

The event unites players from all over Scotland

Words: DANIELLA THEIS Pictures: INVERNESS FIDDLERS' RALLY

# Fiddle Frenzy

The Inverness Fiddlers' Rally has become a mass gathering that's loved by players and listeners alike

EVERY year, on a cold winter's night, Inverness hosts an event that brings together a wealth of musicians from across Scotland for an evening of musical magic. The Inverness Fiddlers' Rally, this year taking place at Eden Court on March 16, has been showcasing Scottish traditional music at the tail end of winter for decades.

"I think since the society was founded in 1977, they have also been holding a rally," says Dave Greer, who has been organising the event for 17 years.

Up to 120 fiddlers crowd on to the stage for the show, as musicians from all over Scotland join up to play together: people from Orkney, Dundee, Falkirk, Elgin, Dunkeld, Fife, Glasgow, and more. Last year, the event had 16 visiting societies.

It is this mix of regions, the Highland location, and time of year, that makes the rally unique for visitors and players alike. "It doesn't happen that often that you get such a large number of players in one place," Dave adds.

"I think societies that come and join us for the day like the fact that it is a chance to play in the big auditorium. A lot of them play in smaller communities where there's maybe just a small village hall.

"It's also quite nice that it's kind of coming out of the winter, but it's still a cosy night. The fact it is taking place in the capital of the Highlands just makes it doubly nice for people, I think."

Every year, the rally includes special guests. This year one is renowned Scottish traditional musician Bruce MacGregor, long-time presenter of BBC Radio Scotland's *Travelling Folk*, also known for forming the multi-award-winning Highland fiddle super group Blazin' Fiddles in 1998. Another is guitarist Anna Massie, who won Producer of the Year at the Scottish Trad Awards in 2022, and was a three-time nominee for Best Instrumentalist in the same competition.

Dave continues, "There'll be a good atmosphere. The music is so rousing. Everyone is normally on very good form. All the musicians wear tartan for the night.

"The music tends to be traditional tunes from Scotland mainly, but we do include a few Scandinavian ones, some from Ireland, and more.

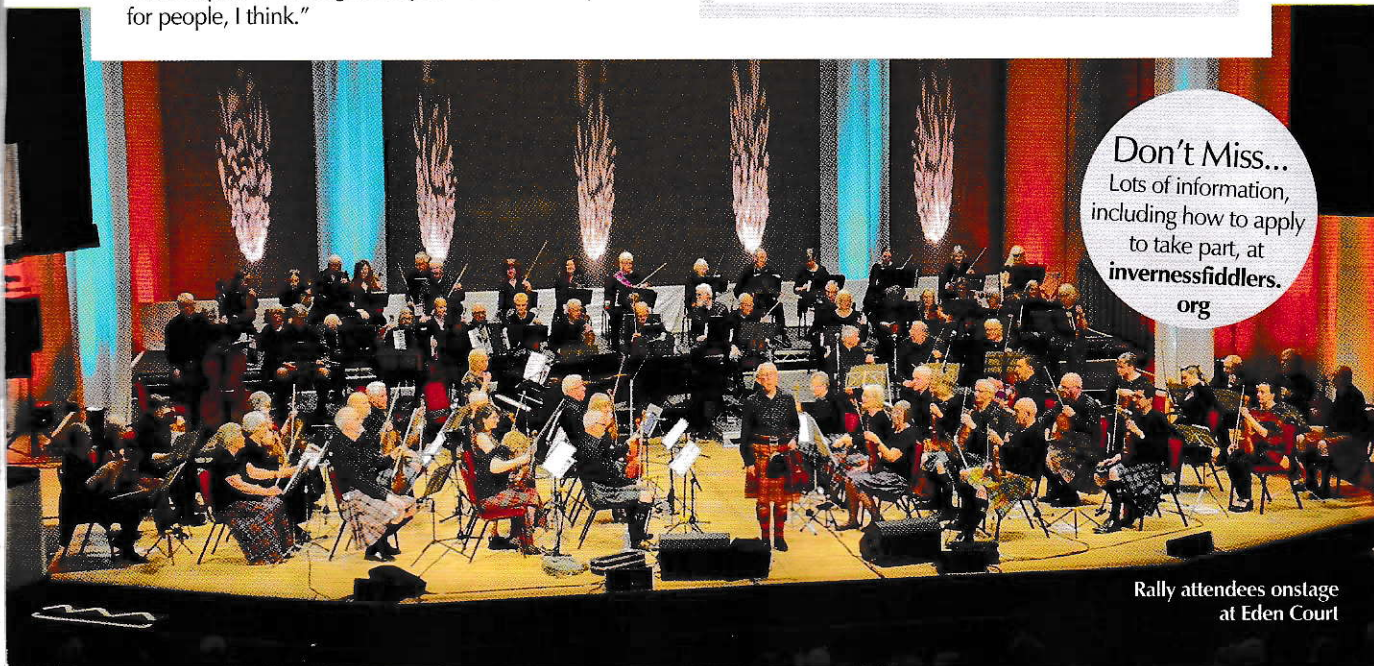
"We always try and include some Gaelic waltzes as well, because some of our audience who have been coming for years like to sing along."

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## CONTACT

01463 234234

eden-court.co.uk



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including how to apply  
to take part, at  
**invernessfiddlers.org**

Rally attendees onstage at Eden Court