

First Footin' – looking for singers to perform on New Year's Day

Edinburgh's Hogmanay celebrations will continue into New Year's Day with the free offerings included in First Footin' – musical events all over the city centre – and in Portobello and Leith.

Folk artist, Karine Polwart, is looking for singers to join a 200-strong community choir to perform at St Giles' on New Year's Day at Come Away In.

She will host a performance to mark the turning-of-the-year with 'Come Away In', a commissioned project welcoming special guests musicians Lori Watson and Corrina Hewat, along with 200 community choir singers, celebrating crossing the threshold of the New Year in the embrace of massed voices and song.

Alongside Choir Director Stephen Deazley, Ms Polwart is inviting singers of all abilities to join the choir for the day, as music fans mark the New Year with a mass performance of song in the historic cathedral. No formal music skills are required, and parts will be simple and taught by ear – find out more information and register to be part of the 'Come Away In' community choir at edinburghshogmanay.com from 12 noon Thursday 14 November.

Looking for something different this New Year's Day? [@IAMKP](#)

is recruiting 200 people to join a community choir to sing in [@stgilesHighKirk](#) with her at the First Footin' event Come Away In pic.twitter.com/lBFykvc8Gg

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [November 13, 2024](#)

Karine Polwart said,“Singing in the New Year is such a massive communal tradition here in Scotland that opening the doors of St. Giles’ Cathedral to 200 community voices just seemed obvious. It’s a glorious space designed for song. I hope our invitation to ‘Come Away In’ captures a spirit of hospitality, sanctuary, and togetherness – things that need looking after in these times.”

The Scottish Government’s Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, Angus Robertson, said,“The First Footin’ and Sprogmanay programmes look like they’re shaping up to be a great way to kick start 2025 with fun for all ages and all interests.

“We’re delighted to again be supporting this year’s celebrations with £100,000 from our Festival Expo Fund. Edinburgh’s Hogmanay and New Year’s Day festivities are much-loved both at home and abroad, and are a wonderful showcase for the extraordinary range of artistic talent we have in this country.”

Edinburgh’s Hogmanay producers and First Footin’ creators Unique Assembly said, “We’re thrilled to unveil another fantastic First Footin’ line-up for Edinburgh’s Hogmanay this year. New Year’s Day in the city has become a wonderful experience, welcoming audiences to shake-off the night afore and discover a wealth of talent from across Scotland and beyond. Inviting people to become part of the show with Karine Polwart’s community choir in St. Giles’, will be an incredible

experience for all and the best start to 2025. Stay tuned for even more to be announced!"

First Footin will enable audiences to explore the city and a range of venues where live music will be played, embracing the traditions of Hogmanay. Award-winning musician and composer **Aidan O'Rourke** has co-curated the First Footin' line-up with a programme of live music, performance and collaborations from the world of folk, indie, jazz, classical, dance and hip-hop and more.

First Footin' highlights include:

Award-winning singer-songwriter **Karine Polwart** presents 'Come Away In' at St. Giles' Cathedral with a 200-strong community choir plus special guests **Lori Watson** and **Corrina Hewat**

Participants can register to join the choir from 12noon Thursday 14 November at edinburghshogmanay.com – registration is free, and participants must be available for two rehearsals ahead of the event, and for the performance itself on New Year's Day at St. Giles' Cathedral

Historic Greyfriars Kirk presents a feast of spectacular Scottish artists featuring **Valtos**; Skye natives Daniel Docherty and Martyn MacDonald who have taken the Trad and Electronic music worlds by storm, along with artist and composer **Kate Young**, Edinburgh born singer **Lewis McLaughlin**, and on-line sensation **NATI**, who in 2022 amassed an incredible 2m followers.

In a special collaboration with **The Scottish Album of the Year (SAY) Award** and partners **Stirling Council**, First Footin' welcomes a selection of 2024's nominees to the live music trail, with **Dead Pony**, **Broken Chanter**, **Spyres** and **Bee Asha** performing at Virgin Hotel – Greyfriars Hall

The Fruitmarket Gallery once again hosts an afternoon of classical music, with a diverse programme of solo and duo

music for viola and cello, performed by acclaimed Canadian cellist **Christian Elliott** and **Fiona Winning**; Principal Violist of the Royal Philharmonic and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras

Rising stars **Grayling**, **EVYE** and **Zoe Graham** perform as part of a programme of singer-songwriters at Virgin Hotel's Eve

Experimental folk duo **Norman&Corrie** will invite special guests including previous BBC Radio Scotland Young Trad Musician of the Year **Amy Laurenson** and **Harry Gorski-Brown** at the St. Andrew Square Spiegeltent

Edinburgh duo **Dowally** and more to be announced at Edinburgh Christmas' brand new venue **The Coorie Inn** on George Street

New First Footin' venue Leith Arches presents an afternoon of contemporary Scottish artists featuring Glaswegian jazz sensations **Mama Terra**, Edinburgh rock band **Low Tide**, and Loch Lomond singer-songwriter **Liv Dawn**.

Plus, a New Year's Day Club Night featuring **Hayley Zalassi**, **Swatt Team** and **Disco T*ts**

Portobello Town Hall joins proceedings for the first time with a free Family Ceilidh throughout the afternoon, with **Bella McNab's Dance Band** and community band **Shunpike Social Club** providing the dancing tunes

Plus, BBC award-winning singer songwriter **Mike McKenzie** will be performing at The Scottish Cafe & Restaurant

At night, **Vitamin C Club** transforms Portobello Town Hall for a night of rock'n'roll excess featuring **The Vaselines**, **Sacred Paws**, **Django Django (DJ set)** plus hosts **Vic Galloway** (BBC Radio Scotland) and **Andy Wake** (The Phantom Band)

Plus an evening of revelry at the **First Footin' Sessions** with **Cold Town Beer** taking place in Edinburgh's best city centre pubs and bars

Family entertainment

Celebrations for families and young revellers run throughout New Year's Day with the return of the hugely popular **Sprogmanay** in collaboration with the National Museum of Scotland. Enjoy lively performances and activities for all the family with a vibrant free programme including; music performances from **Unicorn Dance Party** arts and crafts, and this year a special street theatre performance from international performers **Close Act**, will see illuminated 'I-Puppets' running, jumping and even flying amongst the crowds.

Dance the day away at the **Sprogmanay Family Ceilidh**, this year hosted by the incredible **Fruin Ceilidh Band** at Assembly Roxy, and at a new event at Portobello Town Hall, presenting ceilidh dancing with **Bella McNab's Dance Band** and community street band **Shunpike Social Club** with some Afrobeat, Brazilian and Cuban big band flair. These fun family events are the perfect chance to embrace traditions and introduce kids to classic ceilidh dancing for the first time with an expert caller on hand to ensure everyone of all ability can join in. Running all afternoon, families are invited to stay for the afternoon or drop in and out of sessions to catch their breath!

First Footin' is created and produced by Unique Assembly as part of the 4-day Edinburgh's Hogmanay festival on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council, funded by the Scottish Government's Festivals Expo Fund through Creative Scotland, and supported by Essential Edinburgh and Cold Town Beer.

Further information and tickets for Edinburgh's Hogmanay 4-day celebrations are available now from www.edinburghshogmanay.com.

BELOW: Karine Polwart and artists Bee Asha and Mama Terra plus Choir Director Stephen Deazley in St.Giles' Cathedral





