

# Aiming for a Danny Kyle award

LEAH SEATOR

Orkney folk singer, Jo Philby is to try her hand at the Danny Kyle Open Stage competition at *Celtic Connections*, she has revealed.

With her trusty accompanist, Elaine Grieve at her side, Jo will compete for one of the coveted awards, following in the footsteps of many local acts who have impressed judges at the event, including The Chair.

"Having gone on quite a musical journey since moving here back in 2002, my music has developed over the years with various line-ups," Jo said.

"We all experienced and gained so much from touring regularly off the island and playing at home, especially with the Gnosss lads, who went on to win a Danny in 2015.

"My music took on another slant, when Tom Robinson joined myself and Elaine and we introduced some Americana influences.

"It is now that my music feels just where I want it to be, and with the ever present core, myself and Elaine Grieve. It is all about the voice, good heartfelt songs with sensitive accompaniment and harmony vocals."

As a duo, Jo and Elaine bounce off one another perfectly, and Jo is very glad to have Elaine by her side.

"The songs I love to sing are all enhanced by Elaine's beautiful accompaniment on mandola & guitar," she said.

"The blend of our voices together is what makes our sound unique to us.

"We had a fantastic year as a duo in 2016, and we're overwhelmed by the response we got on our gigs away and encouraged by our loyal audience at home in Orkney."

Jo's idea to enter the Danny Kyle Open Stage competition came via kind comments from her supporters.

"Several people in the music world suggested I applied for the DKOS," she explained.



Jo Philby (right) and Elaine Grieve are set to compete on the Danny Kyle Open Stage at *Celtic Connections* this month.

"I spoke with Elaine, and we decided it was now or never, because we both love what we do and enjoy sharing the passion of our songs and music."

Jo first visited Orkney for the Folk Festival in 2001, and she moved here the very next year.

She said: "I have now successfully built a life between work and my love of music.

"Never did I think I would be performing as I do now. I feel immensely proud to

be part of the community I have made my home.

"I am looking forward to flying the flag for Orkney, as many have done before us at this year's *Celtic Connections*!

"We both feel a huge honour to have been given this opportunity to perform at DKOS, when they have so many applicants from all over the country.

"We see it as a good time to give a wider audience an insight into our love of storytelling through songs and music, and what to expect

if they came to one of our gigs.

"It will also give us another platform to meet musicians and venues from the Folk world. A great time with like-minded folk, which is what it is all about — exciting!"

On the night, the audience will be treated to something really special from the duo, who have carefully planned their strategy.

"We want to give the listeners a cross section of what we do, so we have chosen songs that really draw the listener in and hopefully take them on a journey for the moments we have," Jo said.

"One is our own composition, another is written by a well-known folk duo and another is a traditional song that folk would know to sing along if they want to.

"We hope to set the scene of what is key to our performance."

Beyond the competition, Jo and Elaine are planning to be busy this year.

They are booked for Glenfarg Folk Club, The Wee Folk Club, a tour in May, and three weekends in Ullapool, as well as a wealth of local gigs, all of which they look very much forward to.

For further information on Jo and Elaine, visit [www.jophilby.co.uk](http://www.jophilby.co.uk). Catch them performing on the Danny Kyle Open Stage in Glasgow on Sunday, January 22.