

Tattoo House Band drumming up new recruits for 2019

Following the resounding success of its first global tour last year, Pipers Trail – the house band of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo – opened applications this week for 2019 recruits.

Pipers Trail was developed by the Tattoo in 2014 to establish a worldwide network of Scottish piping and drumming performers with abilities to play traditional and contemporary music. The band is built upon a focus for excellence and inspiring the next generation to continue Scotland's longstanding traditional music forms.

As well as playing a key role in the Edinburgh Tattoo's Massed Pipes and Drums, the band, led by former Director of Army Bagpipe Music, Major Stevie Small, kicked off its worldwide journey in September of last year at the Dusseldorf Tattoo before performances in Norway, the Czech Republic, China, and a return to Dusseldorf in September this year.

New recruits are being called on from all points of the compass with the opportunity to perform at the annual Tattoo spectacle in the iconic shadow of Edinburgh Castle, and the chance to travel the globe to international ceremonies and piping events.

Next year, the band will increase in size from 50 members to 75 members fulfilling three files on the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle. Potential applicants should be over 18, have proficient musical skills including an RSPBA Grade 3 as a minimum standard, and be able to commit to performing at the

world-renowned Tattoo for four weeks in August 2019.

Stevie Small, Project Officer at Pipers Trail, said: "Pipers Trail is committed to leaving a lasting legacy for Scottish traditional music and dance all over the world, beyond the walls of the annual Edinburgh Tattoo. We truly believe we offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for those with a keen and capable interest in piping and drumming.

"This year, we are looking to extend the size of our group quite significantly opening up more spaces for seasoned musicians and the next generation of talent. Those thinking about applying should have the ability to set up, tune and maintain their pipes to a high standard and be able to read, play and memorise scores quickly and accurately.

"Earlier this year, the Tattoo revealed its intent to reach ever-larger audiences at home and abroad with an ambitious international expansion programme, so the opportunities which lie ahead for Band members are huge."

As well as nurturing traditional music, Pipers Trail also provides members with an opportunity to experience different cultures, communities and traditions building global citizens and friendships with musicians around the globe.

Shonagh Duncan became a member of Pipers Trail last year. Originally from Duns in the Scottish Borders, she first learned to play the bagpipes aged just nine years old. In 2013, Shonagh began studies at the University of Edinburgh but continued to spend her spare time busking on the capital's Princes Street. Nowadays, she plays sell-out shows in front of Edinburgh Castle and in front of international audiences in Germany, Norway and China.

She said: "I always assumed that only those with a military background would be considered to perform at The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, but it's open to pipers and drummers from all walks of life. Becoming a member of Pipers

Trail has enabled me to fulfil my lifelong dream of crossing the drawbridge at Edinburgh Castle to perform in front of thousands of people.

“Being a part of Pipers Trail is also more than just a career choice, it’s very much a lifestyle choice and the people that you work with day-to-day become like your close friends and family. It has done so much for me both personally and professionally.” To date, the Band has brought together more than 200 performers from Argentina, Uruguay, Canada, New Zealand, United States, Australia and across the UK to perform at Edinburgh Castle’s famous Esplanade in the last four years.

Applications open today and close on 16 December 2018. For further information and to apply, pipers and drummers should visit www.edintattoo.co.uk/piperstrail.