

### ***The 'first family' of Gaelic music***

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*They are one of the first families of traditional music, but it has taken them a long time to get the five members of the Campbells of Greepe together on stage and in the recording studio. With nine Mod medals between just the five Campbells who will take to the stage at Eden Court's Empire Theatre on Thursday, the family will be led by Kenna Campbell who, as Gaelic singing tutor at the RSAMD, is one of Gaeldom's most influential and acclaimed performers.*

*Joining her on stage will be her brother, Seumas, a key figure in the Gaelic choir scene, Kenna's daughters, Wilma and Mary Ann Kennedy and niece Maggie Macdonald from Inverness.*

*Mary Ann is a well-known Gaelic singer, broadcaster and producer, while Wilma and Maggie are also highly respected teachers. Wilma leads the vocal team at the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music at Plockton while Maggie works with the government-sponsored Youth Music Initiative.*

*A new album, 'Fonn', has been released, produced by top producer Jerry Boys, and will be followed later this year by a book. Mary Ann, whose voice is known not just as a singer but for her World Music programmes on BBC Radio Scotland and BBC Radio 3, revealed the album and book were the culmination of four years' work.*

*However, the genesis of the project dates back even further and has its roots in community life in the family's home area of Roag in North-West Skye.*

*"We are just the ones daft enough to get up on stage. In Roag everyone sang, it was just part of everyday life. People went to ceilidhs and worked out in the fields and you never did that without singing," Mary Ann said. "The family kind of sang together anyway, but the idea of doing something more structured wasn't an automatic thing. We got together first 15 years ago for the centenary celebration of the Glasgow Skye Association – and we obviously enjoyed it so much it was another 12 years before we got back together again."*

*It was meeting Grammy-winning producer and engineer Jerry Boys which really gave them the impetus towards recording together.*

*Boys, who has worked with World Music giants Buena Vista Social Club and Ali Farka Touré along with REM, John Lee Hooker, Shakira and Fairport Convention, came to Scotland to look at a Gaelic music programme. Seeing the Campbells perform at Dunvegan Hall in 2009, he immediately made an offer to producer an album.*

*The offer was accepted and the Campbells assembled at Watercolour Studios in Ardgour, run by Mary Ann and her husband, Nick Turner, to record the album, 'Fonn'.*

*Being part of a family group suits Mary Ann, who has also performed as part of the band Clìar and with all-male Gaelic music collective Na Seòid (The Heroes).*

*"I'm not a person who particularly likes being on stage on my own," said Mary Ann, who*

*recently took on the role of musical director with the award-winning Inverness Gaelic Choir. "There's definitely something about voices singing together that appeals to me."*

*However, the Campbells will not be alone when they visit Eden Court. As the album features guests including Scottish-US fiddle and cello partnership Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas, so the Campbells will be joined on stage by piper Lorne MacDougall and step dancer Nic Gareiss.*