

POMEGRANATES FESTIVAL POP-UP

SCOTLAND'S FESTIVAL OF WORLD TRADITIONAL DANCE

TRIPLE BILL

COMMON GROUND

TRADITIONAL DANCE THEATRE OF THE COMMONWEALTH

25 JUNE 2026

19:30

CITIZENS THEATRE

119 GORBALS ST | GORBALS |GLASGOW G5 9DS

TRADITIONAL DANCE FORUM OF SCOTLAND

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pop-up

POMEGRANATES FESTIVAL

SCOTLAND'S FESTIVAL OF WORLD TRADITIONAL DANCE

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"How did 'pomegranates' become a metaphor for the process of creativity?

While curating the pilot festival edition of Pomegranates in 2022, we came across the line "Attracts me like a pomegranate". It was initially the second line of the Beatles song Something (1969) written by George Harrison. "Pomegranate" was only used as a temporary filler before Harrison settled on the final lyrics. For us, Pomegranates came to stand for the creative process of planting a seed, seeing it grow and tending to it together.

With every seed sown, we acknowledge and pay our respect to the native and indigenous cultures that have existed for millennia. We offer our gratitude for teaching us and inspiring many of the Commonwealth dance practices we use in the Common Ground Triple Bill."

ILIYANA NEDKOVA AND WENDY TIMMONS
Pomegranates Festival Curators

This Pomegranates Festival 2026 Pop-Up is curated by the Traditional Dance Forum with the support of

COMMON GROUND TRIPLE BILL

INTRODUCTION



We are delighted to welcome you to Pomegranates – Scotland's annual festival of Scottish and world traditional dance. Recognised as one of Scotland's ListHot100 most influential cultural events, Pomegranates is where tradition meets innovation, where every traditional dance practitioner's story matters.

Since 2022 each spring, we have been transforming Edinburgh into a curated trail of performances, exhibitions, workshops, social dances, walking tours, book readings and film screenings. For four years, we have been re-defining what world traditional dance means in the 21st Century.

To mark the fifth edition of Edinburgh's Pomegranates Festival in 2026, we are doing something different – we are going west and curating a series of pop-up festival events accompanying the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games this summer.

Warm welcome to the first of these Pomegranates pop-ups – C*ommon Ground.* Curated, commissioned and produced by the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland, *Common Ground* is a triple bill of traditional dance theatre that carries memory, hope and resilience from across the Commonwealth.

This triple bill is everything we love about creating together: virtuoso artists, deep cultural connections and dance that speaks directly to the world we live in. Mountains, oceans and the shared steps that unite us.

Thanks for joining us to celebrate the Pomegranates Festival's fifth birthday and help us send this love letter to the Commonwealth's dance traditions, past and present. One night, three world-class acts and a stage full of joy. Enjoy!

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CREATIVE TEAM



NIC GAREISS

Nic Gareiss (he/they) has been hailed by the New York Times for his "dexterous melding of Irish and Appalachian dance," and called "the most expressive and inventive step dancer on the scene" by the Boston Herald. Informed by 30 years of ethnographic study and performance, Gareiss draws from percussive dance practices – clog, flatfoot and step dance – weaving together a singular technique that facilitates improvisation and sonic collaboration. He has performed in seventeen countries at venues including Carnegie Hall, the Cork Opera House, Kuopio Dance Festival, Jacob's Pillow, and London's Barbican Centre.

Gareiss has created two evening length solo shows – *The Art of Treepling* and *Solo Square Dance* – and collaborates in duo projects with artists including Allison de Groot, Alexis Chartrand, Ultan O'Brien, Caleb Teicher and Jake Blount, as well as with the quartet This is How we Fly. He served as the Artist-in-Residence at the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland, School of Scottish Studies and Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh in 2018-2019.

MADELINE SQUIRE

A creative dance artist, choreographer and movement director, Madeline Squire a was a First Artist dancer with Scottish Ballet 2014-2025 and currently a Dance Artist-in-Residence at Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh. It is through this residency that she choreographed *Drift* and launched it as part of Edinburgh Science Festival 2026 in collaboration with the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland.

Squire creates works both for the stage and screen. Her work is influenced by her own experience of neurological recovery and approach to disability. Celebrating and exploring the beauty in uniqueness, with a new perspective of working. She has created work independently and for Scottish Ballet, United Nations, Nowness, The University of Edinburgh, Royal Opera House (Draft Works), Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, London Vocational Ballet School and more.

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CREATIVE TEAM

SOTIRIOS PANAGOULIAS

A freelance dance artist based in Glasgow, Sotirios Panagoulias is of Cypriot heritage. Currently – a Lecturer in Modern Ballet at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Associate Tutor in Dance Science and Education at the University of Edinburgh. He has worked with Scottish Opera, Prague Chamber Ballet, South Bohemian Ballet and the Engagement Team of Scottish Ballet, dancing in a big range of repertoire from classical ballet to contemporary, opera and musical theatre. Recent works include: *Fragmental*, *Concerto 2.0*, *Shuffle and Cut*, *The Gardener on a July Day, The Burden, Were you Sleeping?* and *Agrino Lounge*, plus *Socratic Circles* as part of Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland's Pomegranates Festival 2025.

NICHOLAS SHOESMITH

Nicholas Shoesmith is an Associate Choreographer with Scottish Ballet and former Soloist dancer with them. Since retiring from dance, Shoesmith has been working as a freelancer within the sector, continuing to create works for Scottish Ballet, Victorian State Ballet in Melbourne, as well as independent companies and schools. He is also a teacher, working with young dancers and gymnasts across the country. Most recent works include Scottish Ballet's *Wee Nutcracker* and *Underbelly* for the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. *Common Ground* is his first choreography for the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland.

LUCY ALLAN

A pianist and composer from Glasgow, Lucy Allan specialises in music for dance. Currently Allan is a piano accompanist for ballet and contemporary dance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and a Lecturer on the Conservatoire's Piano for Dance programme. She is also a frequent musical collaborator at Scottish Ballet as both an accompanist and as a composer, including *DIVE* and *Wee Nutcracker.* Allan's work combines her gift for piano improvisation with electronic music production, stylistically drawing significant influence from jazz, minimalism and commercial dance music. She produces and performs drum and bass under the moniker imo-Lu and, in 2025, released her debut solo project, *Microcosm*. *Common Ground* is Allan's first composition for the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland.

COMMON GROUND TRIPLE BILL

PROGRAMME



ACT I: **MOUNTAINS**

*Firstly, hear the high places with **Nic Gareiss** – one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" and virtuoso percussive dancer who served as the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland 2018-2019 artist-in-residence.*

In this solo which blends footwork, speaking and song, Gareiss shares step dance rhythms from the Appalachian mountains (ranging from Nova Scotia through Québec, south to the Blue Ridge in what some people call the United States), as well as from the Scottish Highlands, Ireland's Sliabh Luchra (Rushy Mountain) region and Surrey's St. George's Hill in England. Blurring the boundaries between sound and gesture, dancer and musician, Gareiss offers a singular blend of traditional dance, text and song mapping the cadence of these knolls, peaks and hollers.

ACT II: **OCEANS**

*Then, deep dive to the ocean floor with **Drift –** a haunting ensemble piece fresh from its premiere at the Edinburgh Science Festival 2026**.***

Choreographed by **Madeline Squire** – First Artist with Scottish Ballet 2014–2025 and currently Dance artist-in-residence at Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh – *Drift* is inspired by the complex structures of coral reefs. Watch as the dancers weave their limbs together, competing for space as their environment shrinks – mirroring how marine life becomes displaced when their habitats are destroyed. A reminder that the Commonwealth Small Island States, including Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana and Jamaica, are facing disproportionate threats not only from overfishing and sea-level rise but from the subsequent loss of dance cultures and traditions.

COMMON GROUND TRIPLE BILL

PROGRAMME



ACT III: **COMMON GROUND**

Finally, after celebrating the common wealth of our mountains and oceans and their remarkable capacity for cooperation and renewal, enjoy the preview of ***Common Ground.***

Co-choreographed by **Nicholas Shoesmith and Sotirios Panagoulias**, this brand new ensemble piece fuses traditional dance styles from across the Commonwealth – from the grounded pulses of Nigeria to the precision of the Scottish Highland Fling. With live music from **Lucy Allan** and a company of Scotland-based dancers, each with Commonwealth heritage, this is contemporary tradition at its most powerful.

It brings inherited Commonwealth movement motifs into a shared space – not to erase differences, but to find the harmonies. The stage becomes a ceilidh–gathering where every accent, gesture and rhythm are like stepping stones, paving the common ground that connects us all.

"*Common Ground experiments with communication from such an array of movement vocabularies that it serves to prove that dance truly is a universal language*"

NICHOLAS SHOESMITH

"One of the highlights of co-creating this new piece – the collaborative way in which the music was composed and performed in the studio alongside the Common Ground choreography. Lucy Allan took inspiration from the movement patterns and tailored each music section to reflect that."

SOTIRIOS PANAGOULIAS



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACT I: MOUNTAINS **DANCE, TEXT AND CHOREOGRAPHY:** NIC GAREISS

ACT II: OCEANS **CHOREOGRAPHER:** MADELINE SQUIRE **DANCERS:** CHELSEY TANG, SIYI CAI, YI WANG, XU PU, NUO XU, MINGZHUO LIU, XIAYI ZHANG, XINJING ZHENG, YUZHENG LIANG, YUXUAN SONG, SHULIN LI AND XIAOLI ZHOU **MUSIC:** PAUL KINGSLEY SQUIRE

ACT III: COMMON GROUND **CHOREOGRAPHERS:** NICHOLAS SHOESMITH AND SOTIRIOS PANAGOULIAS **DANCERS:** CHLOE CADE, SUSANNAH FORSYTH, EMMA READY, KIRA EWING, JUILY CHEN, MARCO BAROT AND DAMI ADELEKE **MUSIC:** LUCY ALLAN

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CURATORS/PRODUCERS: WENDY TIMMONS AND ILIYANA NEDKOVA

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: TRADITIONAL DANCE FORUM OF SCOTLAND. CURATED FOR POMEGRANATES FESTIVAL 2026 POP-UP AS PART OF GLASGOW 2026 COMMONWEALTH GAMES FESTIVAL

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