TRADITIONAL DANCE FORUM OF SCOTLAND



HIGHLIGHTS

APRIL 2025 - MARCH 2026



APRIL 2025

The fourth annual edition of our **Pomegranates Festival** saw a packed five-day programme from 25-30 April of Scottish and world traditional dance workshops, exhibitions, walking tours, talks and new work on stage and screen, exploring the themes of masks and intangible cultural heritage – from Ceilidh Plus to Venetian masks, Hungarian Csardas and Buso, Polish Polonaise and Chinese Yi cultural dance, plus much more.

Presented and produced in partnership with Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh City Libraries, Dance Base, King's Hall and Scottish Storytelling Centre. **Funded by** Creative Scotland's Multi-Year Fund through TRACS and Edinburgh Local Community Fund through the University of Edinburgh.

MAY 2025

As part of our trad dance on screen campaign we offered an all-month online streaming of **The Bright Fabric of Life** (2024). Using the body language of traditional African dance choreographed for the camera, this screen dance tells stories of motherhood and kinship, love and loss from Scotland and Sub-Saharan Africa. It captures the poignant story of Sylvie – a young Ethiopian girl, whose dreams are destroyed when a disastrous childbirth leaves her broken.

Presented and produced in partnership with Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh. **Funded by** Culture & Business Scotland, MHSCollie Medical Associates, Medtronic, Wellspect and iMedicare. **In aid of** Uganda Childbirth Injury Fund.





JUNE 2025

On the eve of the UNESCO International Dance Day, 28 April 2025, we gathered for an evening of blether about the **UNESCO 2003 Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage** (ICH)**.** This became Scotland's first discursive event dedicated to traditional dance as ICH in Scotland following the UK Government's ratification of the Convention. In June 2025 we launched a new platform for resources on all aspects of traditional dance as ICH or living heritage in Scotland.

This evolving resource also features our report from the international conference HOW SUSTAINABLE IS DANCE AS ICH? held in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 21 to 23 May 2025 – the closing event of the Dance as ICH project **funded by** the European Union and involving researchers from 6 countries.

JULY 2025

We support the homegrown and international trad dance talent that helps make Edinburgh the trad dance capital of Scotland and the sprightly cultural city for 12 months of the year, not just for August. Yet, since August 2022, we have been running our #traddance campaign for increasing the visibility of trad dance and highlighting the contribution of trad dance practitioners in the programmes of the Edinburgh summer festivals. In July 2025 we teamed up with the independent art criticism platform **The Quinntessential Review** (theQR.co.uk), to ensure that our #traddance campaign goes a long way further and co-published over 10 new reviews.

The pilot edition of our innovative **Traditional Dance Criticism Course** that trained 6 emerging critics was **funded by** Creative Scotland through TASGADH – a small traditional arts grant awarded to Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland.





TRADITIONAL DANCE FORUM OF SCOTLAND | TRADITIONAL DANCE COLLOGUE O SCOTLAND | BUIDHEANN DANNSA TRAIDISEANTA NA H-ALBA

Supporting, celebrating and safeguarding Scottish and world traditional dance across Scotland since 2012

Registered Charity SCIO SC045085

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Registered office St Margaret's House 151 London Road, Edinburgh, EH7 6AE

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AUGUST 2025

Sequins – one of our most recent productions was selected as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Springboard'25 programme, curated by our academic partners at Edinburgh College and presented on 21-23 August 2025 at PASS Theatre. A solo show fusing Congolese and hip hop dance with funky rhythms and rhymes. It features the Scottish choreographer and dancer Kalubi Mukengela-Jacoby, plus the voice and poems of the BBC presenter of Scottish descent Ian McMillan.

Sequins launched as a curtain raiser to **Hidden Faces ensemble piece** – our Pomegranates Festival grand finale on 29 April 2025. Its August run was Included in our summer trad dance round up which saw an unprecedented rise of trad dance shows as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

SEPTEMBER 2025

From Pomegranates Festival 2025 and our Intangible Cultural Heritage-themed Ceilidh Plus: Scotland+Poland+Hungary to **Scotland's first-ever Hungarian Dance House,** we couldn't be prouder to have inspired and supported Scotland's own **Magyar Táncház Skóciában** (Hungarian Dance House). We launched it in Edinburgh ahead of the third annual European Folk Day (23 September) and ran an entire season of lively monthly gatherings.

The Hungarian Dance House was inscribed in the UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in 2011. Originating in the 1970s, this practice connects rural folklore and live string music to communities, allowing anyone to actively learn folk dances through direct observation.





OCTOBER 2025

Attended one of our professional development days as part of the Pomegranates Festival? We captured the highlights in our creative documentary **Kaera Jaan** and teamed up with our partners at Dance Base for the new iteration of **Dare 2 Dance** day on 12 October 2025, curated as a world trad dance takeover. It featured at least two of the Pomegranates Festival tutors Nadia Kattab (Palestinian Dabkeh) and Yuxi Jiang (Chinese Trad Folk), who also appeared in the documentary.

The European Folk Day (on and around 23 September) started in 2023 as a pilot project coordinated by European Folk Network with **funds from the Creative Europe programme.** Ever since, it has been driven by the passion of individuals and organisations across the continent, including by trad dance practitioners across Scotland.

NOVEMBER 2025

For the second year in a row, the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland was the national charity of choice for the annual **ReFashion Edinburgh** – a sustainable fashion event curated by our Pomegranates 2024 Festival designer-in-residence Alison Harm. All the proceeds from the tickets were donated towards our efforts to embed sustainability and diversity in traditional dance across Scotland. For the first time held at Edinburgh's Biscuit Factory on 23 November 2025, ReFashion Edinburgh was once again a runaway success in aid of our charity.

Supported by models, dancers, hairdressers, hair stylists, make-up artists and backstage professionals, 10 local designers came together in this fourth edition of ReFashion Edinburgh, aiming to provide an antidote to fast fashion and make a difference in an industry that desperately needs to change.





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DECEMBER 2025

Having sown the seeds of Csardas – Hungary's fine example of intangible cultural heritage during the Pomegranates Festival 2025 – we celebrated the fourth monthly session of Scotland's own Magyar Táncház Skóciában (Hungarian Dance House) themed around Christmas and Advent on 13 December 2025. We also reflected on our first **European Traditional Dance Day** held in Glasgow on 2 November 2025 – an afternoon free and open to all, full of live music and joyful Italian, Breton, Irish, Ukrainian and Polish dancing.

This first in a series of European Traditional Dance Days was our first-time collaboration with Glasgow European Citizens Forum – an event **funded by** Glasgow City Council.

JANUARY 2026

We started the New Year with a dynamic and insightful day (16 January 2026) exploring the link between dance and human flourishing at **The Healing Power of Traditional Dance symposium,** convened by our Chair Dr. Wendy Timmons at the Dance Research Scotland (DaReS) network, University of Edinburgh. It featured presentations and discussions on the biopsychosocial benefits of dance with leading experts from our partners The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS), Dance Base and international research centres.

Symposium takeaway? More peer-reviewed published research is badly needed! We also agreed that we should put theory into practice on the dance floor at our next Ceilidh Plus.





FEBRUARY 2026

Just like Robert Burns' fame travels across borders so does our truly global **Ceilidh Plus series!** The cross-continental energy of the first edition for 2026 on 13 February was quite palpable! We brought together fantastic Scottish dance callers and musicians with local, Chinese and North American heritage for an evening of dancing to live music, celebrating not only Robert Burns but the arrival of the Lunar New Year and a nod to St Valentine's Day, sharing the joy through Scottish Country, Chinese Square and American Line dancing..

Our community Ceilidh Plus series has been providing space for the folk fusion of Scottish Ceilidh with other world trad dances since November 2024, laying the ground for a new tradition.

MARCH 2026

Scottish Country and Bulgarian Kukeri Dancing (also the inspiration behind the Eurovision 2026 banger hit Bangaranga) were both the focus of our two **Living Heritage exhibitions** highlighting the intrinsic link between books, music, heritage crafts and traditional dance. Curated for the Edinburgh Central Library, the exhibitions ran 2 March–30 May 2026, free and open to all, as part of our campaign for ensuring that Scottish and world traditional dance practices in Scotland are recognised as part of our global intangible cultural heritage.

Produced in partnership with Edinburgh Central Library, Bulgarian Cultural and Educational Centre Scotland, Two Destination Language, Festival of Europe, Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS), RSCDS Edinburgh and Dundee, Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh, House of Edgar and James Senior of St Andrews.



