



## Amplifying Artistry Series 2, Episode 2

### “Gàidhlig Lannraig a Tuath”

#### Transcript

00:00:00 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Welcome to Amplifying Artistry, the podcast that turns up the volume on creativity in North Lanarkshire.

00:00:16 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Join us as we dive into the vibrant minds of local creatives right here in the heart of Scotland. In this series, we'll be chatting with creative people who live or work in North Lanarkshire, exploring their unique stories and witnessing firsthand what happens when passion meets a revolutionary desire to create. So whether you're listening during

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

your daily commute, finding solace in these conversations at home, or simply seeking a moment of inspiration, in this podcast we hope that you will identify with the people that you hear and the stories that we encounter.

By delving into the lives and experiences of North Lanarkshire's gifted artists and creators, we shed light on the transformative power of creativity. So whether you're seeking a deeper understanding of yourself, a fresh perspective on your own potential, or simply a delightful escape into the world of creativity; Amplifying Artistry promises an enlightening journey that will leave you inspired, informed, and perhaps forever changed. So join us and coory in for the next wee while.

00:01:22 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Halo agus fàilte air ais gu amplifying artistry. No, you don't need to adjust any settings. On this episode of the podcast we are celebrating Seachdain na Gaidhlig, or World Gaelic Week. From the 19th to the 25th of February people gathered to celebrate our native language all over the country including right here in North Lanarkshire. We hosted several events to honour the dialect, including workshops, nature walks and live music events, all free of charge.

One such music event I was lucky enough to attend was a concert held at Bellshill Cultural Centre featuring singer Catherine Tinney, who was joined by musicians Sarah Markey and Luc McNally. I caught up with Catherine herself before the event to discuss the importance of bringing the language to audiences in North Lanarkshire.

I also managed to speak to Sarah, one of the musicians of the night, who happens to be a North Lanarkshire local. You'll hear those interviews now, followed by a taste of some of the fantastic music that we heard that night.

00:02:22 **Catherine Tinney**

So my name is Catherine Tinney and I am a Gaelic singer, and I'm here tonight to do a concert for Seachdain na Gaidhlig or World Gaelic Week.

00:02:32 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Fantastic. So have you been speaking Gaelic your whole life?

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

00:02:36 **Catherine Tinney**

I have spoken Gaelic since I can remember. I grew up speaking Gaelic and yeah, now do a lot of my work life in Gaelic and based in Glasgow, still speak Gaelic everyday and I also teach Gaelic as well.

00:02:50 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Lovely. So where was it that you grew up? It wasn't in Glasgow, was it?

00:02:54 **Catherine Tinney**

No, I grew up in Skye.

00:02:55 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

OK, so was Gaelic quite commonplace in Skye where you grew up?

00:02:59 **Catherine Tinney**

Yeah, it's very much still a community language and I went through Gaelic medium education as well in Portree.

00:03:06 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

So then coming to Glasgow, I'd imagine Gaelic is less widely spoken then. What sort of challenges have you faced trying to remain speaking Gaelic in your professional life while living in an area where it's maybe not as common?

00:03:18 **Catherine Tinney**

I don't know actually in particular if there have really been challenges, I think there are misconceptions about Gaelic in Glasgow. There's a huge Gaelic community in Glasgow and traditionally in my family, like a lot of people from the Highlands and Islands, people moved to Glasgow or surrounding areas for work. So actually it's maybe not so visible.

00:03:22 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

OK.

00:03:40 **Catherine Tinney**

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

But there are certainly a lot of Gaelic speakers in Glasgow, hence still being able to speak Gaelic most days with a lot of what I do for work and socially.

00:03:49 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Mm-hmm. Yeah. So bringing an event like this to North Lanarkshire then, is North Lanarkshire another place where maybe there's more Gaelic speakers than you think?

00:03:56 **Catherine Tinney**

I would say so. I will admit I don't know so much myself about North Lanarkshire's Gaelic community. I'm aware through work I do with schools, you know, I've gone in and done events before at Condorrat Primary School. I know folk who went through Condorrat and Greenfaulds High School, so I'm aware, you know, I think Gaelic is alive in North Lanarkshire and I think similar to Glasgow as well; people move down for work and it's just maybe not as visible.

00:04:21 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Yeah, of course. Well, I grew up in North Lanarkshire and I went to school in North Lanarkshire. Gaelic was something that unfortunately was never part of the curriculum, which I always thought was a shame. That seems to be changing, thankfully. So on the back of that then, how important do you think it is to bring this language, essentially our national language, to places that don't normally have any experience with it?

00:04:42 **Catherine Tinney**

I think a lot of places think they don't have experience of it. We hear quite frequently people are saying, "well Gaelic was never spoken here" and that's just not the case. It's usually pretty evident, especially in place names and even, you know, there are folk I'm friends with who went through Gaelic medium education. They're my age, you know, they're in their 30s and they're from Cumbernauld, and they sang in Gaelic choirs and actually there is a Gaelic choir in Cumbernauld that are very active. And umm, yeah, it's, I think it's just, it's good that it's a part of the community here.

00:05:15 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

Yeah, of course. So being a singer and being a Gaelic speaker, what are some of the specific benefits of combining music with the Gaelic language?

00:05:24 **Catherine Tinney**

I think culturally for me, I think one of the reasons I still speak Gaelic is probably because I'm also a musician, and I think it was very, very tied into music for me growing up. You will find a lot of people maybe go through Gaelic medium education. Not everyone still speaks it as an adult. I think one of the reasons for me, I am still involved in Gaelic, is music. I think music is a great way to learn about history as well. A lot of the songs that I sing tell you a lot that might not necessarily be on the curriculum. I grew up learning about politics of land, and I guess also what women's lives were like, you know, hundreds of years ago? And yeah, even things like I did a degree in textiles not that long ago and was able to use Gaelic poetry and Gaelic songs as references for my dissertation. You know. So I think there's just, music is actually just a really accessible way of learning about culture and history and language as well. And I'd say that not just for Gaelic, but for any other cultures and languages too. It's interesting how many things you see shared with other cultures through music.

00:06:34 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Yeah, of course.

00:06:45 **Catherine Tinney**

And yeah, there's a lot of similarities all over the world.

00:06:49 **Sarah Markey**

Yeah, so my name is Sarah Markey, I'm a musician originally from Coatbridge, so this is like a home gig this evening. And I play flutes, whistles, I also play Clarsach, which is the Gaelic word for small harp. So yeah. During the gig, Catherine said that myself, her and Luc met during the BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year Final. So yeah, since then we were just really good friends and Glasgow's got quite a vibrant folk music scene and we just sort of met through that and decided to work together on different projects and stuff. So I just released my first ever album in 2022 and Catherine

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

actually, multi-talented as she is, designed the artwork for this as well. So we're quite creative individuals I suppose you'd say.

00:07:35 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Yeah. Good. So are you a full time band of three of you, or did she just ask you to come along?

00:07:38 **Sarah Markey**

Yeah. So, well, we've been playing together for a while, but this is the start of Catherine, sort of pursuing her own solo career in music. Well, for her trio. So it'd be mostly Gaelic song, and some tunes in there as well. So yeah, we're looking forward to what this year/next few years brings. It's been a tough few years with COVID and things like that, trying to get projects started. Yeah, we all have a good amount of experience and stuff like that. So we're looking forward to just getting started and creating music and hopefully managing to fund it somehow.

00:08:10 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Yeah, absolutely. Are you a Gaelic speaker yourself?

00:08:13 **Sarah Markey**

I'm not, but I am being taught by Catherine on a regular basis, different words here and there. I do kind of pick up a lot, especially when we'd be up at her home in Skye, in Portree, she'd be speaking Gaelic to her relatives or friends because it's well, you know, spoken maybe not in Portrees so much, but in other areas of the island, they'd be speaking Gaelic quite a lot.

00:08:33 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

So growing up in Coatbridge then yourself, what was your experience like of the Gaelic language? Did you know a lot of people that spoke it?

00:08:39 **Sarah Markey**

To be honest, I didn't really get an introduction to Gaelic until I met Catherine. I'm from an Irish music background, but going to different sessions in Glasgow, there's Gales

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

from all over Scotland that live in Glasgow it's quite a vibrant scene there, so started to sort of pick up from there.

00:08:55 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Yeah, of course. Well, then on the back of that, how important do you think it is to bring essentially our national language to communities like North Lanarkshire where maybe you wouldn't necessarily think of it?

00:09:04 **Sarah Markey**

Yeah, definitely. Because I think I think it's really important. Well, I would say all languages definitely, but especially Gaelic because it's a language that originates from here and also Scots. So, myself and Catherine teach regularly for Celtic Connections Festival and we teach, well Catherine teaches Gaelic song and I teach a bit of Scots songs as well. So it's really important to keep those two languages vibrant and our culture alive. Otherwise it would be such a shame to lose something like this but also, yeah, Gaelic is just...the history of it and things. A lot of it has sort of been left behind in a lot of places that, as I say, when I was growing up, I didn't have much experience of it in Coatbridge. But it just depends what sort of circles you're in when you're younger and things that you find later on in life and stuff. So I'd say it's really important to keep teaching it in school where they can because it's, I mean, having another language is also always a benefit, isn't it?

00:09:58 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Absolutely. And tonight's great for yourself because you're back in your home turf, as you said, it's a home gig. Plus you're getting to do what you've done professionally for quite a while.

00:10:06 **Sarah Markey**

Yeah. Yeah, it's good to come back and play and it's such a wonderful venue. It's really good. I used to teach a lot with the North Lanarkshire...well, that's where I learned Clarsach sorry, the harp. I learned that after school on a Friday. So the opportunities I got from that were massive. Not sure if you get such a thing as regular nowadays, but

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

we would practise all the time in Coatbridge High School and then go do concerts at Motherwell Concert Hall. So there was a Gaelic community within that as well and the traditional band so, yeah, it's good that it still keeps going and it's important it continues to be like that.

00:10:44 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Yes, so you would say there's opportunity for a good music scene in North Lanarkshire?

00:10:47 **Sarah Markey**

Ohh definitely, yeah. There's so many musicians come out of North Lanarkshire and I think as well there's a very good fiddle player. I think he's from Bellshill or something, he's done very well for himself; John Mccusker, and he plays with a lot of Gaelic artists as well so it just shows you can be from anywhere and still take up the language and the music and the culture.

00:11:53 **MUSIC**

*\*Catherine sings in Gaelic, accompanied by Sarah on flute and Luc on guitar\**

00:14:00 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Thank you to Catherine and Sarah for those interviews. I love how they spoke about the way in which the Gaelic language is so deeply entwined with history and the role that music can play in that too. Now, you'll hear more from that event and just a wee while, but for now, I'd love to let you hear something really special from another event that we held for World Gaelic Week. People from all over the community, all with little to no Gaelic speaking experience, gathered in Summerlee Museum for "Ah Cannae Sing". Here, they were taught a traditional Gaelic walking song, not a word of which was in English and the results are pretty remarkable. I'll let you hear it for yourself

00:14:51 **MUSIC**

*\*Katrina teaches a song to participants, which they then sing back\**

00:14:56 **Katrina Henderson**



## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

That's kind of how it sounds like, hopefully it's not too daunting, and we'll see how the lines kinda fit in to...

00:15:47 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

A huge thank you there goes to Katrina Henderson. That was the voice that you heard there at the start of the clip. She is one of the Gaelic Education Support Officers for the council and she helped to facilitate that workshop; teaching them that rousing song and getting them to sound as good as they did.

Back to the concert now, we're going to hear a short interview with Karrie Prescott, who helped to organise the concert. Here she discusses her own unique journey with the Gaelic language. After that, you'll hear a word or two from some of the audience who are present at the event, and finally, some more of the gorgeous music performed wonderfully by Catherine, Sarah and Luc. Enjoy.

00:16:25 **Karrie Prescott**

My name's Karrie Prescott, and I'm the Gaelic Coordinator for North Lanarkshire Council, and as part of Seachdain na Gaidhlig (World Gaelic Week), we are putting on a concert tonight with renowned Gaelic singer Catherine Tinney, accompanied by two musicians, Sarah Markey and Luc McNally.

00:16:46 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Lovely. So how long have you been the Gaelic Coordinator then for the Council?

00:16:51 **Karrie Prescott**

I've been working for the Council for just over a year now, started in December 2022.

00:16:57 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

So in just over a year, how have you noticed the difference in interaction with Gaelic? Has it got better or worse about the same?

00:17:04 **Karrie Prescott**

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

Well, my experience is based on what my colleagues have told me about previous events and interactions that they've had with participants in North Lanarkshire and further afield as well. What I would say is that we've been particularly active in the past year; we've put on a series of events which kicked off with Seachdain na Gaidhlig in 2023, with a similar concert with a Gaelic singer. Then we had a Gaelic Day. We also did some staff events where we spoke to staff and introduced them to some Gaelic phrases and words and a little bit about Gaelic culture in Scotland. We did a few sessions for children as well, and we run classes on a weekly basis throughout the school terms for adult learners.

00:17:53 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Brilliant. So how long have you been a Gaelic speaker for, your whole life or is it something you took on later?

00:17:58 **Karrie Prescott**

I started learning Gaelic first of all when I was in my early 20s, learned Gaelic for a couple of years and used Gaelic. I did it as part of a degree at university and I used Gaelic for a few years in the Community, living in Glasgow, I lived in the West End of Glasgow and there was a lot of Gaelic being spoken locally. I unfortunately lost my Gaelic in the sense that I stopped speaking, moved to England, and didn't use Gaelic for some 20 years actually, and I had an opportunity about six years ago to go back to university, pick it up again and my passion came flooding back and I've been a Gaelic speaker since then and very much looked forward to being involved in Gaelic as part of my working life as well. So this is a bit of a dream come true for me to be working for the Council in this capacity.

00:18:48 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Absolutely. How did you find picking Gaelic back up then after 20 years? Was it like riding a bike or did it take a little bit?

00:18:55 **Karrie Prescott**

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

Well, I'm not sure how good I am at riding a bike. I found that I had the odd word. I remembered how to say 'and' and 'but'. For the first few weeks things started to come back gradually and then I would say within about three months, suddenly a lot came flooding back. Yeah, and I felt my confidence growing and I'd say within a year, I was confidently back speaking again.

00:19:24 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Yeah. Brilliant. So how important is it to keep bringing events like these and weeks like this to North Lanarkshire and keeping Gaelic at the forefront of people's minds?

00:19:33 **Karrie Prescott**

Oh, it's essential as far as I'm concerned. I mean Gaelic is part of the history of this area, of this country. It's a living language that people are using day-to-day. It's a language that people want to learn, that people have an increasing interest, I think because Gaelic has come to the fore in recent years as a language where, you know, there is a declining in the number of speakers, but I think that's encouraged people to come forward and say "well, I own part of this as well. This is part of my history and my cultural identity as well" and to feel part of things. So it's important for us to promote that in terms of engaging people, but also to be aware that, you know, there are people that live here who have been Gaelic speakers all their lives, that this is their culture and that North Lanarkshire is their county as well. So it's important that we represent all people in North Lanarkshire, culturally and linguistically, as far as we're able.

00:20:26 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Absolutely. So if there's anyone listening to this that maybe doesn't have a lot of experience speaking Gaelic, but would like to, are there any resources that you would recommend that they can look up for themselves?

00:20:36 **Karrie Prescott**

Absolutely. I mean, in North Lanarkshire itself we run weekly classes at beginner level, intermediate level and for advanced speakers as well. We also have access to those classes-well those are for adults, just to say that, and that's part of the Community

## **North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development**

Learning Development Service, adult service in North Lanarkshire. For children, we have Gaelic education in North Lanarkshire, from nursery level up. We have nursery schools, primary schools in Condorrat, which feeds into the high school at Greenfaulds in Cumbernauld. And if anybody's interested in learning Gaelic and North Lanarkshire, they would contact the North Lanarkshire Gaelic. We're on social media and we can be contacted also through the Council website. Make an inquiry about Gaelic classes and we'll get you signed up. And these classes are free for those who work, live or are educated in North Lanarkshire itself.

### **00:21:31 Audience Member 1**

I saw on the social media page NL Gaelic and I have an interest in Gaelic. I'm a Gaelic learner and also sing in the Gaelic choir. So when I saw the event, I thought this is a wonderful opportunity to come and hear some Gaelic songs and help celebrate Seachdain na Gaidhlig.

### **00:21:47 Scott Fleming (Host)**

So how important do you think it is to have events promoting the Gaelic language in communities like North Lanarkshire?

### **00:21:55 Audience Member 2**

Hugely. When I was young, my mother was a Gaelic speaker but never taught me because at that time you didn't teach people that. So it's really nice now that the next generation are speaking Gaelic and also bringing it out so other people can hear it and start to get more familiar with the language.

### **00:22:09 Audience Member 3**

Well, from a learner's point of view, it's awesome because if you don't have someone to speak to, it's harder to learn to speak to it. You could learn it and have it in your head, but you can't get it out if there's no one else to talk to. And it's not just a language, it's the whole culture behind it, the music, the poetry. And it's never been just a Highland thing which everyone thinks it is. It's not. Gaelic was spoken all over Scotland, much further south than we are. So yeah, it's really important.

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

00:22:36 **Audience Member 1**

I think it's huge. First of all, we have to open it up to people that have never heard Gaelic before, think Gaelic's not for them. Gaelic's actually very accessible. Tonight's event's bilingual so you don't have to have any Gaelic. You can just come and appreciate the music and the song. And perhaps you'll come along and pick up a few words. And that may be the start of your learning journey.

00:23:00 **Audience Member 4**

Well it's a thing that should never die, shouldn't it? You should always have this sort of thing to the forefront, and especially maybe in schools and bringing it up through the young age groups and coming up. I know Catherine does teaching and things like that but it's something that we don't...my family's Irish Gaelic, you know, and it's very, very similar, I'm sure, but it's something we should just never let go of.

00:23:23 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Yeah, of course, absolutely. Would this event encourage you to engage with more Gaelic events in your community?

00:23:29 **Audience Member 4**

Certainly, because I think there's always that kind of haunting sound and you know, you might not understand, but you can get the gist of the haunting story and what might be involved there. I love it, love the music, love it.

00:23:42 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Good, good.

00:23:46 **Audience Member 1**

Absolutely. I've been learning Gaelic for about 20 years, and growing up in North Lanarkshire, it's a very friendly, inclusive community. I would say it's a Gaelic family and it's open to anybody to come in and just find out what's happening; Gaelic classes, Gaelic learning events, Gaelic choirs, just come along. It's open for everybody.

00:24:10 **MUSIC**

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

*\*More Gaelic song, performed by Catherine and her band. She teaches the audience a Gaelic chorus, which they join in on when she sings it.\**

00:27:18 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

And with that, we bring today's episode to a close. We hope you've enjoyed, and if you feel inspired to increase your linguistic repertoire, please do check out the NLC Gaelic social media accounts to see how you can get involved.

Amplifying Artistry is a podcast by the North Lanarkshire Council Arts development team. To find out more about the team and the work that we do, visit [www.culturenl.co.uk/arts](http://www.culturenl.co.uk/arts).

This episode was produced and directed by Aaron Hawthorne for North Lancashire Council.

This episode was edited, hosted, and facilitated by me, Scott Fleming. You can access a transcript of this episode at [www.culturenl.co.uk/amplifying-artistry](http://www.culturenl.co.uk/amplifying-artistry). All interviews and audio excerpts have been included with kind permission from the participants. You have been listening to Amplifying Artistry.

See you next time.

00:28:29 **Catherine Tinney - \*after the credits\***

Yeah, yeah. So "halo agus fàilte". "Fàilte" is 'welcome'. So "halo agus fàilte air ais."

00:28:38 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

"Halo agus fàilte air ais".

00:28:40 **Catherine Tinney**

Yeah. "Gu...Amplifying Artistry". So "halo agus fàilte air ais gu Amplifying Artistry".

00:28:42 **Scott Fleming (Host)**

Halo agus fàilte air ais gu Amplifying Artistry. Fantastic, lovely. Thank you very much.

## North Lanarkshire Council Arts Development

### *END OF TRANSCRIPT*

---

Transcript generated by Artificial Intelligence and edited by Scott Fleming.

If you have any feedback or questions about this transcript, Amplifying Artistry or North Lanarkshire Council's Arts Development Team, please contact [arts@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:arts@northlan.gov.uk).