

# THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS : BIOGRAPHY

Launched on an unsuspecting world back at Celtic Connections 2003, Scotland's original and best folk big-band are back in more rambunctious, roof-raising form than ever. The power and glory of their massed fiddles, bagpipes, accordions, whistles and vocals, audaciously orchestrated with harp, piano, a powerhouse rhythm squad and a blistering brass section, transforming Scottish traditional music into a grand-scale fanfare for the 21st century.

The heart of the band has always been the most outstanding traditional and folk players in the country, coming from **Blazin' Fiddles, Breabach, The Poozies, String Sisters, Mystery Juice, Harem Scarem, Bachue** and **Box Club** to name but a few. The powerhouse rhythm section is made up from musicians who have performed with acts as diverse as **Wolfstone, Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, String Sisters, Eric Bibb** and **Martha Reeves** and the brass section are one of the finest in the business, populated by players called upon by **Ray Charles, Robbie Williams, Joe Cocker, Elton John, Sharleen Spiteri, Wet Wet Wet, Gil Evans, Peatbog Faeries** - the list really does go on and on.

The Unusual Suspects is the creation of its musical directors **Corrina Hewat & David Milligan**. They first came up with the idea in the mid 1990's, but it wasn't until Glasgow's Celtic Connections Festival offered them a platform to put their 'folk-orchestra theory' into practice, that this monster band became a reality.

On a Sunday afternoon, late in January 2003, thirty-two of Scotland's finest and most dynamic musicians took to the stage of the main auditorium in Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall as part of the 10th Celtic Connections Festival. No one knew what to expect, (including many of the musicians!) but what followed became the stuff of legend, "they rewrote the book on how folk music should look and sound..." being hailed by The Scotsman newspaper as "one of the **top twenty gigs of all time**". The concert was hailed as the **crowning glory** of that year's festival, and with a triumphant return appearance in 2004, a UK tour followed, culminating with two sensational gigs in Edinburgh & Inverness - both recorded and released as their debut album "**Live In Scotland**".

Since then... the Unusual Suspects have been nominated for Best Live Act in the Scots trad Music Awards, they've performed at festivals throughout the **UK, Norway, Croatia, Luxembourg, France** and **Germany**; they were invited to **Canada** to collaborate with award-winning musician & songwriter Gordie Sampson and a host of musicians at the **Celtic Colours** Festival in Nova Scotia 2004 and again in 2006; Mike Harding described the band as "one of the most exciting I've ever seen" during the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards; They were the first Scottish band to be invited to perform at a music industry **WOMEX** showcase; They performed to a crowd of 300,000 at Berlin's **Brandenburg Gate** as part of Eurofest, and represented Scotland with two headline performances and ten 12-hour days of music showcasing the Year of Scotland at the **Lorient** Interceltique Festival in Brittany, France.

*"The new album is AMAZING! The world needs to hear this. It has everything great about what's happened on the scene in the last 20 years."* **Donald Shaw, musician & director of Celtic Connections Festival.**

Recorded in the Main Auditorium of the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, their second release "**Big Like This**" marks a verdant point in the band's existence. The Unusual Suspects are already looking forward to more gigs and exciting new projects. Watch out... they may be coming to a stage near you. Catch them if you can.

**Players:**

FIDDLES: **Catriona Macdonald, Anna Massie, Eilidh Shaw, Patsy Reid**

PIPES: **Calum MacCrimmon, Donal Brown**

ACCORDION: **Mairearad Green**

TRUMPETS: **Ryan Quigley, Colin Steele**

SAXOPHONE: **Nigel Hitchcock**

TROMBONE: **Rick Taylor**

GUITAR & VOCAL: **Ewan Robertson**

DRUMS: **Alyn Cosker**

PERCUSSION: **Donald Hay**

BASS: **Tom Lyne**

PIANO: **Dave Milligan**

HARP/VOCAL: **Corrina Hewat**

**WHAT THE PRESS SAY:**

"The Unusual Suspects are the best thing in Scottish music since the Celtic Connections festival itself."

**THE TIMES"**

It's big, bold, brassy, and adventurous... This whirlwind of sound takes Scottish music to unimagined heights."

**THE LIVING TRADITION MAGAZINE**

"A massive, glorious blast... awesome power - a harmonious, often uproarious dance between full-throttle rampage and orchestrated finesse."

**THE SCOTSMAN**

"Taking Scottish music forward with giant steps. A jiggling, reeling juggernaut... brilliantly arranged - the putative 'Scottish National Folk Orchestra' walloped off the main auditorium stage in sound waves that thumped into your chest with the impact of a benign piledriver"

**THE HERALD**

. "The orchestral quality and awesome sound of this band on stage was something to be marvelled at. I would liken their sound to a Scottish Riverdance." **www.efestivals.co.uk**

*"Their 'folk orchestra theory' has many layers, with jazz influences and strong rhythmic undertones that shift from melancholic pipes to the wildest of trumpets. They evoke different Scottish Landscapes in a signature change: the intertwined fiddle trio in a blink, jamming in the snug of a Shetland pub, are suddenly joined by a brassy sound that pulls your imagination into a city-scape of a bustling Sauchiehall Street."*

**The Philharmonie, Luxembourg**

*"...The Unusual Suspects presents music from the tradition in large-scale, full-flavoured flow, co-inventors Corrina Hewat and David Milligan's arrangements, brass section leader Rick Taylor's inspired input, and the players' disciplined exuberance conspiring in an ensemble that puts the art in party."*

**THE HERALD**

New album "Big Like This" on Big Bash Records (BBRCD017) launched on 29th January 2011 at the Old Fruitmarket as part of the Celtic Connections Festival.

Available from Proper Music and online [www.unusalsuspects.uk.com](http://www.unusalsuspects.uk.com)

## **GIG HISTORY:**

July 2010 - Cambridge Folk Festival, UK  
February 2009 - Philharmonie, Luxembourg  
June 2008 - Festspillene, Harstad, Norway  
January 2008 - Celtic Connections, Glasgow, UK  
December 2007 - Scots Trad Music Awards: Fort William, UK  
October 2007 - The Sage Gateshead, UK  
October 2007 - Queens Hall, Edinburgh, UK  
August 2007 - Lorient Interceltique Festival, Brittany, France  
March 2007 - Europafest, Brandenburg Gate, Berlin  
February 2007 - Celtic Connections Festival, Glasgow  
October 2006 - Celtic Colours Festival, Nova Scotia, Canada, UK  
August 2006 - Spancirfest, Varazdin, Croatia  
July 2006 - Brampton Live, Brampton, UK  
November 2005 - Perth Concert Hall, UK  
November 2005 - Assembly Rooms, Wick, Caithness, UK  
October 2005 - The Music Hall, Aberdeen, UK  
October 2005 - WOMEX, The Sage, Gateshead, UK  
October 2005 - Big Big World Festival, Glasgow, UK  
October 2005 - Queen's Hall, Edinburgh, UK  
October 2005 - Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries, UK  
October 2005 - Aros Hall, Tobermory, Isle of Mull  
July 2005 - Cambridge Folk Festival, UK  
January 2005 - The Unusual Suspects of Celtic Colours show at Celtic Connections  
January 2005 - Sage Gateshead, UK  
October 2004 - Celtic Colours Festival, Nova Scotia, Canada  
February 2004 - Eden Court Theatre, Inverness, UK  
February 2004 - The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh, UK  
February 2004 - Derngate, Northampton, UK  
February 2004 - The Coliseum, Aberdare, UK  
February 2004 - The Hawth, Crawley, UK  
February 2004 - The Anvil, Basingstoke, UK  
February 2004 - Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, UK  
February 2004 - BBC Folk Awards, London, UK  
February 2004 - Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries, UK  
February 2004 - City Hall, Newcastle, UK  
February 2004 - Rothes Hall, Glenrothes, Fife, UK  
January 2004 - Celtic Connections Festival, Glasgow, UK  
January 2003 - Celtic Connections Festival, Glasgow, UK

### **Contact:**

Dave Milligan  
Email – [info@unusualsuspects.uk.com](mailto:info@unusualsuspects.uk.com)  
Telephone – +44(0)7702 073077

OR

Corrina Hewat  
Email – [info@unusualsuspects.uk.com](mailto:info@unusualsuspects.uk.com)  
Telephone – +44(0)7711 512692