

BUTTON BOXES & MOOTHIES PRESS RELEASE

September 2025

The Fifth Button Boxes & Moothies Festival of Free Reed Instruments will be taking place in Aberdeen on 14–16th November 2025

It is an exciting time at the Elphinstone Institute, North–East Scotland’s centre for the study, promotion and celebration of traditional culture. As part of their 30–year anniversary celebrations, Button Boxes & Moothies will be taking place once more in Aberdeen from 14–16 November 2025 after a break of 10 years. “It is wonderful to be back up and running”, says festival director Frances Wilkins, “and we have a fantastic line–up of musicians for the event, including Sandra Kerr (English concertina), Rick Epping (moothie, English concertina, and Jews harp) and Will Pound (moothie and melodeon)”.

The festival will centre around King’s College, in the heart of Old Aberdeen, with a focus on workshops, concerts, free ‘come and try’ events, sessions, talks, demonstrations and exhibits. Free reed instrument players of all ages and levels, including non–players who would like to have a go, are encouraged to take part in this rare opportunity to receive tuition in the instruments and come and try the wide array of instruments being showcased as part of the event. There are also several mixed instrument workshops for players of any instrument, whether free–reed or not, throughout the weekend.

Frances Wilkins continues, “Festival–goers will have the chance to find out more about the instruments and their music and to take part in workshops, sessions, ‘come and try’ events and concerts. Workshops cater for all abilities, whether you are a complete beginner or an experienced player. There will also be display of antique instruments and a pop–up exhibition at the venue.”

“This is a one–of–a–kind festival”, adds Elphinstone Institute Director Tom McKean “It’s a unique chance to hear world–class musicians playing concertinas, melodeons, button accordions, mouth organs and Jews harps in the beautiful setting of Old Aberdeen.”

Sandra Kerr, an outstanding musician and seasoned performer who will be attending from North–East England, says of the festival, “One of the great delights of being a musician and playing the English concertina is when other people want to learn from you. Being able to pass on new areas of repertoire or technique is enormous fun and very satisfying. I’m very much looking forward to being in Aberdeen for this event – working with players I’ve never met, and playing, performing, catching up and jamming with the amazing musicians appearing at Button Boxes & Moothies. It’s going to be great!”

Anglo concertina player Kisna Panesar, who is currently studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and has been booked to perform and teach at the festival, says, “Button Boxes & Moothies brings together wonderfully imaginative worlds. It’s a celebration of creativity and an amazing opportunity for learning. I am so privileged to be a part of this festival and can’t wait to meet everyone.”

To launch the festival the Lord Provost of Aberdeen, Dr David Cameron, will be hosting a Civic Reception at the Town House in the city centre on Friday 14 November at 3:00pm. This is a free event which can be booked via the website, with an opening address and music from some of the wonderful musicians booked for the festival.

Cllr Martin Greig, Aberdeen City Council's Cultural Spokesperson, adds, "It is great to see this event return to Aberdeen after a decade, providing opportunity for our community to come together and take part in music and tradition. I encourage everyone to get involved and enjoy what Button Boxes & Moothies has to offer."

Festival tickets are now available through the website where you will find plenty of information about the artists and a full programme of events. This can be found at www.buttonboxesandmoothies.com

Many thanks to Aberdeen City Council's Culture Investment Programme, the Friends of the Elphinstone Institute, TMSA and SC&T for supporting the event.

Editorial note

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More information and tickets are available at www.buttonboxesandmoothies.com