

## Corrina Hewat | biography

Within a few minutes of hearing her, the energy and the timing, the depth and the colour of her music will touch you. One of the leading Scottish Harp players in the world today (nominated Instrumentalist of the Year 2004 at the STMA) Corrina has toured through Europe, the Far East and Canada taking the Small Harp to a new level of excellence, combining traditional style music with contemporary attitude. She is also blessed with a stunningly earthy voice, which resonates with years of soaking up Scotland's musical tradition, while exploring contemporary elements and jazz. She is in demand as a player, composer, arranger and teacher, and her appeal grows larger as more and more people hear and meet her. She has an astonishing ability to create and collaborate with others and this has led her to recording over 30 albums in the last twelve years. She plays a Camac Aziliz Harp (she calls it 'Little Yellow') and the "Big Blue" electroharp.

Corrina Hewat is co-founder & co-musical director of the extravagant 22-piece **Unusual Suspects** - the folk big band dubbed The Scottish National Folk Orchestra *"one of the most exciting bands I've ever seen"* quote Mike Harding Radio 3. She is also a skilled and innovative composer and arranger, having written many large scale commissions, while also musically directing shows such as 'Songs of Conscience' 2007, 'Scottish Men' 2006 and the TMSA Young Trad Tour since 2005. Corrina is a founder member of distinct bands such as Bachue, Chantan and Shine and has been involved in awarding winning and pioneering shows such as My Ain Countrie and Scottish Women.

Recent projects include a duo with Kathryn Tickell, exploring the Scottish and Northumbrian Borders traditions and vocal trio Grace, Hewat, Polwart with Karine Polwart & Annie Grace. *"The world needs to hear this!"* Corrina is also developing her own one woman show for tour in 2008, incorporating a range of music, songs and stories from her background growing up in the Scottish Highlands through to her surroundings now in the Scottish Borders. She is a stunningly versatile singer *"She blends a jazz singer's flexibility, a blues singer's economy and a folk singer's heart into a style that's both natural and her very own"* with an incredible range and velvety tone while also possessing a creative and powerful technique on the harp, both on the Scottish small harp and electric harp. *"A range of expression and depth of technical assurance... dazzlingly nimble finger work and liberal deployment of the instrument's big bass end"*.

Corrina's teachers in college were Sanchia Pielou and Maire Ni Chathasaigh whose tuition and style she still refers to today. She is a core tutor on the Traditional Music Degree courses at Newcastle University and the RSAMD, as well as teaching workshops and courses on harmony singing, arranging and vocal techniques.

Her recently published music book, with accompanying CD, 'Scottish Harp' has received critical acclaim from teachers and pupils alike. It comprises of traditional-style pieces and compositions for solo harp (Taigh Na Teud music publishers: [www.scotlandsmusic.com](http://www.scotlandsmusic.com)). Her second book is due out in 2008.

She also has six 30 minute videos available for download on for intermediate players: [www.ayepod.net](http://www.ayepod.net)

### DETAILS DETAILS...

Born in Edinburgh 21st December 1970  
Brought up on the Black Isle, Ross and Cromarty, Highlands of Scotland

## TUITION...

Fortrose Academy 1981 - 88  
Clarsach tuition from Christine Martin 1983 - 84  
Feis Rois traditional weekends 1984 - 88  
Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama 1988 - 1989

City of Leeds College of Music 1990 - 93 (1st Honours Degree in Jazz & Contemporary Music on pedal harp and small harp, studied with Maire Ni Chathasaigh)

## PROFESSIONAL WORK...

**The Unusual Suspects** 2003 onwards  
**Grace, Hewat, Polwart** - vocal harmony trio with Karine Polwart & Annie Grace  
vocal/instrumental "Girly Trio" formed 200  
**Kathryn Tickell and Corrina Hewat** duo touring show 2005 onwards  
**Scottish Women** 2000 - 2003 a twenty strong cast of women and music  
**Shine** 1999 - 2003 3 vocals/2 electroharps with Mary Macmaster & Alyth McCormack  
**Chantan** 1996 - 1999 vocal trio with Christine Kydd & Elspeth Cowie  
**Bachue** 1994 - 2006 duo with David Milligan on piano, which became quartet with Donald Hay on drums & Colin Steele on trumpet  
**A Winter's Tale** 1999 - 2003 Christmas show with Gerda Stevenson, Simon Thoumire, David Milligan, Mairi Campbell and Dave Francis  
**The Two-Ring Ceilidh** 1995 - 96 two halved concert incorporating a ceilidh dance with Mairi Campbell, Dave Francis, Gill Bowman & Jock Brown  
**My Ain Countrie** 1998 - award winning Scottish Women show at Celtic Connections with Karen Matheson, Sheena Wellington, Ishbel McAskill, Wrigley Sisters, Christine Kidd  
**Seannachie** 1994 - 97 trad Scottish fiddle, harp, voices, bouzouki, guitar, bodhran

## DIRECTION MUSICAL...

**Unusual Suspects** - co-musical director with David Milligan  
**Songs of Conscience** - co-musical director with Karine Polwart - a beautiful, emotional women's show with Peggy Seeger, Laura Boosinger, Thea Gilmore, Sarah Watkins, Karen Casey; premiered at Celtic Connections 2007  
**TMSA Young Trad Tour** - finalists and winner of Hands Up For Trad BBC Young Traditional Musician of the Year tour throughout Scotland once a year  
**Scottish Men** - show with Brian McNeil, Rod Paterson, Arthur Cormack, Donnie Munro, Findlay Napier, John Morran, James Graham, Brian MacAlpine, co MD-ed with Maggie McInnes  
**Folkestra** - guest musical director of Kathryn Tickell's young folk orchestra

## COMMISSIONS...

2007 "**Lorient Suite**" a new 18 minute piece commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council for the Unusual Suspects. The premier performance was at the Year of Scotland Celebrations in the Lorient Interceltique Festival August 2007.

2007 "**The Lovely Wife O Kelso**" a new commission for the Ceol Mor band, a young students version of the Unusual Suspects, rehearsed and performed in August at the Aberdeen International Youth Festival

2007 **"The State of the Union"** -premiered on 21st July 2007 at Brampton Live  
A night of music marking the 300th anniversary of the Acts of Union (The act abolished the separate parliaments of Scotland and England and created one new parliament of Great Britain.) Suspicion and mistrust between Scotland and England had prevented the union throughout the 17th century. The Scots feared that they would simply become another region of England, being swallowed up as had happened to Wales some four hundred years earlier. For England the fear that the Scots may take sides with France and rekindle the 'Auld Alliance' was decisive. England relied heavily on Scottish soldiers and to have them turn and join ranks with the French would have been disastrous. Scottish folk were against it and fought hard but Scottish MP's were easily bribed as wealth and power is hard to turn down. And who'd want the Scots as an enemy?? It's a very interesting time in our history. You should google for more information on the Acts of Union. And it's an interesting idea to have Kathryn and myself writing a piece to mark the event. Two women, Northumbrian and Scottish, playing traditional instruments. I suppose Ken Bradburn and the Brampton Live team thought to ask us as we have a balanced view of things yet feel strongly about our own cultures, and we work well together. And we are women! Two women musical directors. It's an interesting piece. Also involved: Maddy Prior, Nancy Kerr and James Fagan, Dick Gaughan, Eddi Reader, Peter Tickell, Julian Sutton, Martin Green, Olivia Ross, Annie Grace, Rick Taylor, Donald Hay.

2005 **"The Ballad of Eppie Moray"** - a piece funded by the Women In Music commissioning Fund and the Scottish Arts Council, written specifically for the women involved in the Unusual Suspects. The tale is a dark one, telling of the forced union involving rape and marriage of Eppie Moray. Such was the time when this was 'okay' to do. But she has none of it, and escapes, damning with contempt the man who could not tame her.

2003 **"Silhouette"** - a 20-minute vocal piece, was commissioned by An Tobar, The Tobermory Arts Centre, in Mull for a special outdoor performance, premiered by the Dunedin Consort in the summer of 2003 using the old Fishermens' Pier in the centre of Tobermory as the stage. The piece is in four sections, featuring six voices and incorporating words and poems from ee cummings and Judith Jardine.

2000 **"Photons in Vapour"** - after the second performance of 'Making the Connection', I was approached to write a piece, commissioned by An Tobar, the Tobermory Arts Centre on the Isle of Mull. The piece (4 sections, 46 minutes in total) centres on local musicians. The work focuses on light and its varying roles within the community. The images were summed up in poems written by the local wordsmiths, the 'Scribe Tribe'.

1998 **"Making the Connection"** - the Celtic Connections Festival in Glasgow then commissioned me to write celebrating five years of the festival. This idea became the 'new voices' series, which has continued each year since. The piece (5 sections, 50 minutes in total) was premiered in January 1998 and then again in 2000. It was written for ten musicians, incorporating jazz, pop, classical and contemporary material on a solid traditional base.

1997 **"The Sea King's Daughter"** - a soundtrack and song settings for an audio play of George Mackay Brown's work, published by the Saltire Society.

1996 **"Song of Redshank"** - the Highland Festival commissioned me to write for their festival, a twenty-two minute long work for ten musicians, and incorporating very traditional style material with contemporary ideas.  
selected discography...

## DISCOGRAPHY...

Kathryn Tickell & Corrina Hewat the sky didn't fall - Park Records PRKCD88  
The Complete Songs of Robert Tannahill Vol. I - Brechin All Records CDBAR003  
The Unusual Suspects - Live in Scotland (Live) - Foot Stompin Records CDFSR1727  
Bachue - The Butterfly - Big Bash Records BBRC015  
Bachue - A Certain Smile - Culburnie Records CUL114D  
Bachue - Bachue Café - Highlander Music HRMCD001  
Harp House - compilation of harpists (producer) - Harp House Records HHRC001  
Corrina Hewat - My Favourite Place - Footstompin' Records FSRCD1719  
Faultlines - Karine Polwart - Neon Records 2004  
Scottish Women - Various Artistes - Greentrax CDTRAX 261  
Silhouette - performed by The Dunedin Consort - An Tobar Records TRCD 015  
Shine - Sugarcane - Chocolate Records CHOC 001CD  
Photons In Vapour Corrina Hewat & The Light Music - Tob Records TRCD007  
Scots Women - Various Artists (Live) - Greentrax CDTRAX 213  
Ishbel MacAskill - Essentially Ishbel - Ishbel MacAskill IMCD001  
Chantan - Primary Colours - Culburnie Records CUL108D  
Abby Newton - Castles, Kirks and Caves - Redwing Music RWMCD 5410  
Horse - Hindsight...is a wonderful thing - Randan RANHCDA 02  
Eric Bibb - Home To Me - Manhaton Records HATMAN2001  
Andy Thorburn - Tuath gu deas - Andy Thorburn Music ATMUSCD1  
The Complete Songs of Robert Burns Vols. IV, V, VI - Linn Records CKD 083, 086, 099  
Scottish Love Songs - Compilation - Tartan Tapes CDTT1003  
Carol Kidd - Christmas with Carol - Jazz Arena JACD1  
The Sea King's Daughter - Audio Classics - Saltire Society SSACCD001  
Feisty Besoms - Auld Flames - Feisty Besoms FB001  
Dougie Pincock - Something Blew - Greentrax CDTRAX 080  
Iain Fraser/Freeland Barbour - Northlins - Iona Records IRCD027  
Ecosse-Scotland - Compilation - Silex/Audivis YA225708

## TUTORING...

Harp tutor at the Newcastle University Traditional Applied Music Degree Course  
Harp tutor at RSAMD's Traditional Music Degree course  
Harp tutor/vocal tutor Strathclyde Uni, on Applied Music Degree course 2003 - 2005  
Guest tutor at City of Edinburgh Broughton School specialist music department  
Selkirk High Music Traditional Music School of Excellence 2000 - 2003  
Adjudicator for the New Hampshire Highland Games, USA  
Fettes College 1996 - 99  
Feis Rois 1989 - 94

## WORKSHOPS...

All workshops can be tailored for children and adults; complete beginners, post beginners, adult learners, intermediate, advanced through to professional.

### voice...

Harmony Singing Workshops - sing and be merry!  
Scots Song - dance songs to ballads  
Robert Burns - obscure to well-known selection  
Scottish Lullabies - dark tales, supernatural, stories of love & loss to dandling songs  
Technique - exercises in breathing, control, agility, tone, projection, improvisation

### harp...

Scottish tunes from airs to reels and jigs  
Composition - learning to compose, learning to arrange  
Scottish Lullabies - learn to play (and/or sing) a selection of songs nearly forgotten  
Learn to Swing - learn a different feel & timing to incorporate into your music .