



A La Banda project
In association with
Cryptic and Aros

“It’s not about nationalism; it’s not about the hills. It’s about people.”

Jim Sutherland – Artistic Director

Struileag is a two year arts project that will reach out around the world to the people of the Gaelic diaspora. Community engagement across generations at home and abroad is vital to the project, feeding into all aspects of the creative development.

Culminating in a large scale international event the project explores the universal links between language and culture. The Struileag finale will take the form of a Highland show that will stream live around the world by satellite to become a nationally significant highlight of the year of Homecoming 2014.

Presented in Gaelic, the show will be strongly visual making it accessible to people around the world who may not speak Gaelic. This forward looking, culturally ambitious project will offer new perspectives on the lives of a people spread all across the globe.



History isn’t just a thing of the past. We’re making it now! Tell us your story.

“An inspiring and poignant exploration of the collective, experiences and aspiration of the contemporary Gael”

Douglas MacKinnon – Director of Film

Who? Where? How?

The Highlanders went everywhere and did everything from becoming slaves to being the best known masters of industry. There are the Gaelic speaking communities of Nova Scotia and the fiddle playing Metis people of Western Canada.



Did you know that James Cameron, architect to Catherine the Great of Russia designed the iconic Kremlin clock tower? Cameron claimed lineage from the Camerons of Lochiel. The Russian connection carries through to modern times. Anna Kareeva travelled all the way from Moscow this year to win four medals at our National MOD for Highland dancing.

Gaels took root in Argentina where Guillermo Santana McKinlay started a Gaelic choir in 2002 that is still going strong and his son Freddy leads a 40 piece pipe band. In fact our own Charlie Barley's Stornoway Black pudding business has Argentinian connections. Murdo Mackenzie Grandfather of the current proprietor left in the 1920s along with many other Shepherds and farmers to work on the bleak Patagonian prairie. Murdo rose to become a key figure in the Menendez Empire and for 30 years was head of the family firm before returning to Stornoway.

There are many more stories of highlanders and their descendants who became diamond miners in Africa and American Billionaires. Struileag will tell these and many other stories of Highland influence.



The Struileag Finale

Music, song, poetry, will come together with film in a theatrically presented event that will tell the story of a people scattered to the winds. The Struileag finale will stream internationally as well as enjoying screenings in digitally equipped cinemas around Scotland. We will link up to simultaneous events around the world, elements of which will stream back into our Inverness show. We are currently in discussion with people in New Zealand, Canada, London, Argentina and Russia regarding the development these simultaneous events. Community events will take place around Scotland in village halls and community centres where people can gather to watch the streamed show whilst taking part in their own ceilidh to celebrate a culture and its people scattered to the winds. International screening is likely to boost the tourist potential for the region.

*“It will be surprising, magical, and revelatory and above all
it will be brave!”*



Bàrdachd / Poetry

Innovative approaches to contemporary forms

Poetry, the project’s bedrock, specially commissioned for this project, will form the backbone of the narratives used in the Struileag finale. The new writing will be commissioned to a brief and in



responding to the themes it will shape the narrative thrust of the production. Some of the poetry will be written with a view to developing it into songs. Other pieces will be written to be spoken and performed with musical settings. Poetry will be commissioned from established Gaelic poets across the diaspora. One commissioned piece will take the form of a secular psalm to the sea presented in Nova Scotia and responded to by satellite in Inverness. Another piece is being commissioned as a rap.

Ceòl / Music

An epic emotional sound stage

Fresh, contemporary music written in response to traditional forms will challenge common perceptions and stereotypes. Songs will be developed collaboratively with the poets and instrumental sections will conspire with other art forms to set up and support the narrative of the show. A 12 Piece Band consisting of some of our finest instrumentalists will be joined by 8 Singers selected from the cream of the crop of Scots Gaelic singers, a Diaspora Youth Orchestra to include members of Scotland's own National Youth Ensembles alongside selected musicians from around the world and a Gaelic choir.



“We want to build upon the cultural heritage rather than simply rely upon it. We will do something that’s dynamic and not merely passive.”

Kevin MacNeil – Director of Poetry

Fìolm / Film



Film will bring the diaspora to life from the urban sprawl of Detroit to the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. Presenting an emotional counterpoint to the poetry and music, film will create another layer of the show that can give context as well as carrying the narrative. We will see the great sheep prairies of Australia and the frozen wastes of Alaska. Country dancing in Red

Square, Moscow juxtaposed against Highland games in Christchurch New Zealand, the Gateway to the Antarctic offset by the waulking of the tweed in Nova Scotia, Canada. Film can show us the indigenous peoples around the world whose land we share.

Struileag and the National MOD

The Struileag team is excited to be co-operating with An Comunn Gàidhealach in order to deliver the Struileag finale as part of the opening night of the National MOD in Inverness 2014.

The Struileag festival

A week-long festival of events preceding the MOD that will include;

- Showcasing of community projects from Struleag partners including Gaelic drama, visual arts and music
- Performances by indigenous peoples from around the Gaelic diaspora to include Seminars and workshops. We feel that this is an important and often forgotten perspective on diaspora
- Gaelic music showcase featuring some of our finest home-grown talent alongside performers from around the diaspora
- A Gaelic children's day with performances taking place across the highlands in collaboration with Schools and Youth organisations



Struileag – *an imaginary boat used in a contest of wit, story-telling or singing at a gathering. When one had sung or otherwise contributed to the amusement of the ceilidh he would say “cuiream Struileag seachad orm gu”, naming some other person who makes the same remark when he or she has finished his/her share of entertaining*

“What happens when viewers start seizing bits of the story and telling it themselves?”

Frank Rose-Digital anthropologist

Coimhearnachd / Participation

The process of telling a story doesn't have to be linear.

Community Engagement will form a substantial cornerstone of the project. Exploring contemporary stories as well as accessing diaspora from a historical perspective, Struileag aims to capture a participant's imagination or interest sufficiently to encourage deeper investigation. The project will become a hub for schools and community activities at home and abroad encouraging young people to use Gaelic and to talk to older generations of their families in order to seek information to feed into the narrative.



Struileag will engage with people across generations and geographical boundaries to involve them in an immersive trans-media experience within which they themselves can be part of the storytelling process. Poetry and other forms of creative writing will become part of a rich narrative which will include audio, film and interactive animated games in which participants will take part in a collaborative creation.



Poetry competition for all ages

Community and schools engagement will feed into a Poetry competition which will contribute towards the text of the show. Selected material will take its place in the show alongside the commissioned work of established poets. The best of the poetry that is not selected for inclusion in the main show will be included in a book of poetry alongside the text of the show and original poetry commissions.

This epic exploration of the Highland diaspora will unfold across diverse media, taking advantage of new and emerging web technologies, to develop non-linear narratives. Struileag will cross platforms to tell the story of the Gael, a people scattered across the globe in different time periods, facing different issues, and from different perspectives.



In contrast to linear print-based narrative, digital technology can allow us to explore diaspora in innovative new ways, injecting new dimensions to storytelling. Information and stories can spread through community interaction with people actively engaging in the distribution of the material through their social networks and in the process expanding its economic and cultural value.

Participants will be able to help shape the project by developing ideas and narratives, taking trips and side-trips through photographs, text, sound and video, with the option of participating in discussions, as well as consulting maps, links to other sites and archival material.

The project will take place across platforms including mobile applications and social media. Internet activity will lead to treasure hunts and physical explorations of the participant's environment. Gathered information, video and images can then be fed back into the project with potential for elements to be included in the Struileag Live finale which will take place in Inverness and be streamed around the world by satellite. Merchandising of related materials will allow the participant to then take aspects of this epic story with them into his or her everyday life.

Transmedia storytelling is not a new phenomenon, and is perhaps the oldest technique we have for spreading information. From memorized sagas transferred orally from one storyteller to another, to cave paintings and art, the tales told through human history have found multiple channels to their publics.”

Kevin Moloney



“As children, just born, we do not choose the language we speak, we absorb what we hear around us.” Alasdair Campbell – Producer

Dileab / Legacy

The pivotal aspiration of the STRUILEAG team is that the profile and importance of Gaelic as an indigenous language will be strengthened and therefore lead to the heightening of the confidence of the communities where Gaelic remains an integral part of everyday life. In taking the project to an international audience we intend to highlight the universal importance of indigenous languages to the concept of home and belonging. The project will endeavour to leave a lasting legacy to the cultural wealth of Scotland.



STRUILEAG will generate a lasting legacy in the form of;

- Book of poetry and songs
- Commercially available recording
- DVD
- Documentary film
- The Struileag cookbook
- The show will be scaled down for further touring
- An online trans-media web site that can continue to grow beyond the life of the project
- The social legacy in the form of an interconnected network of people all around the diaspora
- An on-going partnership of organisations in the Highlands of Scotland

An Sgioba / The Team

Jim Sutherland – Artistic Director / Composer

Kevin MacNeil – Director of Poetry

Dan Ayling – Director of Show

Douglas MacKinnon - Director of Film

Alasdair Campbell

Jim Sutherland

Sandra MacIver

Donald MacDonald

www.jimsutherland.uk.com

<http://www.kevinmacneil.com/>

<http://www.danayling.com>

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0533559/>

Lead producer for La Banda

Producer for La Banda

Producer of film

Community Engagement Director, Scotland (Aros)



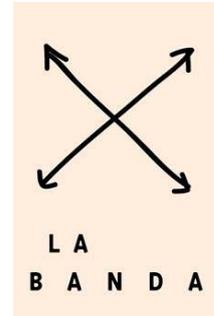
Luchd-leasachaidh/ Production Partners

LA BANDA Ltd

www.jimsutherland.uk.com/La-Banda-Ltd

Key Personnel: Jim Sutherland and Alasdair Campbell

La Banda Ltd has a reputation for producing high-quality, large scale music projects that capture the imagination. Cross fertilisation of musical traditions and inter cultural collaboration constitute the vital basis of the company.



AROS CENTRE

<http://www.aros.co.uk/>

Key Personnel: Donald MacDonald and Cailean MacLean, Aros operates a cultural tourism venue and is an arts promoter and facilitator based on Skye. Engaged in high quality local and national projects which derive their ethos from the culture, language and history and the Gael, often in partnership.



CRYPTIC

<http://www.cryptic.org.uk>

Key Personnel: Cathie Boyd and Claire Moran

Cryptic is an internationally-renowned producing art house, creating a lasting artistic legacy by presenting high-quality, innovative work.



“National identity can neither be preserved like an antique piece of furniture nor discarded like an old piece of clothing, it needs to be constantly reassessed, adapted to changing circumstances and brought into harmony with our deeper self-understanding and ideals. To freeze it, to refuse to evaluate and change it, out of inertia, uncritical pride or a mood of nostalgia, is the surest way to subvert it” Biku Parekh

