In 2013, year 2 of Glasgow Life’s Gaelic Arts Strategy we commissioned 6 new Gaelic Drama works-in-progress which were performed at the Victorian Bar, Tron Theatre, Glasgow. Our aim was to develop new Gaelic Drama opportunities for professional Gaelic speaking playwrights, directors and actors. This was achieved by producing a series of exciting new short pieces all at different stages of development. We have now collated details of the projects, responses and data from audiences and the artists who took part.

The success of these projects is shown by the many new collaborations, relationships, additional funding and professional developments that have emerged during the process. The works-in-progress have continued their development since these initial presentations at the Tron, some in partnership with Glasgow Life and others have succeeded in attracting independent funding and a profile in their own right.

341 people attended the events [35 being non-Gaelic speakers] and a further 1207 people interacted with sònàSonas, Street Theatre [the majority non-Gaelic speakers]. These figures are a demonstration of the demand for professional Gaelic Drama in Glasgow. Our audience feedback forms showed that all the performance achieved an approval rating averaging between 82-100% and our associated post show discussions proved to be a key audience engagement tool.

Glasgow Life is now looking at their Gaelic Drama activity for 2015-2018. Our plans will be informed by our evaluation, successes and challenges, of this project as well as those of our broader arts and drama programme. Further consultation with other agencies and practitioners will ensure that we continue to grow and produce exciting and innovative Gaelic drama projects in the city of Glasgow in the years to come.
Some Stats
- Attendance: 50 / 50 evening performance
- 92% of audience completed questionnaire
- 100% enjoyed the performance
- 100% rated their experience as either good or very good
- 100% would like to see the performance developed to a full production

Next Stage...
Following on from the success of the first work in progress Daibhidh Walker's company successfully secured funding to develop his piece to include the character of Lady Macbeth, extend the piece to a hour long performance and develop a visual design for the piece. The funds from Bòrd na Gaidhlig's Open Gaelic Drama fund and on-going support from Glasgow Life enabled the company to produce the latest stage of the work at the Circle Studio a few weeks prior to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and help devise the Gaelic extract of the play for the work-in-progress. John Binnie directed the original play for the Citizens Theatre in 2014. The piece opens with a young Lewis woman preparing for the return of her father and sweetheart from the First World War in the early hours of Wednesday 1st January 1919. They are sailing home on the HMY Iolaire which is carrying 280 triumphant seamen. Tragedy struck when just yards from the safety of Stornoway harbour in Lewis the boat hit rocks known as the beasts of Holm and 205 men perished. The audience are given an insight into the impact of this key catastrophe in island history, where few were left unaffected by the tragedy and entire villages were left without fathers, husbands and brothers.

Beasts of Holm
Written & Performed by Mairi Morrison
Directed by John Binnie
Music from Moilidh NicGriogair & Sarah Lang
MacDonald, Sgoil Gàidhlig Ghlaschu

Performance duration 30 mins
Post show discussion

Maire Morrison

"Would have given a standing ovation - it deserved it!"
"Emotionally powerful, even for a non speaker - good subject, little known"
"I think it's important that people understand the significance of the event. The future production hopefully will bring it to a wider audience"

MacBheatha
Performed 29th November 1.30pm, 8.30pm
Duration 35 mins
Post-show discussion

A short version of Macbeth in Gaelic
Translated and adapted by Ian MacDonald
Performed by Daibhidh Walker
Directed by Liz Carruthers

A man has stumbled into the Tron bar in Glasgow with wild stories about power, obsession, guilt and madness lead him to his undoing. This one man play calls and facebook messages he grows more and more paranoid before his ambition and madness lead him to his undoing. This one man contemporary version allowed Daibhidh Walker to develop his work as an actor with a classical text. Ian MacDonald allowed Daibhidh to work in a contemporary setting in Gaelic.

"I appreciate the support from Glasgow Life at each stage of developing MacBheatha, which helped me to develop my work in a different direction" - Ian MacDonald

"This is a sense of intimacy at play which is crucial to a re-telling of the story that taps into the bardic tradition of oral storytelling. Whatever happens next in the project’s development … it is important that the project continues to respect and celebrate the way Shakespeare looks like a very local lad."

Neil Cooper, The Herald (work-in-progress, Tron)

"I've translated many kind of texts, from poetry to drama, but this language of this translation, and it has made me approach it as play theatre. Although it is a work in progress I hope we can show that Shakespeare can work in a contemporary setting in Gaelic."

Liz Carruthers
Some Stats

- Attendance: Matinee 36 / Evening 38
- 69% of audience completed questionnaire
- 100% enjoyed the performance
- 83% rated their experience as either good or very good
- 72% would like to see the performance developed to a full production [the remainder stating that they like the performance as it was]

Next Stage...

Iain and Liz are looking for funding to develop the piece into a full length play with three actors and a musician with a view to a national tour. Iain has been invited to further develop Mac an–t Stronaich on Saturday 28th March.

Iain will be developing three new pieces as part of the Urlar project in partnership with The Playwrights’ Studio Scotland, with a presentation of the work on Thursday the 16th January 2014 at the CCA.

"it was useful to have an opportunity to have the time and space to write a story that has always fascinated me. I think it is the gap between legend and fact that most interests me about Mac an t-Stronaich. There is little of substance known about the man. This story is only an echo in the gap."

Iain Macrae

Sample of Audience Comments...

"Iain is a talented actor and it’s a compelling story for a one-man piece"

Beth Frieden

"Superb performance, enjoyed greatly"

"Modern drama, especially with a sense of humour is always good"

Catriona Lexy Campbell

"Loved it, reminded me of childhood power cuts at home"

"For myself, it was very beneficial to have the opportunity to see how an audience would react to the concept and also to identify the difficulties in a show that has very little external light. I was also pleased to have the opportunity to perform on-stage at such a prestigious theatre after a fairly long period away and it gave me a great confidence boost in the run-up to other acting projects."

Catriona Lexy Campbell

"it was a useful to have an opportunity to have the time and space to write a story that has always fascinated me. I think it is the gap between legend and fact that most interests me about Mac an t-Stronaich. There is little of substance known about the man. This story is only an echo in the gap."

Iain Macrae

Sample of Audience Comments...

"Iain is a talented actor and it’s a compelling story for a one-man piece"

Beth Frieden

"Superb performance, enjoyed greatly"

"Modern drama, especially with a sense of humour is always good"

Catriona Lexy Campbell

"Loved it, reminded me of childhood power cuts at home"

"For myself, it was very beneficial to have the opportunity to see how an audience would react to the concept and also to identify the difficulties in a show that has very little external light. I was also pleased to have the opportunity to perform on-stage at such a prestigious theatre after a fairly long period away and it gave me a great confidence boost in the run-up to other acting projects."

Catriona Lexy Campbell

As an

Dorchadas

(From the Darkness)

25th April 2013, 2pm, 8.30pm

2pm Matinee & 8.30pm Evening Performance

Post show discussion

Written & Directed by Catriona Lexy Campbell

Performed by Beth Frieden, Catriona Lexy Campbell and musician Dòmhnall Alasdair Campbell.

Catriona Lexy used her childhood experiences of living on the Isle of Lewis, where there would often be power cuts with the stormy weather, to write this piece. Unable to use their electrical appliances, people had to find other ways to pass the long dark nights. Although it was always a bit scary at first, it wouldn’t be long until tell living stories, playing games and singing together had filled the void and there was always some element of disappointment when the electricity was restored. This short work aimed to recreate a little bit of that magic.

"I think giving emerging artists a chance to work with more established artists and giving established artists a platform to explore new writing is a great idea, because new writing and more artists is what Gaelic drama needs. I would also love to see a program bringing Gaelic writers together with actors to produce new work"
sonaSons, the Gaelic street theatre company were invited to perform at the event. The content of the performance was Gaelic, inviting them to enjoy the language in an open and accessible way. Two pieces were developed: \textit{The Choice} and \textit{Hallaig}. The latter is a work in progress written by Iain Finlay MacLeod with story and characters inspired by two of Sorley MacLean’s best known poems, \textit{Finlay Macleod’s ‘Hallaig’} and working to make it accessible for both Gaelic and non-Gaelic speaking audiences. I felt my own creative development was enhanced by thinking and working in non-verbal theatrical languages.”

Iain Finlay MacLeod

Sample of Audience Comments...

“I very much enjoyed the challenge of directing a ‘scratch’ version of Iain Finlay MacLeod’s ‘Hallaig’ and working to make it accessible for both Gaelic and non-Gaelic speaking audiences. I felt my own creative development was enhanced by thinking and working in non-verbal theatrical languages.”

Kath Burlinson

Next Stage...

Following the development of this work the pieces were performed in SkainosFest, East Belfast and at Rights and Revelry, the latter hall, premier Irish Language Festival in Northern Ireland. SònaSons will be working with Glasgow Life during the Commonwealth Games 2014. Cultural Programme 72% of public ferries will sail the streets. There will be opportunities for drama practitioners in Glasgow and beyond to get involved.

Hallag

Performance 28th June 2013, 8.30pm

Duration: 35mins

Post show discussion

Writer: Iain Finlay MacLeod

Directors: Kath Burlinson & Dòl Eoin MacKinnon

Performers: Cinairch m‘oir Mhoirtir, Somhairle Martin MacHyn, Maeve MacKinnon, Martin MacIntyre, Martin MacLellan, Martin MacIver, Martin MacUalpo, Martin MacKinnon

Post show discussion

26th & 28th July, Merchant City Festival

15th June, Mela, Kelvingrove

May 23rd, Two street performances on Buchanan Street, Glasgow

May 22nd Presentation of work to Street theatre representatives followed by a discussion

Attendance Figures

- Attendances: 42
- 73% of audience completed questionnaire
- 89% enjoyed the performance
- 100% rated their experience as either good or very good
- 92% would like to see the performance developed to a full production

Some Stats

- Attendances: 42
- 73% of audience completed questionnaire
- 89% enjoyed the performance
- 100% rated their experience as either good or very good
- 92% would like to see the performance developed to a full production

Iain Finlay MacLeod

“I've done Polish and Italian and this is way more fun and a great way to learn a language”

Iain Finlay MacLeod

Sample of Audience Comments...

“Great night, enjoyed the music and performances”

Iain Finlay MacLeod

Sample of Audience Comments...

“The Hallag script is currently being developed with the National Theatre of Scotland with funding from Creative Scotland. Iain Finlay’s theatre company Robhanis has recently received charitable status.”

Next Stage...

The Hallag script is currently being developed with the National Theatre of Scotland with funding from Creative Scotland. Iain Finlay’s theatre company Robhanis has recently received charitable status.
“It would be difficult, though, to find a more vivid and tightly focused version that this powerful new one-hour adaptation for two actors, translated into a sinewy and richly atmospheric Gaelic”

Joyce McMillan, Scotsman on performance of MacBheatha at Circle studio, Citizens Theatre

For information on Glasgow Life’s Gaelic Arts & Drama programme contact
Rona MacDonald, Gaelic Arts Producer
rona.macdonald@glasgowlife.org.uk

With thanks to the Tron Theatre, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, National Theatre of Scotland, Gaelic Books Council, Liz Carruthers.