



THE BALMORAL SCHOOL OF PIPING AND DRUMMING
presents...



Carnegie Mellon University
Pipes and Drums

with Special Guests



19TH ANNUAL BALMORAL CLASSIC
NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025

EVENT PROGRAM BOOK



f America's 19th annual bagpiping celebration

BALMORAL CLASSIC 2025

Schedule of events

FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 14

7:30pm Opening Gathering co-hosted with the Pittsburgh Piping Society with performances by pipers and 2025 judges Bruce Gandy, Lezlie Webster, and Glenna Mackay-Johnstone.
The Pitch on Butler, 4717 Butler St, Pittsburgh (Lawrenceville) 15201

SATURDAY MORNING & AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 15

United States Junior Solo Piping & Snare Drumming Championships (*times are approximate*)
The Understory, Cathedral of Learning, (UC4C) 4200 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh (Oakland), PA 15213

9:00am Piping - Piobaireachd
12:00pm Snare drum - March, Strathspey & Reel, and Hornpipe & Jig
1:30pm Piping - March, Strathspey & Reel
4:00pm Awards Ceremony for the Championships

Scottish Nationality Room, Cathedral of Learning



SATURDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 15

7:30pm Concert: Carnegie Mellon University Pipes and Drums, with Bealtaine *see pages 14-15*
Carnegie Lecture Hall, (CLLH) 4400 Forbes Ave (Schenley Drive, behind Carnegie Library), Pittsburgh
Tickets: \$30 general admission, \$35 priority seating, \$20 seniors 65+, \$15 students

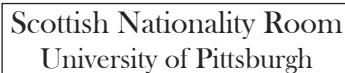
SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 16

10:00am Piobaireachd workshop with Bruce Gandy
Courtyard Pittsburgh University Center (CPUC) 100 Lytton Ave, Pittsburgh
For information on how to participate in the workshop inquire at leslie@bagpiping.org



The Classic is sponsored by:
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www.bagpiping.org

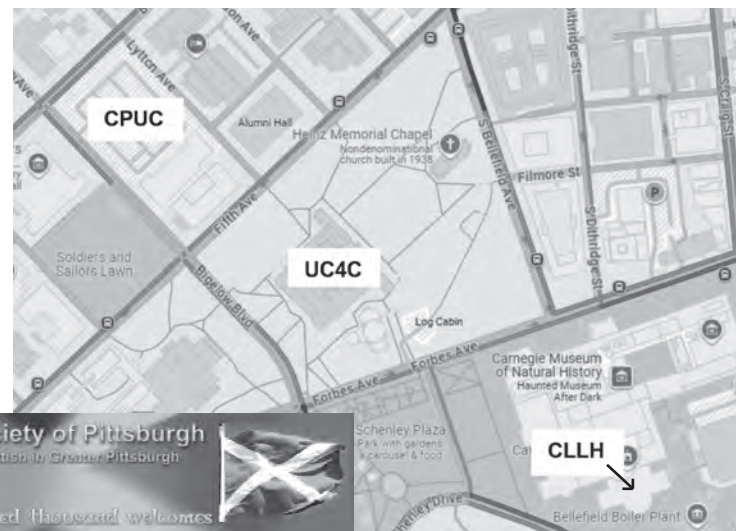
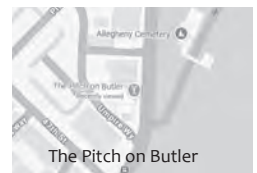
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Balmoral School receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Welcome!

Welcome to the Nineteenth Balmoral Classic, Pittsburgh's annual celebration of Scottish Bagpiping, and traditional Scottish arts.

The Balmoral Classic's core event is the United States Junior Solo Highland Bagpiping and Snare Drumming Championships, the only US National competition for pipers and snare drummers 21 years of age and younger. This year's free event takes place on Saturday, November 15, in Pittsburgh, at The Understory, Cathedral of Learning. There are eight piping contestants and four drumming contestants representing California, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas. They have worked intensively for years to earn their position by competing with distinction in their respective regional pipe band associations. For any competitor at this level it takes a lot of talent, focus, and time, in some ways analogous to preparation for top athletic contests. They have all come to Pittsburgh at their own expense to prove their skills and compete for awards and valuable prizes. The champion piper will receive a set of MacRae bagpipes donated by McCallum Bagpipes.

On Friday evening, November 14, Balmoral and the Pittsburgh Piping Society co-host a gathering at The Pitch on Butler, to meet our judges and competitors, and enjoy local piping performances, plus a mini recital by the judges.

The Saturday bagpiping contests on November 15 begin in The Understory, in the Cathedral of Learning, at 9:00am with the Piobaireachd (classic bagpipe music) event. After lunch and the drumming events, piping resumes at approximately 2:30pm with the March, Strathspey, and Reel (MSR) medley contest, which is projected to conclude in the vicinity of 5pm.

The Saturday Snare Drumming events take place in the same venue, beginning at 12:30pm with the MSR contest followed immediately by the Hornpipe & Jig (H&J) event.

Patrick Regan will be our emcee for the Saturday competitions, awards ceremony, and evening concert.

The winners of the US Junior Championship competitions will be announced at the awards ceremony at 5:00pm in the Scottish Nationality Room, Cathedral of Learning. Awards and prizes are listed elsewhere in this Program Guide with thanks to our sponsors.

The Saturday evening concert at the Carnegie Library Lecture Hall features **CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY PIPES AND DRUMS**, for Scottish and Irish music, step dancing and guests Bealtaine. Tickets through ShowClix or at the door. More details are in this program.

On Sunday, November 16, from 10:00am-noon, Bruce Gandy, of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, will conduct a Piobaireachd workshop in the Panther Room at the Courtyard PUC.

Please visit our website and follow our Facebook and Instagram page to be connected to Balmoral School and the broader Celtic cultural worldwide community through the sharing of articles, and events. If you are not on our email and street address lists, for local to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania events, please sign up so we can stay in touch. <https://balmoralschoolofpiping.org/contact/>

The Balmoral Classic is made possible in part by grants and tax-exempt individual and organizational contributions, for which we are very grateful. We thank all of our contributors for their support, which is essential to the survival of this event. To the many Balmoral Classic volunteers, we extend our sincere thanks. Without their time and talents the weekend events would not be possible.

We encourage you to patronize our advertisers and sponsors, and we hope that you will join them in enjoying and supporting Scottish and Irish music and dance, traditional art forms that occupy an important place in the diverse world of North American culture.

On behalf of the Balmoral Board and Staff,
Ceud mile fàilte! (A Hundred Thousand Welcomes!)

George Balderose, Executive Director
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Sean Patrick Regan, Interim Artistic Director



BALMORAL SCHOOL OF PIPING & DRUMMING BOARDS AND STAFF

The mission of the Balmoral School of Piping and Drumming is to raise the standard and promote the appreciation of bagpipe music in the USA by providing world class instruction, cultivating excellence in youth, presenting innovative musical events, and fostering tradition.

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OUR SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Kati Csofan, Walter Michael, and the Pitt Scottish Nationality Room, for navigating our way to bring the championships to the University of Pittsburgh Cathedral of Learning (read about this co-sponsor on page 19)

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The Pittsburgh Firefighters Memorial Pipe Band proudly represents the firefighters of the City of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania.

The Pittsburgh Firefighters Memorial Pipe Band wishes to congratulate the competitors on their accomplishments in qualifying for the Balmoral Classic and wish you all good luck.

Pipe Major Joe Magliocca • 412-341-9244

New members welcome

Please see our Facebook page at Pittsburgh Firefighters Memorial Pipe Band



BALMORAL PIPES & DRUMS - The Balmoral Pipe Band is a project of the Balmoral School of Piping and Drumming. The band is comprised of pipers and drummers of all ages and ability levels. The ensemble is a teaching organization which strives to continue the proud and noble tradition of executing bagpipe and drum music at the highest level possible. They practice weekly, and perform at numerous public and private events throughout the year. Those with an interest in piping or drumming are always welcomed, regardless of experience or ability level.

Instructor and Pipe Major, Sean Patrick Regan
Instructor and Drum Sergeant, Ian McLeod
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www.balmoralpipesanddrums.org



BALMORAL SCHOOL OF PIPING & DRUMMING RAISING THE STANDARD

THE BALMORAL SCHOOL OF PIPING & DRUMMING was established in 1978 by co-founders George Balderose and James McIntosh, MBE, “... to raise the standard and promote the appreciation of bagpipe music in the USA by providing world class instruction, cultivating excellence in youth, presenting innovative musical events, and fostering tradition.” It is a non-profit, 501.C.3 a.1 tax-exempt school, and its Board of Directors includes professionals from the fields of law, finance, education, management, commerce, and piping and drumming who selflessly serve to guide the organization and realize its mission.

Balmoral celebrates and teaches traditional bagpipe music dating as far back as the 15th century, along with more recent compositions in the traditional style. For over 45 years, the school has introduced students and audiences to some of the world’s most outstanding premier and senior pipers through their workshops, summer camps, and concerts hosted in Pittsburgh, at other US locations, and online. Long-term commitment to the culture and heritage associated with the great traditions of bagpiping and drumming is encouraged among the Balmoral students. Learning music through the Balmoral School builds character, promotes the continued relevance of heritage, and fully supports family values.

SUMMER SESSIONS

Balmoral has introduced to Pittsburgh and other US locations some of the world’s most outstanding senior pipers to teach at its summer sessions, among them John MacDougall, Ron Lawrie, Iain Morrison, P/S John Wilson and P/M Iain McLellan, BEM of the 12-times World Champion Strathclyde Police Pipe Band.

The late James McIntosh, M.B.E. also founded the Bagpipe Performance program in the College of Fine Arts at Carnegie Mellon University, the World’s first degree in bagpiping. Balmoral past instructor & Advisory Board member Mike Cusack was the first American to win the Gold Medal at the prestigious Northern Meeting in Inverness. He also led the St. Thomas Episcopal School Pipe Band of Houston, Texas to five Juvenile- Grade World Pipe Band Championships. Noteworthy drumming instructors who have taught for Balmoral include Reid Maxwell, Bert Barr, Andrew Hoinacki, Jon Quigg, Andy White, and Gordon Bell.

The Balmoral School’s summer sessions attract pipers and drummers from across North America each year, and are held on college and academy campuses.

2026 Sessions will be held at Kutztown University, July 5-10, and PennWest-Edinboro, July 12-17.



BALMORAL CLASSIC

Founded in 2007, the Balmoral Classic remains the only United States-based event for bagpipers and snare drummers 21 years of age and under. Veteran judges from around the world are brought to the Classic to provide the most scrutinizing and knowledgeable audience for its young performers. The competitors receive invaluable support via comment sheets, provided following their performances, and are invited to participate in workshops covering the highest forms of their shared art.

BRINGING TRADITION TO WIDER AUDIENCES

The Balmoral Pipe Band is a project of the Balmoral School. The ensemble is a teaching organization which strives to continue the proud and noble tradition of executing bagpipe and drum music at the highest level possible. The band celebrated its 100th performance in early 2022. Its members are pipers and drummers of all ages and ability levels. They practice weekly, and perform at numerous public and private events throughout the year. Those with an interest in piping or drumming are always welcomed, regardless of experience or ability level.

Educational books published by the Balmoral School include: [The Balmoral Collection of Hymns Arranged for the Highland Bagpipe](#) (2012) and [The Balmoral Guide to Playing the Bagpipes for Community Dances](#) (2018)





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THE GATHERING

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14 - 7:30 TO 10:30 PM

THE PITCH ON BUTLER
4717 BUTLER ST, PITTSBURGH, PA

Join us for a thoroughly Celtic evening and judges mini-recital co-sponsored with the Pittsburgh Piping Society

The Balmoral Classic weekend kicks off with a night of piping and an opportunity to greet Balmoral Classic competitors, judges, Balmoral School board, staff, volunteers, and local pipers and piping enthusiasts and members of the Pittsburgh Piping Society. Judges Bruce Gandy, Lezlie Webster, and Glenna Mackay-Johnstone are featured guests at end of the evening.

This is an informal social event, kilts are welcome, but not required.

Meet at The Pitch on Butler for camaraderie, dinner, drinks, and music.

Donations to support the Balmoral Classic encouraged.



About Pittsburgh Piping Society

According to the late historian Rowland Berthoff, the Pittsburgh Bagpipe Society was formed in 1898. The Pittsburgh Piping Society reignites the long-snuffed torch of the original society. Though the 19th century iteration was noted for its teaching of Scottish immigrant children, the modern day manifestation of the society aims to be more social than pedagogic.

In short, it's modeled after the Eagle Pipers Society, hoping to unite a long talented but somewhat fractured local piping community. Much like other similar societies, regular meetings with an informal atmosphere give pipers another stage outside of the competition platform whereupon they may simply turn up and have a tune. A Piobaireachd will be featured each meeting, giving the non-pipers and enthusiasts in attendance an opportunity to encounter our "Big Music."

A typical PPS evening consists of pipers of all abilities who play for a supportive audience – each performing for around five minutes. To close the night, we feature a piper who plays a longer selection for the assembled group, including a piobaireachd. Monthly events vary.

The PPS is a non-profit organization and is served by a board of directors:

Amy Howard - President, Treasurer
Andrew Carlisle - Vice-President
Christine Nolin - Operations Director
Sean McCarthy - Secretary
Casey Buchanan-Smith - Director
Maria Hofbauer - Director
Palmer Shonk - Director
Robert Felsburg - Director



To find out more: <https://pittsburghpingsociety.org/>

HISTORY OF BALMORAL CLASSIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

YEAR	OVERALL -PIPING	PIOBAIREACHD	MSR – PIPER	PIPING JUDGES		
2024	Alex Pavlovic	Alex Pavlovic	Andrew Zhao	Dr. Angus MacDonald	Paula Glendinning	Matt MacIsaac
2023	Liam Horne	Liam Horne	Duncan Winters	John Cairns	Scot Walker	Glenna Mackay-Johnstone
2022	Paul Mackay	Abby Long	Leland Reid	Robert Wallace	Amy Garson	Lezlie Webster
2021	Cameron Bonar	Cameron Bonar	Cameron Bonar	Murray Henderson	Brett Tidswell	Michael Rogers
2020	David Stulpner	David Stulpner	David Stulpner	Robert Wallace	Jim McGillivray	Scot Walker
2019	Kayleigh Johnstone	Kayleigh Johnstone	Kayleigh Johnstone	Ian Duncan	Bruce Gandy	Lezlie Webster
2018	Charlie Morris	Charlie Morris	Charlie Morris	Dr. Angus MacDonald	Donald F Lindsay	Matt MacIsaac
2017	Joseph Horwath	Liam Macdonald	Callum Younger	John Bottomley	Amy Garson	Dr. Jack Taylor
2016	Kolya Sier	Mark McClennan	Kolya Sier	Ian K. MacDonald	Robert Wallace	James Bell
2015	Gavin Mackay	Gavin Mackay	Gavin Mackay	Dr. Bill Wotherspoon	Bill Livingstone, Jr.	Duncan Bell
2014	Griffin Hall	Griffin Hall	Andrew Hutton	Brian Donaldson	Ed Neigh	Dr. Jack Taylor
2013	Scott McCann	Christian Haars	Scott McCann	Duncan Bell	Scot Walker	Andrew Wright
2012	Kirk Brunson	Nicholas Theriault	Jack Williamson	James Bell	Donald McBride	James MacColl
2011	Alexander Schiele	Alexander Schiele	Alexander Schiele	Brian Donaldson	Donald Lindsay	Scot Walker
2010	Joseph Stewart	Joseph Stewart	Daniel Pisowloski	Andrew Carlisle	Donald McBride	Willie McCallum
2009	Anthony Masterson	Marshall German	Anthony Masterson	Brian Donaldson	Alasdair Gillies	James MacColl
2008	Ryan Praskovich	Reid Bishop	Ryan Praskovich	Bruce Gandy	Amy Garson	Scot Walker
2007	Larson Stromdahl	Kegan Sheehan	Andrew Tice	Alasdair Gillies	James McIntosh	John Wilson

YEAR	OVERALL-DRUMMER	MSR -DRUMMER	HJ –DRUMMER	DRUMMING JUDGES		
2024	Nicholas Bowden	Nicholas Bowden	Nicholas Bowden	Jon Quigg	Derek Cooper	
2021	Sebastien Arguelles	Sebastien Arguelles	Sebastien Arguelles	J.Reid Maxwell	Stephen Creighton	Eric MacNeill
2020	Thomas Carruthers	Thomas Carruthers	Thomas Carruthers	Jim Kilpatrick	Steven Shedden	Gordon Bell
2019	Nicholas Moore	Nicholas Moore	Jeremiah Whitney	Gordon Bell	Jon Quigg	
2018	Shane Stapleton	Shane Stapleton	Shane Stapleton	Gordon Bell	Jon Quigg	
2017	Matthew Darmadi	Matthew Darmadi	Isabella Jackson	Gordon Bell	Jon Quigg	
2016	Blair Beaton	Blair Beaton	Blair Beaton	Gordon Bell	Jon Quigg	
2015	Mackenzie Chamberlain	Mackenzie Chamberlain	Mackenzie Chamberlain	Donald Bell	Gordon Bell	
2014	Miles Bennington	Miles Bennington	Nick Parr	Gordon Bell	Jon Quigg	
2012	Amber Stone	Amber Stone	Alastair Burgess	Alex Kuldell	Jon Quigg	
2011	Petey Lowrie	Petey Lowrie	Petey Lowrie	Gordon Bell	Andrew Hoinacki	
2010	Quinn McCormack	Quinn McCormack	Quinn McCormack	Jim Sim		
2009	Petey Lowrie	Petey Lowrie	Petey Lowrie	Gordon Bell		

US JUNIOR SOLO CHAMPIONSHIPS JUDGES & COMPETITORS

The Balmoral School of Piping & Drumming is proud to introduce our team of world-class piping and snare drumming judges for the 19th Balmoral Classic's US Junior Solo Piping and Snare Drumming Championships. This year's competitions will take place in person with an international panel of judges hailing from Canada and the United States of America.



CANADA - BRUCE GANDY is an internationally acclaimed bagpiper, teacher, and composer whose career blends championship success with a lifelong dedication to teaching. A former World Pipe Band Champion with the 78th Fraser Highlanders, Bruce has also won some of the most respected solo prizes in piping: the Silver Star for Former Winners MSR at Inverness, the Senior Piobaireachd at Oban, the Bratach Gorm in London (twice), and most recently the Masters MSR in Glasgow. Beyond the competition stage, Bruce is recognized worldwide as a leading educator and mentor. His Essential Piobaireachd Foundations courses, his membership teaching platform, and his book Performance – Delivering Your Own Awesome reflect his mission to help pipers bridge the gap between technical mastery and confident performance. With decades of experience as a competitor, adjudicator, composer, and teacher, Bruce continues to inspire pipers at every level to learn deeply, play boldly, and achieve their own musical breakthroughs.



USA – LEZLIE WEBSTER a professionally-ranked piper since 1973 has enjoyed a successful competitive piping career across Canada, the UK, and the USA, but found her true passion in teaching and mentoring others. She founded the Boston Police Pipe Band and the Gaelic Fire Brigade Pipe Band in Boston and currently instructs the New Hampshire Police Pipe Band and the New Hampshire Pipes and Drums grade 5 band. As the first female piping judge for the EUSPBA and the only woman to win the USPF MSR, she has helped break barriers in the piping world. Today, she treasures the chance to judge alongside longtime friends and share the knowledge passed down from a lifetime of remarkable mentors.



CANADA - GLENNA MACKAY-JOHNSTONE is from an accomplished piping family, past and present. She grew up in a piping household as a daughter of the late, great Ontario piper, Reay Mackay. She played at the highest level and brings over four decades of experience as a competitor, performer, instructor, adjudicator, and composer. Her compositions are featured in several prominent piping collections and recordings. Glenna is also a Gaelic singer who has performed at numerous venues and contributed to various recordings. In her professional life, Glenna served as an educator with over three decades of experience in public education. She resides in Aurora, Ontario, alongside her husband Alasdair and their two children. Both of her children have also excelled in music and are involved in the piping community, carrying on the family's musical legacy.



USA - GORDON BELL began drumming at the age of eight under the guidance of Norman MacLeod and later received tuition from the legendary Alec Duthart. He became the drum sergeant of the Parlin & District Pipe Band in 1975, winning the North American Championship in Grade 2, and placing them in Grade 1. He has also been a member of Muirhead & Sons, Kenmure, Worcester Kiltie, 78th Fraser Highlanders, the City of Washington Pipe Bands, and most recently, The New York Metro Pipe Band. Gordon also saw a great deal of success in the solo field winning the EUSPBA Overall Champion consistently from 1979 to 2003. He has recorded with The Empire Brass Quintet, 78th Frasers Live in Scotland, and with his own Celtic Rock group 51 Ash in which he plays the bass guitar.



USA – MILES BENNINGTON counts solo and band competitive successes as a North American Champion, Canadian Champion, U.S. Champion, EUSPBA Champion, PPBSO Champion Supreme, top ten at the World Pipe Band Championships, and semifinalist at the World Solo Drumming Championships. He is currently a member of the Grade 2 Ulster Scottish Pipe Band from Philadelphia, PA after previously playing with the St. Thomas Alumni, Toronto Police, and Great Lakes pipe bands. Additionally, Miles has instructed several prize-winning drum corps throughout the northeast and midwest United States.

Currently, Miles serves as the principal drumming instructor for the Carnegie Mellon University Pipe Band who, under his guidance, were the 2025 European Drum Corps Champions, confirming their status as one of the premier drumming programs in the North America.

On Sunday morning, Balmoral is offering a free piobaireachd workshop with piping judge Bruce Gandy. The workshop is open to the pipers of the 2025 competition, to all previous Balmoral Classic competitors, and to invited guests. To express interest in attending the workshops, please email leslie@bagpiping.org.

2025 COMPETITORS

SOLO BAGPIPING CHAMPIONSHIP

Ray Flanagan	Grand Rapids, Michigan
Logan Gorsuch	Rolling Hills Estates, California
Isabelle Hogan	Quincy, Massachusetts
Thomas McCollum	Deerton, Michigan
Meghan McElhinney	Akron, Ohio
Flora Stone	Natick, Massachusetts
Mihir Zambre	Pearland, Texas
Andrew Zhao	Sugarland, Texas

SOLO SNARE DRUMMING CHAMPIONSHIP

Patrick Bingham	Thomasville, North Carolina
Quinn Faith	Willoughby Hills, Ohio
Mae Thompson	Rockville, Maryland

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Piping

Overall Piping Winner
Ralph & Patricia Murray Memorial Award
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(Room/Board/Tuition for two weeks at
Balmoral School 2026 summer sessions)

Piobaireachd Winner
Balmoral Award and Scholarship
(Room/Board/Tuition for one week at a
2026 Balmoral School summer session)

March, Strathspey, & Reel Winner
E.W.Littlefield, Jr. Award and Scholarship
(Room/Board/Tuition for one week at a
2026 Balmoral School summer session)

Overall Piping Winner receives MacRae
Bagpipes, African Blackwood, engraved
alloy ferules and imitation ivory
projection mounts, with bagpipe case
(donated by McCallum Bagpipes)

Overall 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Place Winners
Medals and Balmoral Scholarship
(Tuition for one week at a
2026 Balmoral School summer session)

**Piobaireachd and MSR 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th
Place Winners**
Medals

Drumming

Overall Drumming Winner
David Peet Memorial Award
Henry Matthews Memorial Scholarship
(Room/Board/Tuition for two weeks at
Balmoral School 2026 summer sessions)

March, Strathspey, & Reel Winner
St. Andrew's Society of Pittsburgh Award
(Room/Board/Tuition for one week at a
2026 Balmoral School summer session)

Hornpipe/Jig Winner
Pittsburgh Firefighters Memorial Award
(Room/Board/Tuition for one week at a
2026 Balmoral School summer session)

Overall Drumming Winner receives
Grey Rabbit dress sporran with cante
(donated by The Pipers Hut)

Overall 2nd, 3rd, 4th Place Winners
Medals and Balmoral Scholarship
(Tuition for one week at a
2026 Balmoral School summer session)

**MSR and H/J 2nd, 3rd Place Drumming
Winners**
Medals

**The following prizes have also been
donated in support of the
Piping Championships**

Gift Certificate
(donated by Scotts Highland Services)

Gift Certificate for 500 Pipetunes credits
(donated by McGillivray Bagpipes)

InTune Mic
(Donated by BagpipeLessons.com)

Digital Tone Protector
(Donated by BagpipeLessons.com)

Scots Guard, Vol. 3
(donated by Balmoral School)

Playing Bagpipes for Community Dances
(donated by Balmoral School)

The Balmoral Collection of Hymns
Arranged for Highland Bagpipe
(donated by Balmoral School)

**The following prizes have also been
donated in support of the
Drumming Championships**

Virtual lesson with Blair Brown

Virtual lesson with Miles Bennington

Premier 12" Round Practice Pad,
Accessory Stand, & Premier Snare Sticks
(donated by Henderson Imports, Ltd.)

Maple Glazed Tunes by Grant Maxwell
(donated by Balmoral School)

Each competitor will receive:

Henderson's White Zip Pouch,
Bagpipe Logo Decal, Pen, and Pin
(donated by Henderson Imports, Ltd)

Choice of CDs from Balmoral
Archives
(donated by Temple Records)

Balmoral Classic commemorative
magnet, Balmoral School stylus pen
(donated by Balmoral School)

Round gripper pad
(donated by East End Food Coop)



2025 Award Medal

An advertisement for Temple Records. It features a collage of various music releases, including CDs and vinyl records. The text includes "proud to support the Balmoral Classic", "pipes, drums...", "...and so much more", and "SPECIAL OFFER WINTER WARMER 4 CDs for £20". The website "www.templerecords.co.uk" is listed at the bottom.

An advertisement for Pittsburgh Trophy Company, Inc. It features a cartoon mascot holding a trophy. The text includes "SUPPORTS The BALMORAL Classic", "Stop in and see what we can do for you!", and a list of services: "Etched Glass and Acrylic, Bronze Casting, Clocks, Pen Sets, Plaques, Medals, Trophies, Ribbons and Gifts". Contact information for Pittsburgh, PA is provided, along with the website "http://www.pittsburghtrophy.com" and the tagline "A family owned business serving the community for over 30 years".

CONCERT
NOVEMBER 15 AT 7:30PM
CARNEGIE LIBRARY LECTURE HALL
Carnegie Mellon University
PIPES AND DRUMS



Bagpiping has been an integral part of campus life at Carnegie Mellon University since 1939. The Kiltie Band was started by Lewis W. Davidson, a native Scot, and each year students who were interested in learning to play the bagpipes could enroll.

In 1985, James H. McIntosh MBE, a world-renowned piper, assumed the position as Director of the pipe band. During his tenure, it was proposed that Carnegie Mellon institutionalize bagpipes as a legitimate major in its Conservatory of Music. Mr. Elden Gatwood, artist-lecturer of oboe and principal oboe for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, approached the department head, Marilyn Taft Thomas, with a proposal that bagpipes be formalized as a major and hire Mr. James McIntosh to teach it. Mr. Gatwood, a bagpiping student of Mr. McIntosh, spoke of his extraordinary gifts as a teacher and his international reputation as a bagpipe performer. "The entire tradition of the campus has been celebratory bagpiping. It makes sense for us to acknowledge bagpipes as a legitimate musical instrument. While there are bagpipe teachers around the world, what Carnegie Mellon offers is a program of study where a person can get a complete grounding in music as well as specific instruction on the instrument" (Thomas, M.T. 1991). The faculty supported the idea with enthusiasm and the proposal was accepted. Prior to this program, no opportunities existed anywhere in the world for the serious student to study bagpiping at a bachelor's degree level. In 2011, McIntosh and Carlisle started the first master's degree in bagpipe performance.

The band performs frequently at official University events and occasionally for local concerts, the most notable among the latter being their annual Saint Patrick's Day-proximate "Celtic Connections" tour with the River City Brass. In 2023, the band performed twelve performances alongside the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in Heinz Hall as part of their 'Holiday Pops!' December concert series.

The band also travels a limited tour of the United States competition circuit where it consistently wins events at the Grade Three level, including wins most recently at the 2025 Celtic Classic (Bethlehem, PA), the 2025 Chicago Highland Games,

and the 2025 American Pipe Band Championships in Norfolk VA; Carnegie Mellon has won the overall award for best Grade Three band at the American Pipe Band Championships on five occasions, including every year since the event returned after the pandemic in 2022. Recently returning from their first foray across the Atlantic into the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association's competition arena, the band wins took 2nd and 5th place wins, respectively, in the European and World Pipe Band Championships, and the drum corps secured first place for drumming in their competition group at the European Pipe Band Championships.

The band is currently led by Professor Andrew Carlisle and drumming instructors Miles and Lauren Bennington.



Carnegie Mellon University Pipes and Drums

Faculty/Staff

Director: Andrew Carlisle, Professor of Music, Director of Piping

Drumming Instructor: Miles Bennington

Midsection Instructor: Lauren Bennington

Performers

Pipe Major: Andrew Carlisle

Leading Drummer:
Miles Bennington

Pipe Sergeant: Roy Huang

Pipers

Alex Burlew
 Evan Burlew
 Matteo Cericola
 Wil Cocke
 Mike Domain
 Connor Eckert
 Corey Florindi
 Eli Forcucci
 Amy Howard
 Aaron Jentzen
 Bill LaSota
 Chris Lorince
 Jon Love
 Nathan Love
 Walt McGhee
 Patty Mooney
 Chris Nolin
 Matt Peterson
 Felipe Marples Rodriguez
 Steve Schlosser
 Casey Buchanan Smith
 George Smith
 Colin Swett
 Jason Wells
 Duncan Winters

Snare Drummers

Devin Brode
 Matthew Fuhrman
 Zarmond Goodman
 Ian McLeod
 Elisha Jimenez
 Terry Park
 Max Schrenk
 Kendrick Terry
 Connor Williams

Bass Drummer

Jim Bennington

Tenor Drummers

Lauren Bennington
 Chandra Brode
 Jett Vaultz

Rhythm Section

Aaron Jentzen: 12-String Guitar
 Jon Love: Piano/Keyboards
 Matt Peterson: Bass Guitar

Didgeridoo

Joseph Carringer

Auxiliary Percussion

Miles Bennington
 Terry Park

Highland Dance

Gabby Pealer

Irish Dance

Abigail Borsa
 Annie Reilly

Bealtaine

Conor Freeland
 George White
 Bill Buchko
 Andy Morrison
 Dylan Rooke



Carnegie Mellon University Pipes and Drums Concert Program

First Half

The Mists of Time

The Mists of Time, Mary Ann MacKinnon
The Boys of Ballymote, Trad. Irish, Arr: A. Carlisle
The Clumsy Lover (Jig), Neil Dickie, Arr: A. Carlisle
The Clumsy Lover (Waltz), Neil Dickie, Arr: A. Carlisle

March, Strathspey and Reel

The Young MacGregor, Pipe Major James MacGregor
The Shepherd's Crook, Trad. Scottish
Dr. MacPhaill's Reel, Andrew Bain

4/4 Marches

Flett from Flotta, Pipe Major Donald MacLeod MBE
The Battle of Waterloo, Trad. Scottish
51st Highland Division, Pipe Major Donald MacLeod MBE

Highland Cathedral

Ulrich Roever / Michael Korb, Arr: A. Carlisle

Heilan' Laddie

Trad. Scottish

Duet - Bagpipe and Snare Drum

Elisha Jiminez and Connor Eckert

Tag Team Solo Piobaireachd Exhibition:

Matteo Cericola – The Little Spree
Roy Huang – Glengarry's March
Alex Burlew – Cave of Gold
Evan Burlew – Lament for Mary MacLeod

Quick March Medley: 2/4 Marches

The Atholl and Breadalbane Gathering, Pipe Major William Ferguson
Greenwood Side, Trad. Scottish
Corriechoillie's 43rd Welcome to The Northern Meeting, Pipe Major William Ross
The Piper's Cave, James Sutherland

6/8 Marches

Cameron MacFadyen, Duncan Johnstone
Jean Mauchline, Pipe Major William Bryson
Andrew Carnegie, James McIntosh MBE

Medley Selection

MacGregor of Rora, Trad. Scottish
The Braes of Forbes, Pipe Major George Stewart MacLennan
The Lads of Kilmarnock, Trad. Scottish
Shovel Tongue, Murray Blair
Smelling Fresh, James Duncan MacKenzie

9/8 Marches

Heather Grant of Strathyre, Pipe Major James MacGregor
The Battle of the Somme, Pipe Major William Lawrie

79th's Farewell to Gibraltar

Pipe Major John MacDonald

[INTERMISSION]

Second Half

BEALTAINE

Conor Freeland: Uilleann Pipes/Whistles/Flute
George White: Bouzouki/Mandocello/Guitar
Bill Buchko: Bodhrán/Cajon
Andy Morrison: Guitar/Banjo/Mandolin
Dylan Rooke: Bass/Guitar

Carnegie Mellon University Drum Corps: Drum Fanfare **RISE, Miles Bennington**

2/4 Marches

High Road to Gairloch, Trad. Scottish
The Brown Haired Maiden, Trad. Scottish

Quick March Medley

Cutting Bracken, Trad. Scottish, Arr: A. Carlisle
The Rose of Allendale, Trad. Scottish, Arr: A. Carlisle
Colin's Cattle, Trad. Scottish, Arr: A. Carlisle

Amazing Grace

Rev. John Newton, Arr: A. Carlisle

3/4 Retreat Marches

The Green Hills of Tyrol, Trad. Scottish, Arr: A. Carlisle
When the Battle's O'er, Trad. Scottish, Arr: A. Carlisle

Duet: Miles Bennington and Andrew Carlisle:

Hornpipe and Jig
Crossing the Minch, Pipe Major Donald MacLeod MBE
Bronnie's Blue Brozzi, Mark Saul

Tag Team Solos:

Roy Huang
Amy Howard

Duncan Winters
Connor Eckert

Competition 2/4 Marches

Tommy MacDonald of Barguileann, Bruce Thompson
Pipe Major William Grey's Farewell to The Glasgow Police,
Pipe Major John MacDonald

Traditional Irish Jigs

Trippin' Up the Stairs Trad. Irish, Arr: A. Carlisle
The Kesh Jig Trad. Irish, Arr: A. Carlisle
Merrily Kissed the Quaker, Trad. Irish, Arr: A. Carlisle
Queen of the Rushes, Trad. Irish, Arr: A. Carlisle

Journey to Skye and Jig

Journey to Skye, Don Thompson
Drew James McIntosh, Bob Worrall

Slow Air, Waltz and Jig

Hector the Hero, James Scott Skinner, Arr: A. Carlisle
The Atholl Highlanders, Trad. Scottish, Arr: A. Carlisle

Traditional Irish Reels

The Silver Spear, Trad. Irish, Arr: A. Carlisle
Humours of Tulla, Trad. Irish, Arr: A. Carlisle

Carnegie Mellon University Pipes and Drums *Biographies*

Andrew Carlisle is originally from Ballygowan, Northern Ireland and since 2010, has lived and worked in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as a Professor of Music and the Director of Piping at Carnegie Mellon University. Andrew is in constant demand as a performer, instructor, and adjudicator throughout the world. He has performed in over twenty countries, across four continents; most notably at The White House in 2008, and in front of 50,000 people at the Oz Stadium in Sydney, Australia in 2010. He is a leading solo piper and has won numerous prestigious awards including:

- The Gillies Cup for Piobaireachd at the Scottish Piping Society of London, UK
- The A Grade Strathspey and Reel at The Argyllshire Gathering, Oban, Scotland
- The A Grade Piobaireachd and Overall at The Cowal Highland Gathering, Dunoon, Scotland
- The US Gold Medal for both Piobaireachd and Light Music at Kansas City, Missouri
- The Metro Cup Light Music Medley Champion at Newark, New Jersey
- Five United States Piping Foundation Championship wins at Newark, Delaware
- The Macallan Trophy on three occasions at Lorient, Brittany, France
- The William Livingstone Memorial at Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
- The Toronto Indoor Gathering, Toronto, Canada
- The Gordon Duncan Memorial on two occasions at Glasgow, Scotland
- The British Army Championships at Edinburgh, Scotland
- And three All-Ireland titles at Senior level.



For twenty-four years, Andrew has been an active member of the world-renowned Field Marshal Montgomery Pipe Band, sharing in the success of over forty-five major championship wins, including ten World Pipe Band Championship wins. He has been featured as a soloist on the band's 'Re:Charged' and 'Impact' albums.

Since 2012, Andrew has been the Artistic Director, Pipe Major and Senior Arranger for the annual Virginia International Tattoo; a production involving 900 performers held eight times each April in the 8,000 seat Scope Arena in Norfolk, Virginia. In 2016, Andrew started the American Pipe Band Championships held on the adjacent Scope Plaza on the Saturday afternoon of the tattoo – in its ten-year existence, it has attracted top bands from Scotland, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Australia, and from all over Canada and the United States.

Andrew has been a fully qualified adjudicator for solo piping, piobaireachd, pipe bands and ensemble with the Eastern United States Pipe Band Association since 2010.

Andrew was the featured artist in a one-hour television program recorded by the BBC in 2016 entitled 'The Castle Session' performing the Great Highland Bagpipe, Scottish Border Pipes, Scottish Smallpipes, low whistle and penny whistle.

Since arriving in 2010, Andrew has transformed the Carnegie Mellon University Pipes and Drums into one of the leading pipe bands in the United States. The band have won the Grade Three American Pipe Band Champions at Norfolk, Virginia five times and The Celtic Classic festival at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania four times. In June 2025, the band won the Chicago Highland Games, the largest pipe band competition in North America. In August, 2025, Andrew organized Carnegie Mellon's first ever overseas trip where the band had a very successful trip to Scotland in Grade 3B. The band placed second at The European Pipe Band Championships, Perth and placed fifth at The World Pipe Band Championships.

Miles Bennington has served as the Principal Drumming Instructor for the Carnegie Mellon University Pipes & Drums since 2021, quickly establishing a culture of excellence. Upon joining, he immediately revitalized the program by composing meaningful, original scores for both beginner and advanced players and prioritizing current student development while building strong connections with band alumni. By setting uncompromising expectations for a dynamic and precise presentation from the snare, bass, and tenor corps, Miles has driven Carnegie Mellon's Drum Corps to an unprecedented level of competitive success. This remarkable record includes being named Best Drum Corps at the 2025 European Championships, winning the Grade Three Drum Corps title at the American Pipe Band Championships three times, winning the Open Fanfare title at the American Championships in 2025, taking Best Drums at the Celtic Classic 3 times, and earning a 6th-place finish in the final at the World Pipe Band Championships, along with Best Drum Corps in the MSR Qualifier event - more drumming prizes than accumulated in the band's previous 8 decades.

Miles counts solo and band competitive successes as a North American Champion, Canadian Champion, U.S. Champion, EUSPBA Champion, PPBSO Champion Supreme, top ten at the World Pipe Band Championships, and semifinalist at the World Solo Drumming Championships. He has top Grade One pipe band experience having played with Toronto Police Pipe Band and St. Thomas Alumni Pipe Band. Additionally, Miles has instructed several prize-winning drum corps throughout the Northeast and Midwest United States.

Beyond these outstanding corps victories, Miles' commitment to individual instruction has yielded numerous high-profile solo awards for his students across North America. Carnegie Mellon players have achieved top prizes, including Champion wins at the Agnew-Harrison Invitational in Ontario, Canada and the Western United States Championship Solo Invitational in California, along with prestigious Drummer of the Day honors at the Chicago Highland Games, and the John Murray Memorial and Martin Duffy Memorial Juvenile Champion titles. Through dedicated mentorship and a balanced perspective on musicality, sound quality, composition, and technique, Miles continues to build one of the premier pipe band drumming programs in North America.



Lauren Bennington is the bass and tenor drumming instructor for the Carnegie Mellon University Pipes & Drums. Originally from Paris, Ontario, Canada, she grew up immersed in the Scottish arts as a Premier Champion Highland Dancer before turning her focus to pipe band drumming.

Competitively, Lauren's career includes extensive experience at the highest levels of the Grade 1 circuit. She played the bass drum for the Grade Two Paris-Port Dover Pipe Band and the tenor drum for the acclaimed 78th Fraser Highlanders. Her talents as a lead tenor drummer were featured with the Grade One Toronto Police and St. Thomas Alumni Pipe Bands before becoming the bass drummer for the Grade One St. Thomas Alumni Pipe Band. As a competitor, Lauren has earned multiple major titles, including Canadian, American, PPBSO, and North American Champion.

Lauren's original flourishing and rhythm compositions notably contributed to a top six placing in drumming in Grade One at the World Pipe Band Championships. Furthermore, her bass playing was recognized as a significant factor in the Grade One St. Thomas Alumni Pipe Band's ensemble-preference victory over a multi-time World Champion and reigning World drum corps champion band - the first time an American band achieved that feat.

At Carnegie Mellon University, Lauren's expert instruction has resulted in incredibly fast progress for the tenor students, and her attention to detail and innovative perspective on the use of the bass and tenor section has transformed the CMU Pipes & Drums into an ensemble powerhouse that will make you tap your toes!

Joseph B. Carringer is a U.S.-based didgeridoo musician and sound therapist who has performed nationally and internationally for nearly three decades. He began his career in the 1990s performing blues and jazz before moving into electronic dance music, appearing at nightclubs, raves, and festivals. Joseph has toured extensively throughout North America and parts of the world, including Canada, Jamaica, and Peru. His work blends musical artistry with a meditative approach to sound, creating performances that are both grounding and transformative. Joseph Carringer is an internationally recognized didgeridoo sound therapist, and more information about his holistic work with the didgeridoo can be found at DidgeTherapy.com



BEALTAINÉ is a folk band based in Pittsburgh, striving to keep traditions alive while borrowing influence from the modern world. With roots in Irish and Scottish folk, songs from the Canadian Maritimes, trad tunes, and working-class anthems, Bealtaine looks to make their own mark in the folk music world. Their members are:

GEORGE WHITE (Bouzouki, Mandocello, Guitar, Vocals) is from Pittsburgh, PA and has been playing music in one form or another for over two decades. His adventure in Celtic music started at 14 when he got his first mandolin and a Dubliners CD, and he hasn't stopped looking for new songs and instruments since.

CONOR FREELAND (Uilleann Pipes, Whistles, Flute, Vocals) grew up in northeast Ohio. He has loved Irish music since a very early age, when his parents would sing him Pogues songs before bed. His experimentations with the bagpipes began in 2007 with the Great Highland Pipes, followed later by the Scottish Smallpipes and Uilleann pipes, due to the need for a quieter instrument to play near other humans. By day he works as a software engineer, but only to sustain his crippling music habit.

BILL BUCHKO (Bodhrán, Cajon) grew up in Pittsburgh and had his first taste of Irish culture while visiting Dublin in college. Having been a drummer for years, a friend suggested that he bring a drum to a St. Paddy's Day party to join in with the band. That started him down the path of playing Irish music for over a decade. While being an engineer is his day job, playing along to some Irish tunes with a pint in hand is his passion.

ANDY MORRISON (Guitar, Mandolin, Banjo, Vocals) was raised in Michigan and came to Pittsburgh in search of work and stumbled into the Irish scene. Irish music became a passion later in life, taking hold in college and evolving from the humble beginnings of a mandolin and a handful of tunes from Flogging Molly and the Pogues. Andy has made his place filling in the sound on whatever instrument helps complete the song.

DYLAN ROOKE (Bass, Guitar, Vocals) is an Irish citizen of foreign birth (McKeesport, PA) by way of an Immigrant father of the international Irish diaspora. He came into an appreciation for Celtic folk music as a teenager via the punk music scene's intersections with international music and found a deep love for the traditional and folk tunes of his heritage.

<https://bealtaine.band/>

GABRIELE PEALER, PREMIER HIGHLAND DANCER

A competitive Highland dancer at the Premier level, Gabriele has represented her region at the National Championships. She has performed in Scotland and with international highland dance teams, including at the Royal Nova Scotia Tattoo and Nationale Taptoe. A career highlight was performing for Queen Elizabeth II at Balmoral Castle in 2022, where she was the only American dancer featured in a private Jubilee celebration event. Gabby currently teaches with the West Virginia Highland Dancers in Morgantown, WV.

<https://www.facebook.com/wvhighlanddancers>

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<https://shovlinacademy.com/>

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more gentleness, more good –
in short,
more Life

*Excerpt borrowed from Pennsylvania
Music Educators Association*

IN MEMORIAM

William (Bill) Livingstone (1942 - 2025)

Bill Livingstone, one of the most influential Highland pipers in history, died in Whitby, Ontario, on February 22, 2025, a month before his eighty-third birthday. A man of firsts – the first pipe-major to lead a non-Scottish band to a Grade 1 World Championship title, the first North American piper to win a Highland Society of London Gold Medal, the first North American piper to win the Clasp at the Northern Meeting, the first piper to take a band to a World Championship AND win a Northern Meeting Clasp, he was a genuine original.



Livingstone was born in Sudbury, Ontario, on March 20, 1942, to a Scots father and Canadian mother. His childhood in the mining town of Copper Cliff, Ontario, was filled with music, and, according to him, he “could not remember a time when bagpipes were not some part of almost daily life.” The foundation for his musical career was laid as a teenager in Copper Cliff, between playing pipes with the Copper Cliff Highlanders and hammering out blues piano with a bar band that, through chance, brought Livingstone and his future wife, Lillian, together, leading to a marriage of more than 60 years.

Bill’s journey with the pipes began at the age of four under the guidance of his father, William Livingstone Sr., a Scottish immigrant from East Ayrshire. His piping teachers also included John Wilson, Donald MacLeod, Captain John MacLellan, and John MacFadyen—masters of the instrument who sharpened his talent into something extraordinary.

He was a revolutionary in the world of pipe bands. As the founding Pipe Major of the 78th Fraser Highlanders, he led them to victory at the 1987 World Pipe Band Championships in Glasgow. They were the first non-Scottish band to claim the title. Under his guidance, the band won the North American Championship a dozen times, and their music—bold, sophisticated, and unafraid of innovation—pushed the boundaries of what a pipe band could be.

Bill was not just a competitor—he was a composer, an author, and a teacher. He published two books of original compositions and left behind “A Piobaireachd Diary,” a five-volume series of meticulously recorded ceòl mòr that serves as both an archive and a testament to his devotion to the music. His 2017 autobiography, “Preposterous, Tales to Follow,” captured his wit, wisdom, and the remarkable experiences of a life lived in pursuit of musical excellence.

A mentor to many, he helped shape some fine pipers of the modern era: Michael Grey, Andrew Hayes, Ian K. MacDonald, Sean McKeown, and Bruce Gandy to name a few. His teaching was not just about technique; it was about grasping its soul. He is gone, but his influence remains, not just in the tunes he played but in the lives he touched.

(excerpts taken from Pipes | Drums and Piping Press)



Leslie “Les” Cowell (1933 - 2025)



It is with sincere regret that I record the passing of Les Cowell of David Naill Bagpipes. He was 91 and had been ailing for some time. - by Robert Wallace

Les began his piping career in the Boys Brigade in London and as a junior picked up prizes in local contests. I remember him once coming to the College of Piping, digging out old copies of the Piping Times, there to find his name in the lists at a contest in the south east.

After a bagpipe apprenticeship with Henry Starck he joined Ruddell Carte the woodwind specialists. This took Les’s craftsmanship to another level. He became a trained instrument maker. To gauge the level of his skill in handling wood we need to recognise that Ruddell’s had repair contracts with all the leading London orchestras of the day.

Many’s the grateful virtuoso, often in a pre-concert rush, who had his treasured but damaged oboe or clarinet brought to tonal perfection by Les Cowell.

In the early 70s Les decided to branch out on his own making bagpipes. He took the names of family youngsters and David Naill Bagpipes was born. His Buckinghamshire workshop started turning out some of the finest pipes ever heard. But the going was tough. Many in Scotland, especially those of a nationalist bent, resented the GHB being made by an Englishman, more so given that they were superb instruments.

The bagpipe-making business north of the border was less antagonistic. Les was personal friends with John Weatherston and Bob Hardie of RG Hardie & Co.

Les needed a chanter to match his drones and he called Jimmy McIntosh in Dundee for advice. A few weeks later Jimmy and his protégé Murray Henderson were travelling south intent on producing a world beating pipe chanter. And they did. Jimmy listened, Murray played and then Les, with all his skill and woodturning nous, carried out their instructions to the last detail...

... Les Cowell made a huge impact on piping but was always modest about his achievements. He raised the level of bagpipe making to new heights and set the standard for others to follow.

(more on the life of Les Cowell may be found at pipingpress.com)

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<https://www.facebook.com/PittsburghCeltic/>

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<https://rivercitybrass.org/>

IN MEMORIAM

Jerry Gibson (1937-2025)

Jeremy H. “Jerry” Gibson, the founder of Gibson Bagpipes, passed away on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at the age of 87. Born Sept. 30, 1937, in Leigh on Sea, England, Jerry said he heard the pipes played by a passing regiment while he foraged for scrap metal as a young child, during World War II, and the soothing tones inspired his love of the instrument. At just 12 years old, Jerry started playing the bagpipes, and would go on to play in multiple bands worldwide over the course of his life.

When he came of age, he served in the Seaforth Highlanders, and lived in Scotland, then Canada, beginning in 1959, before moving to Eastlake, Ohio, in 1966. Jerry was an engineer for 22 years, which doubtless influenced his work as he began designing his own bagpipes. In 1978, the same year as the first summer session of what would come to be called the Balmoral School, Jerry formed Gibson Bagpipes, manifesting his lifelong passion just outside of Cleveland. His pipes are played at every level of solo and band competition, and invariably receive favorable comments from judges and audiences alike. Jerry continued the daily operations of the company until his retirement in 2014, and his pipes and other products continue to be produced to this day.

“I did not know Jerry Gibson well, but he took time to help me reed a particularly finicky chanter at an early stage of my development, and I appreciated the focused enthusiasm he applied to that process. For years, his were the only practice chanter reeds I would use. I played a set of Gibson drones during my final years as a Grade 1 soloist, and kept them as a dedicated band instrument when I played in the Grade 1 contests with Peel and when winning the Celtic Classic and American Pipe Band Championships with CMU. They have a clear, full tone that fills a space; a solid instrument that has more than held its own alongside pipes of all makes and ages—a truly outstanding legacy for a self-taught pipe maker!” –Sean Patrick Regan, Professional Bagpiper



Marc “David” Ricklis (1950-2025)

The passing of Drum Major Marc “David” Ricklis leaves a significant absence, not only for Gladys, his wife of more than 52 years, and their family, but for the pipers and drummers of countless eastern United States pipe bands. For many, the image of a Highland Games’ massed band during opening and closing ceremonies is incomplete without his towering figure leading the ensemble.

Ricklis began his pipe band career in 1966 while attending Rockville’s Roger E. Peary High School. He enjoyed a successful competitive career and served as senior drum major and competition judge at highland games from Ontario to Florida and Texas to the East Coast.

In 1976, he performed at the White House during the national bicentennial, the 1999 Kennedy Center Honors salute to Scottish actor Sean Connery, and a St. Patrick’s Day ceremony for Ireland’s ambassador and President Barack Obama. Ricklis was the recipient of the 2017 Spirit of Scotland Award from the St. Andrews Society of Mid-Maryland.

“A man of great dignity and presence, Dave was the drum major of all drum majors, commanding respect with his polished bearing, calm authority, and unmatched organizational skills,” his family wrote on the memorial page of Sol Levinson & Bros. “As co-commander of the Brotherhood of Kilted Veterans and a proud U.S. Army veteran, Dave revered the flag and was deeply honored to have served his country. In all he did, Dave brought order, precision, and thoughtful care. He ensured that every endeavor, large or small, was meticulously planned and documented so that it could be carried on seamlessly by others. He believed in always doing the right thing, even when it was difficult.

“At home, Dave revealed a quieter side, humble, gentle, and the steadfast protector of his family. ... Dave’s eloquence, grace, and steadfast commitment to his values leave a lasting example for all who knew him.”

JMore: Baltimore Living staff



Sarah Jean Thompson (1946-2025)



Sarah Jean Thompson, 79, of Murrysville, passed away peacefully on October 23, 2025. She was born on March 6, 1946, in Munhall, daughter of the late Adolphus and Sarah (Scott) Erskine.

Sarah Jean was a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, earning a B.S. in Business, and taught for several years at Thomas Jefferson High School in Jefferson Hills. As well as being a homemaker, she worked as the general manager of the Children’s Festival Chorus of Pittsburgh and served on the boards of or volunteered with many non-profit organizations, including the Discovery Enrichment Program, the Friends of the Delmont Public Library, and the St. Andrew’s Society of Pittsburgh.

Starting in her teens, she taught Scottish Highland Dance for over fifty years and was recognized for her talents by the Royal Scottish Official Board of Highland Dance. Scottish cultural heritage — both of her parents were born in Scotland — was of central importance in her life, and she continued teaching and judging dance competitions for decades. She also played the bagpipes and was a registered teacher of Scottish Country Dancing. For many years, she choreographed and produced the Scottish performances at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival and organized the dancing competition at Ligonier Highland Games.

Sarah Jean is survived by her loving husband, Paul A. Thompson; their son, Alastair Thompson, eight nieces and nephews, twelve grand-nieces and nephews, as well as dozens of her students.

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THANKS TO OUR CO-SPONSOR PITT SCOTTISH NATIONALITY ROOM - Dedicated on January 29, 1938, the Scottish Nationality Room was one of the first four to be dedicated in the Nationality Rooms program. According to a University of Pittsburgh Press publication on the Scottish Classroom in 1940, the original Scottish Room committee comprised representatives from both the Royal Order of Scottish Clans and the Daughters of Scotia. Each lodge in the vicinity of Pittsburgh had a representative on the Scottish Room committee, including Clan MacDonald, Clan McKenzie and Clan Douglas as well as Lady Andrew Lodge, Thistle Lodge and Argyle Lodge. Over the years, the committee has engaged in numerous celebrations of Scottish heritage, sponsored talks on Scottish history and supported Scottish musical performances in the region. Most recently, the committee was instrumental in promoting the twinning of Glasgow and Pittsburgh as Sister Cities. Over the coming years, the cities will collaborate across a number of themes, such as workforce development, the environment and health and well-being. The committee looks forward to celebrating and promoting this newpartnership.

Upcoming event: December 7, 2025, 12-4pm - 34th Nationality and Intercultural Exchange Programs Holiday Open House Location: Cathedral of Learning Commons Room

In the spirit of an open house tradition and to foster connections among neighbors, members of the Nationality and Heritage Room Committees will welcome guests into the Cathedral of Learning for an afternoon of exploration and engagement. Guests will be invited into the Nationality and Heritage Rooms which will be decorated for the holiday season and can participate in traditional crafts and cultural demonstrations to learn about the rooms, the committees, and their ethnic communities and traditions. In the Cathedral of Learning Commons, guests will enjoy traditional treats as they listen to world and holiday music and shop for handcrafted and cultural wares and other items that represent the cultural diversity of the Nationality and Heritage Rooms. For more information on the history of the rooms and committee, please visit Pitt Nationality Rooms

The event is free and open to the public. No prior registration is required. Food and gift items will be available for purchase.

<https://www.nationalityrooms.pitt.edu/events/holiday-open-house-2025-0>

What is the difference between Scottish Highland Dance and Scottish Country Dance

Highland dancing is often performed with the accompaniment of Highland bagpipe music, and dancers wear specialised shoes called ghillies or pumps. It is now seen at nearly every modern-day Highland games event.

Scottish country dance is sometimes called “the ballroom dancing of Scotland” -- it’s a social dance form in which square dancing and contra dancing have their origins. It is also a great form of exercise and aerobic activity. It is practiced world-wide -- learn to dance here in Pittsburgh and you can attend social dance events the world over! Dances and classes throughout the year.

Pittsburgh Scottish Country Dance Society - A Social Organization dedicated to Preserving Scottish History
Special upcoming events: 21 March 2026 43rd Annual Highland Ball and Workshop

<https://pittsburghscottishcountrydance.org/home>



NEW DATE!

Saturday, July 18, 2026, 8 am - 6 pm
Idlewild Park, 2574 US Route 30, Ligonier, PA

www.ligonierhighlandgames.org

The Ligonier Highland Games promotes interest in and appreciation of ancient Scottish traditions and heritage, and works to preserve the arts and culture through education, competitions, and public display. The Games provides scholarships for Highland Dancing, fiddling, harping, piping and drumming and provides for the preservation of Scottish culture. The Games further generates revenue to support the scholarship activities of the Clan Donald Educational and Charitable Trust.

The Ligonier Highland Games is the main fundraising event of the Clan Donald Educational and Charitable Trust, a 501c3 organization. Donations are tax deductible and we are a non-profit organization. We have granted over \$250,000 in scholarships in multiple categories during our past 60 years.

The Ligonier Highland Games is entirely volunteer run with no paid staff members or officers – we do this because we love preserving and promoting our Scottish heritage.

Many of our staff have been working at the Games for decades and some travel great distances at their own expense to help organize and run our event, so a special thanks goes out to all of them.

The Ligonier Highland Games has been held annually since 1959, originally as the Scottish Picnic at Kennywood Park. With the support of the MacDonald Family, the Games moved to Idlewild Park in 1973 and has become an important annual event in Ligonier.

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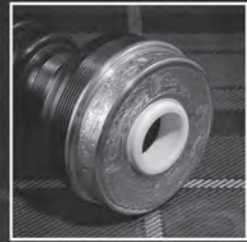
Pocono Workshop November 21-23, 2025 -Sheraton Valley Forge Hotel, King of Prussia, PA. Piping and drumming weekend filled with fun and world class instruction. Registrations accepted all the way up to the weekend of the workshop. Instructors: Stuart Liddell, Cameron MacDougall, Robyn McKay, Derek Midgley, Derek Cooper, Stephen Creighton, Reid Maxwell, Stephen McWhirter, Jordan Baille, Danielle Cooper, Fergus Bryce, Rebecca Hamilton <https://poconoworkshop.com/>

Winter Storm – Kansas City, January 15-18, 2026
Pipes and Drums event presented by MHAF. Every January since 2002, Winter Storm has been “...the centre of the piping and drumming world for 72 hours” – Pipes Drums magazine, 2014
Schedule: Amateur Contests on January 15, Professional Contests on January 16, Workshops on January 17 and 18, and the Evening Concert and Winter Steam on January 17. <https://mhaf.org/>

Jimmy McIntosh MBE Piobaireachd Workshop Weekend – Pittsburgh, February 20-22, 2026
The Jimmy McIntosh Scholarship weekend marks the culmination of the scholarship recipients’ piobaireachd studies. The workshop consists of masterclass and classroom instruction led by Mike Cusack, Nick Hudson and Andrew Carlisle who exemplify the values and traditions cultivated by Jimmy McIntosh. Details: <https://pittsburghpipingsociety.org>

Save the Dates: Balmoral School
2026 Summer Piping & Drumming Camps
Kutztown, PA July 5-10 ~ Edinboro, PA July 12-17

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*Friday Evening, Nov. 14
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Piping Workshop
Bruce Gandy*



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