

# **Fifield continues traditional Musician in Residence programme**

**Multi-instrumentalist Fraser Fifield releases One Great Circle, the second album of his tenure as Traditional Musician in Residence at the University of Edinburgh's Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies on Friday 8 March.**

Following Fifield's *Secret Path*, released last summer, *One Great Circle* is the tenth album in this remarkably versatile musician's prolific career. It was composed for Fifield's favoured instrument, the low D whistle and long-time friends, harper Catriona McKay and Shetland fiddler Chris Stout.

Fifield's music has taken him across the world, working with the Indian percussion master Zakir Hussain and leading musicians from Argentina, Spain and the Balkans. The music on the *One Great Circle* took its inspiration from a character from closer to home, however, the Aberdeen-born storyteller, ballad singer, author, piper and member of a prominent traveller family, Stanley Robertson.

Although Fifield never met Robertson, who died in 2009, the two share Aberdeenshire roots and an upbringing in the piping tradition in common. Fifield, who was able to get to know Robertson through interviews held on Scotland's online cultural resource, *Tobar an Dualchais*, is also sympathetic to

many of his inspiration's thoughts on reincarnation, to which the album title refers.

"Coming from Aberdeenshire and working in traditional music over the past thirty years, I was aware of Stanley's reputation," says Fifield. "He was the nephew of the great ballad singer Jeannie Robertson, of course, and as I listened to him talking and telling stories that had been in his family for generations, I found him to be a fascinating character. I also realised that his storytelling wasn't just fanciful tales. There's a lot of truth amongst the imagery he describes and his way of speaking has its own rhythm that can lead to musical thoughts either directly or indirectly."

Fifield's partners on the recording and in the concert, Catriona McKay and Chris Stout are musicians he has known and worked with over many years. Acclaimed internationally, McKay and Stout have been working together as a duo, and in the band Fiddlers' Bid, since they were music students in the 1990s. Their musicianship has been recognised through winning the BBC Radio Two Folk Awards' Best Duo title and being awarded a Herald Angel at the Edinburgh Festival and recent achievements include an appearance at Sydney Opera House.

"I knew that Catriona and Chris would be able to play whatever I wrote and I knew how to write for their wonderfully adventurous style of playing," says Fifield. "When we got together initially to play the music in a concert at St Cecilia's Hall in Edinburgh back in October, we had a couple of days to familiarise ourselves with the notes and there was very little revision. I left room for them both to express themselves because I wanted their personalities to come through in the music. The recording was then very straightforward. We had a short rehearsal and then we were able to get it all down in one very productive day in the studio."

One Great Circle is released by Tanar Records and will be

launched with a concert at the National Piping Centre in Glasgow on Saturday 9 March at 8pm. In the meantime, Catriona McKay and Chris Stout have their own concert at the Queen's Hall this Saturday, 24 February.

