

Launch of the Multicultural Scotland's Winter Festivals

#WeAreScotland



BEMIS Scotland are delighted to announce the opening of our Scotland's Winter Festivals small grants fund for this year. In 2020/21 we will continue our partnership with the Scottish Government, the Fair Saturday Foundation (Bilbao) and Celtic Connections international music festival to celebrate Scotland's diverse minority ethnic communities' citizenship, artistic assets, and talent.

The 2020 programme will focus on St Andrew's Day '**Acts of Kindness**' and '**Artistic Messages to Scotland**'.

St Andrew's Day Acts of Kindness

2020 has been a very difficult year for everyone, and in this adversity, we have witnessed the very best of professional dedication in our NHS and other public services.

In addition, the minority ethnic third sector has mobilised itself in unprecedented fashion to support our communities – often in extremely challenging circumstances – to ensure that support is there for all who need it. It truly has been a rightly diverse collective national effort. In our largest health board, Greater Glasgow and Clyde, where the ethnicity of staff has been self-ascribed by individuals, over 15% of staff were from minority ethnic communities. This indicates the multi-ethnic efforts that are ongoing to keep all of the people of Scotland safe. We want to celebrate this unique effort by the diverse communities and say thank you to all NHS staff for their ongoing commitment and care.

We would call on all to utilise St Andrew's Day as a marked day to showcase such acts of kindness and appreciation. We are opening the **small grants** fund in this challenging year to help organisations and communities to instigate an '**Act of Kindness**' in and from their communities. These Acts of Kindness could be directed from communities to their local health service, their broader community or isolated community members. An Act of Kindness can be the provision of food, art and crafts materials and online art session to send dedications to frontline workers, recording video messages, online events, or other new ways of sharing between each other in these difficult times. We will provide guidance in developing social media material to ensure your Act of Kindness is shared across Scotland.

Artistic Messages to Scotland

Working with our long-term partners, the Fair Saturday Foundation (Bilbao) and Celtic Connections international music festival, we will mobilise community musicians, poets, singers and artists to host online concerts, events or pre-recorded collaborations to be open to the people of Scotland and around the world. All of our events will be uploaded to the international Fair Saturday events platform where communities across the world will have access to the live links and streams you provide.

Artistic Messages to Scotland can be held from Friday 27th to Monday 30th of November – St Andrew's Day, and on or around Burns Day, 25th January 2021.

In addition, working with Celtic Connections, we will ensure that despite these challenging times Scotland's minority ethnic communities will continue to play their part in shaping and participating in the world's best international music festival. We are working with the festival, due to take place in a digital format in January 2021, to ensure that the multicultural Artistic Messages to Scotland opportunity is part of this collaboration.

Responding to the innovative development of the programme...

Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said:

“Over the last six years the multi-cultural celebration of Scotland's Winter Festivals has gone from strength to strength. This season, supported by funding of £55,000 from the Scottish Government, I am pleased that BEMIS Scotland is inviting diverse communities across the country to showcase Scotland's kindness and unique and evolving culture and traditions to mark St Andrew's Day and Burns Night. Kindness is who we are as a nation and so in these unprecedented times let's all reach out to someone this St Andrew's Day.”

Rami Ousta (CEO, BEMIS Scotland) outlined that:

“The SWF program has been a positive and responsive platform not only for showcasing equal and proactive participation of the diverse communities in the SWF, but also in utilising such cultural participation in promoting and enhancing community spirit at several levels. For this year, BEMIS had to re-shape our programme of events to ensure that we strike the balance between public health, community safety and participation while progressing the key themes of the multicultural celebrations of Scotland's Winter Festivals. Such participation for this year is fully aligned to two key messages that reflect our collective community resilience and inclusive community spirit while appreciating our Home, Scotland. We call on all communities to engage with us in celebrating our unique Scotland and celebrating St Andrew's and Burns Night by delivering and showcasing multicultural Acts of Kindness to each other, and to share combined solidarity with our communities, our society and public bodies via artistic messages to Scotland both for St Andrew's Day and Burns Night celebrations.”

Donald Shaw, Creative Producer for Celtic Connections, said:

“We are delighted to be working together with BEMIS again for Celtic Connections 2021. Although next year’s edition will be very different to anything we’ve done before, with a digital-first festival showcasing a host of world-class performances via online platforms, we were certain that we wanted to once again work closely with the fantastic BEMIS team who continue to support and celebrate the diverse ethnic minority groups throughout Scotland. Now, more than ever, the connections that can be made through music and culture are vitally important in ensuring that we continue to thrive as a multicultural community, supporting each other during these difficult times. Music can define us, it can connect us but most of all, and especially during this time, it can bring joy and light into a very uncertain world.”

Jordi Albareda, Director and Founder of the Fair Saturday Foundation said:

“Without the inspiration, effort and sensitivity of artists, venues and cultural organisations we would not be where we are. It is time to give back to them everything they have given us. And that they will continue giving us. Because, in a way, they are our soul’s health workers. Our task is to promote culture, now more than ever before. We must succeed in taking a step further, with culture as a means of ensuring social cohesion, sharing, empathy and equality. The idea is simple. Extremely simple. To create a festival in which different cultural organisations would perform supporting all at once social or cultural projects of their choice. And triggering a mobilisation around arts and culture. And now, we find ourselves in one of the best places to launch Fair Saturday. Scotland will be one of the countries leading Fair Saturday worldwide.”

For full details on the Scotland’s Winter Festivals fund, including how to apply please visit:

www.bemis.org.uk/swf

If you would like to get in contact for further information on the programme please email neil.foster@bemis.org.uk