

the Sunday MUSIC



by **COLAN LAMONT**

ELEPHANT Sessions believe folk music isn't boring — because it's young people pulling the strings.

The Highland group are quickly becoming one of Scotland's biggest traditional bands and have been booked to perform all over the world.

Mandolinist Alasdair Taylor, from Inverness, says: "Folk music isn't what it used to be — events like Celtic Connections and festivals around the country show otherwise.

"There's a lot of young people and it can be pretty wild. It's not as quaint and traditional as you might think.

"We want to get people riled up, jumping about and dancing and if people are doing that and having fun then we have more fun on stage.

"We grew up playing folk music but mix in all our genre tastes, so there's lots of pop and rock and funk and dance influences to make it more mainstream.

"Young people are definitely more interested in it than they were before and we want to encourage people to get playing and start their own band."

The five-piece band — made up of Greg Barry, 25, from Dingwall, Mark Bruce, 28, from Edderton in Easter Ross, Euan Smillie, from Kilmuir on the Black Isle, Seth Tinsley, 27, and Alasdair, 25 — formed five years ago after studying folk at Newcastle University.

The release of album *All We Have Is Now* a year ago was followed by live appearances at some of Europe's most notable festivals.

True to their rowdy reputation, audiences crowd-surfed their way through the summer and marquee floors broke under the weight of bouncing fans.

More recently the band toured Australia and they admit it's still hard to believe they've gone global.

Euan, 23, says: "I love trav-



elling because we get to go around with our pals drinking and having fun and playing gigs. We can't complain.

"We've done a lot more trips abroad the last couple of years and you never sure how it'll go in a new market because it might be music they've never heard before. We found it went really well and we've been invited back a few times so it seems to be going alright.

"With any good reviews we're always dead chuffed. Those sorts of things mean a lot because we put in a lot of work in and it's nice to get a wee nod of approval."

The band were recently awarded £25,000 from Belhaven Brewery as part of a new initiative which is set to amplify the careers of emerging talent in Scottish folk and traditional music.

It's hoped the money will allow the band to cover the cost of travel to Australia and America next year. They will also appear at the Belhaven Brewery closing party at the legendary Tartan Week in New York in April 2019.

The band said of the boost: "This award is absolutely amazing. We have just begun to tour outside the UK and are building an overseas fan base — this award will really help us to cement that."

● See *Elephant Sessions* at the *Doune The Rabbit Hole* festival in Stirling on July 14



Folk isn't what it used to be... it's pretty wild

BREW SOME GOOD



THE Belhaven fund is supported by Showcase Scotland Expo, an organisation backing the international development of Scottish-based artists.

The bursary is awarded to bands or artists chosen through the Scottish Trad Awards regular nomination and voting process. Music fans will be invited to put forward artists for consideration, while a panel of industry experts will choose the winner from those nominated. The winners of the Belhaven Bursary will be announced and presented in December.



BETA WAVES

WHO: Dale Easson (vocals/guitar), Harry Crossan (synths/beats)

WHERE: Dundee

FOR FANS OF: Tame Impala, LCD Soundsystem, Alt-J

JIM SAYS: With Scotland's biggest music festival TRNSMT getting underway at Glasgow Green on Friday, I'm looking forward to the perfect warm-up in Inverness.

TRNSMT may have a healthy dose of emerging acts alongside big hitters such as Arctic Monkeys, Liam Gallagher and Stereophonics, but the XpoNorth showcases in the Highland capital are all about New Music. Billed as Scotland's leading creative industries festival, the event also covers crafts, fashion and textiles, writing and publishing, screen and broadcast plus digital and technology.

It features around 60 acts across nine venues on Wednesday and Thursday — more than half of which I've previously featured in this column! What's more, it's free to register at XpoNorth.co.uk

Dundee duo Beta Waves are one of the newer outfits appearing. Formed just nine months ago, they are already one of Scotland's buzz bands.



NEW MUSIC
By Jim Gellatly

They see XpoNorth as a great opportunity to get their name out there. Harry said: "It's a massive deal for us. A year ago, we never even had a band. To think we are about to play a festival like Xpo is a little mental. People have responded so well to the music so far. I hope it continues in the same way."

Dale added: "I'd like to think we are a bit different from other bands in Scotland at the minute. We are not a traditional set up, two of us with lots of electronics. It's a bit of a guitar/electronic hybrid."

If you seek out their music you'll find it difficult to pigeonhole, but it's impossible not to get sucked in. The two singles so far, January's *I Think I'm Melting* and current track *Let It Out*, are the perfect calling

cards. To put out music this strong so early, I can't wait to see how it progresses in the coming months. It's already come a long way in a short time. Dale explained: "It's had a fair few makeovers over the last nine or so months. Before I was thinking this could even be a full-time band, it was more of a solo project. It wasn't until me and Harry got together, and he introduced me to programmed drums and a synthesizer that it morphed into Beta Waves. We started writing ten-minute-long psych dance tracks that shrunk to tracks around the three or four-minute mark. The music continues to develop."

Picking up support slots with Neon Waltz, Man Of Moon and Stillhound, live gigs are shaping up nicely. Harry said: "We seemed to hit the ground running with the first couple of shows and met some really cool people that have helped us. We completely sold out our first two shows in Dundee and have had people at all the shows singing along with songs that haven't even been released yet."

Beta Waves' XpoNorth showcase is on Thursday at MacGregor's on Academy Street in Inverness. I can't wait!

MORE: [facebook.com/BETA.WAVES.MUSIC](https://www.facebook.com/BETA.WAVES.MUSIC)
● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio Sundays 2-4pm. www.amazingradio.com, www.jimgellatly.com

▶ Watch a video of the band playing at: www.thescottishsun.co.uk