of the bellows-blown bagpipes in Scotland and were the first to combine the three national instruments: the fiddle, bagpipes and clarsach (small Scottish harp) in regular performance. The repertoire is drawn from all periods of Scottish music and from all regions of the country. Members contribute new compositions within the tradition and the group often explores connections with other cultures. Arrangements evolve in a workshop situation with each member contributing his or her own skills and ideas.

The title of the group is an old Scots word for a wandering beggar musician – one who sat on a 'bink' (bench) playing a whistle. Some also see it as related to the Gaelic words for 'noble seat' where the bard – piper, harper or fiddler – would be given pride of place at the clan chief's table. There is also a popular edition of verse from 1832 in Glasgow entitled Whistlebinkie – Songs for the Social Circle.

The Whistlebinkies have toured extensively taking Scottish music to France, Germany, Italy, Finland, Iceland, Estonia, Sweden and Spain. In 1991 they were the first Scottish music group to tour the Peoples Republic of China, returning to Taiwan in 1999 and have appeared at major festivals such as the Edinburgh International Festival, the Hong Kong Folk Festival and the Festival Interceltique at Lorient, Brittany. In 1996 the group made an important contribution to the Scotland: Cultural Counterpoint festival at the Anderson Centre for the Arts, New York State.

The Whistlebinkies collaborate frequently on special musical projects and have worked with artists ranging from Yehudi Menuhin to David Essex. They have toured with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and have collaborated with Scottish Ballet in Eddie McGuire's ballet The Spirit of Flight. The Whistlebinkies have contributed much music to feature and documentary film, television, radio and stage drama productions.

The band commissioned, premiered and broadcast Scottish Circus by the late John Cage which they presented, along with 4'33", in special performances at Inverlieth Gallery at Edinburgh Botanic as part of a major exhibition of drawings and paintings by John Cage and Merce Cunningham. They recorded Scottish Circus and 4'33" for New York's Mode Records with support from the Cage Foundation for cd/dvd release.

In 2005, a Creative Scotland Award was awarded to Eddie McGuire, culminating in the collaboration between The Whistlebinkies and Scottish-based Chinese traditional music group Harmony in the premiere of Tian Di Yuan (Defying Fate), a one-act ballet with music by Eddie McGuire. In 2006, The Whistlebinkies will appear at festivals and venues throughout the UK and in Hong Kong for a major collaborative project with the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong and the Chinese universities.

They undertook a residency at the 2006 St.Magnus Festival and in 2007, they returned to the Festival Interceltique at Lorient, in the festival's 'Scottish' year, for a performance of Eddie McGuire's L'Épopée Celtique and appeared in Le Grande Nuit D'Écosse.

Their latest CD The Whistlebinkies : Albannach released continues the tradition of The Whistlebinkies being one of Scotland's most successful and best loved folk groups.

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