



# THE PIPES OF CHRISTMAS

24<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PRODUCTION

*Proudly presented by The Learned Kindred of Currie*

24<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PRODUCTION  
**THE PIPES OF CHRISTMAS**

..... Sponsored by .....

Scottish Heritage USA & The Pipers Cove

**S A T U R D A Y**

**December 17, 2022**

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church,  
New York City

**S U N D A Y**

**December 18, 2022**

Central Presbyterian Church,  
Summit, New Jersey

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices. The taking of photographs, videos and the use of recording equipment is forbidden.

Due to Covid-19 & RSV virus, masks will be available at all performances.

*The Learned Kindred of Currie gratefully acknowledge the generous support of*

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*This year's annual concert is dedicated to the memory of*

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Ian Currie  
Monty Norman  
Ian Hamilton  
Anne Kennedy

Bob McGrath  
Mick Moloney  
Maureen Ogden  
Vangelis  
Doddie Weir



# WELCOME HOME

On behalf of our Honorary Chairs, sponsors, our company of outstanding performers, and the many members, friends, and volunteers of the Learned Kindred of Currie, we wish you a warm Highland welcome and thank you for joining us. Whether this is your first year experiencing the magic of the Pipes, or one of our many loyal audience members for whom it is a treasured Christmas tradition, we are delighted you're here.

In the midst an often rushed and chaotic time of year, this concert affords a rare opportunity to celebrate the sacred message of the holiday season in a reverent, joyful style that found its genesis among our Celtic ancestors. With music and poetry that reflect our cherished traditions, this year's program includes perennial favorites as well as inspiring original works.

We are delighted to be presenting two world premiere compositions this year. 'Ascension', composed by our music director Steve Gibb, marks the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II after seven decades of dedicated service. And in celebration of the clarsach (Scottish harp), US National Scottish Harp Champion Rachel Clemente has composed "The Golden Hearth", which evokes the warmth and glow of a yuletide fireplace.

This year we also welcome soprano Sharon Lyons to our company. Ms. Lyons is a much sought-after classical soloist in her native Ireland, and we are thrilled to be hosting her NYC solo debut.

After two challenging years of navigating the COVID pandemic, this year's performance feels particularly sweet. Your presence today supports the return of this beloved concert, as well as the Learned Kindred of Currie's efforts to educate and inspire. Proceeds from this event enable us to share our proud heritage and customs with students, scholars, and the general public through scholarships and outreach initiatives. Thank you for your support.

From all of us to all of you, we wish you a blessed holiday season.

Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr!  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



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- Include the Scottish Heritage USA e-Newsletter (10 x year)
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## AMANDA BLOCK

HONORARY CO-CHAIR

It is an unexpected joy for which I am most grateful to serve as Honorary Chair for this esteemed event. Pipes of Christmas is a Summit institution where the most dedicated musicians and community members converge to create holiday magic, delight, and respite under Commander Currie's inspiring vision.

During this season of frenetic merriment, may we know peace through the beauty of this music. In this season of isolation due to sickness, may we feel connected by shared enjoyment. In this season of darkness, may we find light in the goodness of our neighbors.

GRACE, Summit's outreach organization, actualizes the belief that our generous and bountiful community can fulfill all needs that exist in our community. Every week we serve more than 500 local families who experience financial hardship. GRACE provides nutrient dense fresh food, personal care supplies, and seasonal gear for work and every day life. More than that, we provide community, connection, and empowerment in difficult times. These efforts ensure that all our people can lead healthy, happy, secure lives.

We see a kindred spirit and partner in nourishing the people of Summit in the Pipes of Christmas. I look forward to this masterful experience.

It is my hope we will be inspired to act as Robert Louis Stevenson said in his treasured Christmas Prayer:

"Close the door of hate  
and open the door of love all over the world.  
Let kindness come with every gift  
and good desires with every greeting."

Brightest Blessings,

**Amanda Block**  
GRACE Founder

# RUSSELL DALGLEISH

HONORARY CO-CHAIR



A welcome from Scotland to our friends in the United States.

It is with great pleasure and with a deep sense of gratitude that I welcome you to the 2022 Annual Pipes of Christmas Concert. It is wonderful to witness the return of this event now in its 24th year and the first edition since the time of COVID which we have all had to endure.

This annual concert and webcast is the key fundraiser for the Learned Kindred and monies raised go towards cultural outreach and scholarship fund as well as to support world-renowned musicians and creatives. With the great reputation, we Scots have for our generosity I encourage you all to dig deep to support Robert Currie and his team as they continue to champion Scotland in the United States.

I was truly humbled when Robert Currie, Commander of the Name and Arms of Currie asked me to take on the role of Honorary Chair. Robert and I share a common goal to promote all that is good about Scotland and a key component for me is fellowship. This friendly association of peoples with a common interest, in our case Scotland, is today more often given the name diaspora but for me will always be family. We are a single family of Scots, spread across the globe but at heart, we all remain "Jock Tamson's Bairns".

As Chair of Scottish Business Network, I along with my co-founder Christine Esson and our New York Ambassador Fraser Grier wish everyone involved in this noble endeavour every success and I wish you all a hearty Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Yours most humbly,

**Russell Dalglish**  
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# CELTIC LIFE INTERVIEW

WITH THE FOUNDER, ROBERT CURRIE



After two challenging years, New York City's best and brightest Celtic Christmas celebration returns to the spotlight this Holiday Season. The Celtic Life reconnected with the event's founder Bob Currie about the 2022 event.

**You've enjoyed strong public support for this year's gathering – how did that all come together?**

After something of a hiatus from creating full-scale live productions, we were chomping at the bit to get back into high gear. Pre-production work for 2022 started

in January. My first order of business was to re-secure the booking of Irish soprano Sharon Lyons. Prior to the pandemic, I had "discovered" her incredible EP, "Simply Christmas" – I was hooked. We instantly contacted her to join us. The problem being that the pandemic had made her appearances impossible over these last two years. I was not about to let that happen again. So, with Sharon on board, we set out to chart the musical selections with music director Steve Gibb.

I began to experience the emotional "rush" of producing a full-out live production again. By August, we started receiving ticket inquiries. The Christmas magic was back. I also helped assemble a crack media marketing team from Canada that brought renewed energy, brilliant ideas and outstanding creativity to the show. Between Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, our social media following is at an all-time high. We also established and are still running a GoFundMe campaign to help make up for the financial losses we experienced under Covid. The response has been humbling. Proceeds from the concert not only cover production expenses, but fund all our scholarships, special events and sponsorships for the coming year. As a purely non-profit, volunteer-driven organization, these funds are critical to our mission of preserving and promoting Celtic heritage and culture. Ticket sales have outpaced previous years at this time, and we will likely be declaring some Sold Out notices soon.

### **What can audiences expect at this year's shows?**

Super excited to be back. In addition to Ms. Lyons' debut, we will be bringing back many of our regular favorites. This is not merely a "company," its a family gathering of sorts for both performers and audiences alike. We have some wonderful new material planned and will be dedicating the concert to the memory of HM Queen Elizabeth II. We will also be premiering the third in a series of Royal-inspired works commissioned especially for the concert. We're delighted to be welcoming back our Narrator, the Rev. Dr. Susan Currie and our Readers, Andrew Weir and James Robinson. Both gentlemen performed together in the 1995 film, "Braveheart," as young Hamish Campbell and young William Wallace respectively. Weir has transitioned from acting into a successful career in the scotch whisky trade and a leading interpreter of Robert Burns. Robinson has continued in film and television having appeared in "Outlander" and stars in the newly released film, "Saving Christmas Spirit."

### **Why is it an important event for the Celtic Community?**

Well to start with, this concert brings together some of the finest Scottish and Irish performers. The program offers such a wide assortment of traditional instruments and readings that those in the know will appreciate and enjoy but we also get to introduce a new audience who may never have experienced this music before. Additionally, we will be performing in Scots Gaelic and Irish. It is not often these languages are heard in such a setting, rather they sometimes are sadly relegated to language-specific events before a limited audience. The concert's impact goes way beyond the "live" experience by bringing educational and cultural heritage scholarships to deserving students, sponsoring major Celtic events like "Tartan Day on Ellis Island," the Royal National Mod and the US National Celtic Harp Championship. Our organization maintains a year-long schedule of events and programming. Honestly, our impact goes way beyond the Celtic community alone. Our audiences come from all walks of life and backgrounds. In a world where the secular has taken over the sacred, the Pipes of Christmas is about just that - Christmas. Sure, we love Santa and Frosty and Rudolph, but you can find that just about anywhere these days. We choose to focus on the spiritual emotions of the holiday. Given that this is our 24th year, our audiences seem to be glad we remain focused and watchful.

### **What has the response been like so far?**

Most encouraging! Ticket sales are booming, and our other fundraising programs are flourishing. At the end of the day, it tells us we are offering an event that is valued and cherished across the Celtic community. Its quite humbling to know what a holiday tradition we've created. This promises to be our best production yet!

**What inspired the new EP, and how did you choose the material?**

We maintain a vast library of live recordings and this collection keeps growing with every subsequent year. Having produced two highly successful compilation CDs (“The Best of the Pipes of Christmas” Vols 1 and 2,) we wanted to become more familiar with the digital download experience. We chose a seven-track selection of some of our more recent performances, including several from our 2020 virtual production and remixed and remastered a very nice collection of tunes. We decided to make this EP available exclusively to our GoFundMe donors as a premium for gifts of \$100 or more. The response has been great, and we have created a unique way of recognizing our supporters. Great success!

**What are your plans for the event in 2023 and beyond?**

Just wait! We will be marking a quarter century of performances next year and we plan to pull out all the stops. Just now, we’re staying focused on this December.

The Pipes of Christmas tickets are available via [www.pipesofchristmas.com](http://www.pipesofchristmas.com)

*Special thank you to the Celtic Life for allowing us to print [this interview](#).*



JAMES ROBINSON



ASHLEY NEWBROUGH

# *Saving Christmas Spirit*



NUCIELY ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH PANDORA PERSEPHONE FILMS AND 2111 PICTURES "SAVING CHRISTMAS SPIRIT"  
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WRITTEN BY SEAN GAIN. PRODUCED BY KELLY TODD. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: MATTHEW WYNNER, MELANIE CLARK. PRODUCED BY SARAH WINNINGTON-INGRAM. EDITED BY CHRISTOPHER HARBOING AND VANESSA SHAPIRO  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER: PERSEPHONE HAVIKINS P.R.A. AND BRANDON RILEY P.R.A. COSTUME DESIGNER: JOELLE SELLNER. HAIR: WENDY FARAOE



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# THE COMPANY

## OUR NARRATOR

Susan Porterfield Currie

## OUR READERS

James Robinson

Andrew Weir

## OUR MUSICIANS

Rachel Clemente – harp

Mairi Dorman-Phaneuf – cello

Steve Gibb – guitar

Dan Houghton – pipes and whistle

Sharon Lyons – vocalist

William Peek – organ

Chris Ranney – piano

Mark Verdino – bass

Caitlin Warbelow – fiddle

Paul Woodiel – fiddle, viola

&

The Solid Brass Ensemble

The Kevin Ray Blandford Memorial Pipe Band

## MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Steve Gibb

## STAGE MANAGER

Pam McCaddin

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Robert Currie

## MUSICAL DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Jeff Rickard



..... ACT ONE .....

Highland Cathedral  
Joy to the World  
Wexford Carol  
The Golden Hearth  
Wassail  
Angels We Have Heard on High  
Don Óíche Úd I Mbeithil – *One Night in Bethlehem*  
Ascension  
Amazing Grace

..... ACT TWO .....

Pipe Band Set  
The First Noel  
Love is Christmas  
Trad Set  
Oidhche Shamhach – *Silent Night*  
O Come All Ye Faithful  
Finale

..... MARKETING TEAM .....

**GRAPHIC & WEB DESIGNER**

Melana Currie

**SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIST**

Andrea Lewis

**BRAND & MARKETING STRATEGIST**

Kristen VanderHoek

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# SHARON LYONS

**This Holy Night**  
(Album)-----\$15  
**Simply Christmas**  
(EP)-----\$8  
**Buy both for \$20**



*This Holy Night is the debut full-length Christmas album by internationally renowned singer Sharon Lyons. Recorded with a 20 piece orchestra and 30 piece choir, it includes some of the season's most cherished Christmas songs with beautiful new arrangements. The album is sure to make a lovely Christmas gift and is available now from [www.sharonlyonsmusic.com](http://www.sharonlyonsmusic.com) to ship anywhere worldwide.*

*Sharon's original EP Simply Christmas offers musicals treats spanning from ancient Chant through Celtic to Contemporary. This collection also includes a new Irish/Gaelic translation of one of the season's most loved musical numbers, O Holy Night. Recorded with piano and cello in the natural acoustics of a stunning Irish cathedral, this is a 'simply' perfect accompanying collection to the new album.*

#### **About Sharon:**

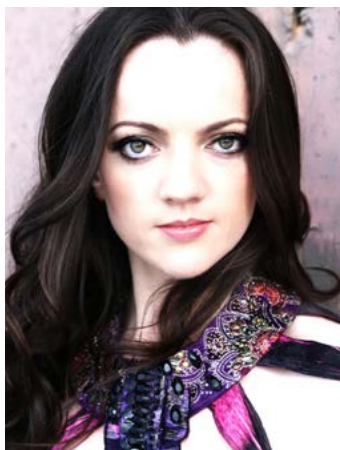
Originally from Dublin, Sharon currently lives in Co. Kerry, Ireland with her husband and son. A much sought-after vocalist, she is in constant demand for concert, tv, soundtrack and session work. Sharon's unique ethereal voice transcends across genres from early medieval chant, to traditional Irish, to classical and contemporary music. Sharon has performed nationally and internationally, for presidents and popes, and has appeared in Vikings for the History Channel US. Alongside her singing, Sharon teaches music, and directs choirs across Ireland. She is also the founder of the Kerry Vocal Academy.

Follow me



# CELTIC LIFE INTERVIEW

WITH IRISH SOPRANO, SHARON LYONS



When Irish soprano Sharon Lyons takes the stage at this year's Pipes of Christmas concerts in New York and New Jersey, she will be carrying the torch of tradition.

## **What are your roots?**

I am originally from a beautiful fishing village called Howth in Dublin, Ireland. My family on both sides are all from Dublin.

## **Where do you currently reside?**

I'm currently living on the Ring of Kerry, in a town called Killorglin. Believe it or not, this town is famous for its annual Puck Fair Festival, which is said to have started over 400 years ago. Each year in August, a goat is taken from the side of the mountain, crowned and then a three-day festival of music, fairs, and more ensues.

## **When and why did you start singing?**

My mom will tell you that at a nativity play in preschool, I shushed my classmate for singing out of tune, so I think from the age of 3, its safe to say I was singing!! I then joined a children's choir in my local church, and I have been singing ever since. It's always been part of me and what I do.

## **Are they the same reasons you do it today?**

I suppose singing is a way of life for me. I trained as a classical violinist also, and during my lessons when I was younger, I used to ask could I sing back the melodies to my teacher. I always had a good ear, so when she used to play the piece, I was working on I was able to sing it back in my head before playing it then on the violin. No week has gone by since my earliest memory that hasn't included singing, whether that was in the church, or school, with friends, in the Academy of Music and so on. I can't tell you the reasons why I sing, only that it's a natural part of me, and I know no other way.

### **What are the challenges involved with the vocation?**

The biggest challenge I think is not recognising burn out. When you do what you love for a living, you never feel the drudgery of being overworked until one day you wake up and (in my case) you have no voice. My body literally has to tell me in a physical way to take a break. Being self-employed also means it's very difficult to say No to any work that comes your way. I have gotten much better at this especially since having my son and understanding the true importance of a healthy work/life balance.

### **What are the rewards?**

Oh wow, what a question. As mentioned above, doing what you love for living is the biggest reward. Before moving to Kerry, I worked for many undertakers and singing at funerals is probably one of the most rewarding jobs I have ever done. In times of the deepest grief, when most people feel helpless in trying to console or sympathise with a family, music creates a powerful, safe, and healing grieving space. I find teaching my private students and choirs a very fulfilling part of the job. Watching previously self-conscious/nervous students overcome their stage fright and sing is such a joy. Also taking a group of 'non musicians' and watching their faces light up when they sing in harmony for the first time gives me such a lift. Performing is a very special reward also. Standing in front of and sing with an orchestra is the best feeling in the world. I could go on and on. Every day is a gift.

### **How have you evolved as an artist over time?**

I think it has taken me until very recently to understand myself as a singer. I was never interested in the opera path, and as such I felt that I fell through the cracks a little on the music scene. For a long time my main work was centred around the Cathedral in Dublin, and as a result I was labelled as a 'church singer' by most. The truth is I enjoy singing all styles of music. From early chant, through to modern pop. I think my classical voice lies most suitably in the earlier music such as Handel and Bach, but I will as happily sing an Irish folk song if I had a choice. I know now my uniqueness lies in my versatility, and there's very few singers that will/can cross styles easily.

### **What have been some career highlights?**

I have sung for our president many times, and that's always both a pleasure and privilege. I have performed many times on the national stages here, national TV & radio and have had wonderful opportunities singing solo for major events in the country. I spent a Summer in Boston under the NUFAX exchange programme

which was funded by the US Government and that was an amazing experience. I sang for Pope Francis in 2018, and the Dalai Lama a few years prior to that. I appeared in the US TV series Vikings singing a self-composed chant 9 years ago. To this day, I still get fan mail and followers from that one piece. Incredible!

### **What inspired your new Christmas album?**

I have wanted to record a full-length album for some time, and this year it was finally possible. My idea was to take some Christmas classics and give them new life, and I really believe I have achieved this. I have appeared on so many other artists recordings that it was time to have my own.

### **What can listeners expect?**

I commissioned new arrangements of these Christmas classics, for solo voice (myself), 20-piece orchestra and choir. The album has a mix of tracks, with 8 orchestral, 2 piano-based and one unaccompanied. You can expect a selection of uplifting, movie soundtrack-style, Irish traditional and choral music.

### **Is your creative process more “inspirational” or “perspirational”?**

I think the latter! I leave the creative/inspirational part to the experts in that area. My great friend Damian Gallagher was the man who arranged the music, and he really is exceptional at what he does. I love singing his arrangements and he knows my voice particularly well.

### **What makes a good live show?**

In my opinion if the artist is authentic and good at what they do, then this will shine through in performance and very little extra is needed. Some of the most moving and memorable concerts I have attended have had no light or smoke displays, no backing dancers, or projected images, just them and their musicians. You want the audience to feel your sincerity, and to leave with that impression.

### **What are your thoughts on the current state of the Irish music scene?**

It is getting better every day. In the folk, traditional and opera world, there have been huge strides forward and more opportunities are appearing every day for artists. Arts Council funding has gone from strength to strength and continues to help the sector. This is so important.

### **How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact you, both personally and professionally?**

Both myself and my husband were out of work due to Covid, however, as we had recently welcomed our son into the world, this unexpected extended maternity leave was very special, and we got time with him that we never would have had otherwise. Of course, it was stressful at the same time, but our government did look after us well and provided a basic liveable income payment. I am a home-bird so having to stay at home was never an issue. So many musicians I know got extremely creative during the lockdown and produced amazing work. I just took a step back from it all and enjoyed the breathing space.

### **What advice might you have for younger people looking to enjoy a career in music?**

If it is your passion, do it. There are so many ways now to earn a living in music, both in front of and behind the scenes. For example, the world of music technology has exploded (especially with social media), and this world will continue to grow and grow. It's a very exciting time to be a young artist.

### **What's on your agenda for the rest of 2022, and going into 2023?**

I have a couple of Irish solo Christmas performances coming up between now and early December, then I head to Germany as soprano soloist in Bach's Christmas Oratorio. I get back to Ireland for two days which include my son's 3rd birthday and then I fly to NYC to be a soloist in the Pipes of Christmas Annual concerts in NYC and NJ. I fly home 5 days before Christmas day and then have a busy few days with music in the cathedral here in Kerry before having some time off over New Years. I worked on the theme song for a new video gaming company that's due to launch early next year, and I have other exciting things in the pipeline to be confirmed over the coming weeks. Its busy but I'm loving every minute of it.

[www.sharonlyonsmusic.com](http://www.sharonlyonsmusic.com)

[www.pipesofchristmas.com](http://www.pipesofchristmas.com)

*Special thank you to the Celtic Life for allowing us to print this interview.*

Victoria Dunston Hay Collins Pacaud  
April 15, 1913 - February 25, 2017



Mr. & Mrs Henry Lafayette Collins, III.  
in loving memory of his Mother,  
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occassion of the 24<sup>th</sup> Celebration  
of The Pipes of Christmas,  
of which she was a longtime patron.



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**SAVE ELLIS ISLAND**

Save Ellis Island is the National Park Service partner for the restoration and re-use of twenty-nine buildings on Ellis Island. Proceeds from the Hard Hat Tour go to the restoration of the historic Ellis Island Immigrant Hospital. Donations can be made on line at [saveellisland.org](http://saveellisland.org) or mailed to our office at 31 U.S. Highway 206, Augusta, NJ 08722.

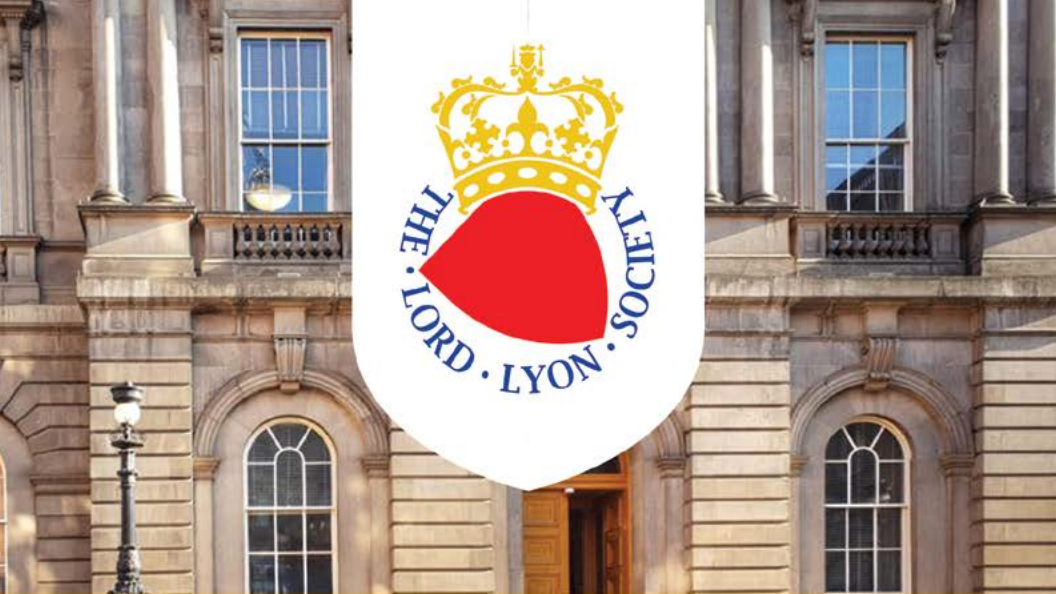


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**The Lord Lyon Society's general aim is to promote Scots heraldry, genealogy and the related arts, heritage and culture. One of the Society's specific aims is to aid and support the digitisation of the records of the Court, including the Public Register, protecting those resources for the future and making them readily accessible to the public.**

The Lord Lyon Society is a Scottish charity established by the Lord Lyon King of Arms, Dr Joe Morrow, CBE. The Lord Lyon King of Arms is the head of the Court of the Lord Lyon, Scotland's heraldic authority, responsible for granting and regulating the use of coats of arms in Scotland. The Court of the Lord Lyon is custodian of the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland which was established by an Act of the Scottish Parliament in the year 1672, has been maintained and added by the Court of the Lord Lyon ever since right up to the present day and now runs to some 100 Volumes which are in daily use.

To find out more about the Society please go to <https://lordlyonsociety.org.uk>  
To become a member of the Society please go to <https://lordlyonsociety.org.uk/join/>  
To find out more about the Court please go to <https://courtofthelordlyon.scot>



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## THE ROYAL CELTIC SOCIETY

[www.royalcelticsociety.scot](http://www.royalcelticsociety.scot)

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

*Promoting and safeguarding the languages, literature, music and heritage of Scotland since 1820*

**Based in the heart of Edinburgh's New Town, the Royal Celtic Society was founded on 4 January 1820 by Sir Walter Scott and a group of Highland gentlemen, at a meeting just a stone's throw from our base today.**

Ever since, the society has been active in support of Scotland's artistic and cultural heritage in its broadest sense.

- Funding the publication of key texts, whether literary, musical or historic
- Providing financial support for research
- Sponsoring key cultural events, including the Edinburgh International Harp Festival, the Northern Meeting Piping Competition, local Highland Games, musical and theater productions
- Advising government and keynote organizations on heritage related questions

Although members are largely based in Scotland, the society has a large and growing membership base in the United States, whose support we value very much.

Members receive, inter alia:

- A full colour, quarterly members' e-newsletter, packed with information and opinion
- Regular social activities, in Edinburgh and elsewhere
- A monthly (during university term time) lecture series, also broadcast via Zoom
- And much more

**Visiting members from 'across the pond' can be guaranteed a warm welcome in Scotland!**

If you would like to know more about membership of the Royal Celtic Society, please contact the Chairman, Dr Alan Hay, FRSA, FSA Scot, on [chairman@royalcelticsociety.scot](mailto:chairman@royalcelticsociety.scot).  
He will be delighted to hear from you!

# Congratulations to the Pipes of Christmas



We hope to see you  
at our festival!

Sept. 9, 2023

Oak Ridge Park, Clark, NJ

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS



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Email us at [dance@nycaledonian.org](mailto:dance@nycaledonian.org)



..... SILENT NIGHT .....

Silent night, holy night!

All is calm, all is bright

Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child

Holy Infant so tender and mild

Sleep in heavenly peace

Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night!

Shepherds quake at the sight

Glories stream from heaven afar

Heavenly hosts sing 'Alleluia!

Christ the Savior is born

Christ the Savior is born

Silent night, holy night!

Son of God, love's pure light

Radiant beams from Thy holy face

With the dawn of redeeming grace

Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

Jesus Lord, at Thy birth