

Why should we abolish the set tunes? Simon McKerrell

Chair Bill Wotherspoon

I'd like to welcome Dr Simon McKerrell. He is employed as a lecturer in the Department of Music at Newcastle University. He is currently the Programme Director (2012-13) for the Bachelor of Music Folk and Traditional Music degree.

In the year 2000 Simon was one of the first students graduating in the degree course in Scottish Music at the RSAMD. Following this he had a PhD thesis accepted by University of St Andrews on 'Scottish Competition Bagpipe Performance: Sound, Mode and Aesthetics'. He has been a lecturer in Ethnomusicology at the University of Sheffield (2008-2009) and Head of Piping Studies for the BA (Scottish Music-Piping) degree at The National Piping Centre, Glasgow (2005-2008).

He is currently researching the investigation of pragmatic aesthetics in music, in particular semantic and bodily affect in audiences of traditional music. He is also pursuing research into a cultural history of Scottish sectarianism.

He is a significant prize-winner on the Highland Pipes but is also adept at the Border and Uilleann Pipes. The Isle of Skye has proved a happy hunting ground for Simon in that he has won the Dunvegan Medal and three Clasps at Portree Highland Games. Also the A-Grade MSR at the Northern Meeting and the A-Grade Jig at the Argyllshire Gathering. He is a regular competitor in Piobaireachd at Gold Medal Standard. He also has a background in professional folk music and currently plays with the celtic band ' Rough Tides'.

The title of the lecture today is ' Why should we set tunes?' although I think he's changed that.