*Released on behalf of Jessie MacLachlan Project*

**Brath-naidheachd – Cleachd sa Bhad Press Release – For Immediate Use**

**Tilleadh na Cloiche – The Raising of the Stone**

**Jessie MacLachlan: Celebrating ‘The Queen of Gaelic Song’**

A two-year lockdown project to restore the memory of one of Scotland’s greatest singers comes to fruition this week, when a magnificent memorial cross is reinstated in one of Glasgow’s most historic and enigmatic cemeteries.

On Friday 13th May, a rededication ceremony will be held to mark the return of the beautiful celtic cross that marks the grave of Jessie MacLachlan, a young woman from a modest background in the west Highland town of Oban, who was to become the toast of European royalty and top the bill at some of the world’s top venues.

Jessie Niven MacLachlan was, in her day, the undisputed Queen of Gaelic Song. A superstar as famous as Scottish contemporaries such as Harry Lauder and James Scott Skinner, she made the first ever recording of Gaelic song, and performed at the first National Mòd in 1892. Her stellar career took her round the world, but she died just short of her 50th birthday, following a traumatic journey escaping the outbreak of WW1.

Jessie was buried in Glasgow’s Cathcart Cemetery, one of Britain’s iconic Victorian ‘garden’ cemeteries which is the final resting place for some 15,000 souls. Her cross, like so many other Cathcart memorials, had fallen into disrepair and lay on its back in pieces until 2020, when three Gaels – musician Mary Ann Kennedy, and academics Dr Priscilla Scott and Prof. Wilson McLeod, came together to restore both the memorial and Jessie’s memory.

A public crowdfunder raised over £4000, including donations from many of the places that Jessie toured around the globe. And with match funding from Creative Scotland’s Maoin nan Ealan Gàidhlig (Gaelic Arts Fund), the expertise of fellow Gael and master stonemason Alex MacIntyre of Glasgow company MacIntyre Memorials was engaged and work began on the restoration of the 3.5m, 14 tonne structure.

Despite many challenges and delays, from COVID to finding unique technical solutions, the stone has now been completely restored and cleaned, and stands in a prominent postition in the cemetery, looking out towards Jessie’s beloved Argyllshire hills.

The cleaning of the stone has revealed the beautiful pale pink of the Aberdeenshire Balmoral Red granite, a nod to the royal approval of Queen Victoria that helped propel Jessie to fame.

This Friday’s ceremony, open to all and starting at the cemetery’s gates at noon, will feature some of the songs that Jessie was known for, and world-class Argyll piper Angus MacColl will play MacCrimmon’s Lament at the graveside, as his great-uncle John MacColl did at Jessie’s funeral in 1916.

There will be a further opportunity to learn more about Jessie Niven MacLachlan in an online talk by Dr Scott on Saturday 14th May, hosted by the Friends of Cathcart Cemetery. BBC ALBA will also broadcast a documentary on Jessie’s life and career in June 2022, as part of their *Trusadh* series.

**ENDS 9th May 2022**

*Details of both events can be found here:* [*https://www.tickettailor.com/events/friendsofcathcartcemetery1*](https://www.tickettailor.com/events/friendsofcathcartcemetery1)

*Hi-res images can be found here:*

[*https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wiCkXaLDIUdbRMstLl81hGb\_kcNVbizg?usp=sharing*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wiCkXaLDIUdbRMstLl81hGb_kcNVbizg?usp=sharing)*. Please credit photos to Watercolour Music. ‘Team Jessie’ image features L-R: Dr Priscilla Scott, Mary Ann Kennedy, Niall Campbell of MacTV and Alex MacIntyre of MacIntyre Memorials.*

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