

## Joy Dunlop

Born and raised in the rural village of Connel in Argyll, Joy was immersed in Gaelic culture from an early age, regularly participating in local Fèisean and Mòds where she won acclaim for both her singing, dancing and enthusiasm for the music and language. She has held the full time post of Gaelic development officer in Argyll, Bute and the Islands for **An Comunn Gàidhealach** since graduating from **Sabhal Mòr Ostaig** in 2004 with an honours degree in Gaelic Language and Culture and the Anna NicDhonnchaidh prize for promoting Gaelic in the community. Joy is well known for her commitment and dedication to the promotion and development of Gaelic and for her involvement in a wide range of activities aimed at raising the profile of the language.

A popular language teacher, Joy has taught courses for **Sabhal Mòr Ostaig**, **Cli**, **CNSA** and local Gaelic organisations, and also works as a translator and simultaneous interpreter. She gained a distinctive international perspective through a sabbatical as Gaelic Instructor-in-residence for **Fèis Mhàbu**, Cape Breton, in 2007, and through working with communities in New Zealand promoting and developing Gaelic language and song in 2008. These experiences have made her a popular guest speaker and MC for events and conferences both in the UK and abroad. Joy is also a highly sought-after local and national Mòd adjudicator for both Gaelic language and music competitions.

In her singing career so far, Joy has won numerous illustrious awards. Several times the lead vocalist of winning traditional groups at the **Pan Celtic International Festival**, she was also runner-up in the festival's International Traditional Song competition in 2005. Winning the Oban Times Gold Medal and Puir-a-Beul competitions at **The Royal National Mòd** (2006), the prestigious Oran Mòr competition (2007) and twice being runner-up in the Gold Medal series (2007, 2009) have confirmed her status as one of Gaeldom's most promising performers. A regular on the traditional music circuit, Joy is equally at ease entertaining home audiences at local cèilidhs as performing at major festivals. In recent years, she has also appeared at **Celtic Connections** (Scotland), **Celtic Colours** (Canada) and **Schotland Festival** (Netherlands) and has toured the Highlands & Islands extensively with Scottish harpist Rachel Hair and guitarist Paul Tracey. Amongst other exciting new projects, 2010 will see her touring both in the UK and abroad with material from **Dùsgadh** (Awakening); her eagerly anticipated debut album released on her own record label **Sradag Music**

In addition to her solo work, Joy is also heavily involved in Gaelic choral music as the conductor of **Còisir Cheann an Tuirc**, the award-winning Argyll male voice choir, and as a member of the infamous Argyll ladies' choir **Atomic Piseag**, who have also enjoyed impressive Mòd successes. She is both Gaelic tutor and active member of **Còisir Ghaidhlig Taigh an Uillt** (who swept the boards at the National Mòd in 2007 & 2008 in the Sheriff MacMaster competition under her tutelage) and is one-quarter of **Dealrach**, an Argyll-based female quartet who won gold on their first-ever outing at Mòd 2008.

Not confined to her vocal talents, Joy has also enjoyed competitive dance success, most notably, Traditional Inter-Celtic Dance Champion at the 2006 Pan Celtic International Festival. Currently, she is in high demand at workshops and festivals worldwide and she is always eager to meet dancers of all genres with whom to swap steps and styles. She has a particular interest in the link between step dancing and Gaelic *puirt a beul* (mouth music) and has explored this successfully in both Scotland and Nova Scotia. Past projects have not only seen her teaching & performing traditional dance but combining her step dancing & ballet expertise with break & street dancing on stage at **The Arches**, Glasgow as part of Celtic Connections' **Highland Bling** project.

Lately, Joy has become an increasingly familiar face in Gaelic broadcasting, most recently appearing on **MG ALBA's Bliadhna Mhath Ùr** show for Hogmanay 2009 and STV's primetime magazine programme **The Hour**. She has featured in music programmes **Guthan nan Gàidheal**, **Sorcha nan Reul**, **Bheir dhomh am fonn** and **Ar n-Aran Làitheil**, (which she also presented) and has been a guest speaker on current affairs programmes **Cunntas** and **Barail Bhoireannach**. She made her acting début in the BBC comedy **PC Alasdair Stiùbhart** and also featured in television specials **Na Piseagan** (BBC), **Leadaidh 's Bracaist** (BBC ALBA) and **Festival Bound** (Equator HD-Canada). A popular columnist, her writing has been commended at both the **Scottish Press Awards** and **Highlands and Islands Media Awards** and this, combined with regular stints on **Reidio nan Gàidheal**, has raised her profile as a new Gaelic voice.