

Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas workshops

- Finding your voice: nobody can be better at being “you” than you can. Learn how to speak on your instrument in an idiomatic way using vernacular language and dialects to explore regional styles from Scotland and beyond. We take a primarily Scottish approach, but the same message can be applied to all cultures and people.
- Find your inner drummer: using dance rhythms found in traditional and non-traditional music, we explore the possibilities of different approaches to rhythm on bowed stringed instruments. Learn how to make your tune come alive by becoming a better dance fiddler, and also how to be a part of the rhythm section and contribute to the group as a more well-rounded ensemble musician. Learn techniques new to the string world and develop your sense of groove.
- Working in an ensemble (for small or large groups): develop an arrangement of a set of tunes incorporating melody, rhythm, harmony, ‘horn’ parts, counterpoint, improvisation and more. We will begin with a focus on the previous two topics of language and rhythm, but expand to develop a performance-ready piece that delves into the inner workings of how to create an arrangement with shape and direction.

All of the above can be applied to those with more experience with traditional music, or to a greater variety of levels and musical backgrounds. Focus is on inclusivity...we invite all instruments, all ages, and all levels to engage at whatever their comfort zone allows. We create a safe, non-judgmental and non-competitive place to learn. Focus is on building community through music-making. All workshops are done by ear; written music can be provided at the end on request.)

- Workshop with orchestras/classical ensembles: learn some of Alasdair and Natalie’s arrangements (both orchestra with fiddle/cello soloists and string quartet works available) and learn the ins and outs of how to make them come alive through more developed linguistic and rhythmic playing.
- Creativity/improvisation: learn how to vary a melody, how to compose a tune, how to make an interesting accompaniment/second voice, and build an arrangement. Get over the tyranny of the written page!
- School performances (lecture/demo): a walking tour through the different regions of Scotland (using different regional styles and accents) and periods of Scottish musical history (baroque through modern) through performances and explanation; also including forays into other closely related North Atlantic fiddle cultures, effects of politics and religion on the music, and the history of the cello in traditional music. We also offer a program more suited to younger children including some well-loved children’s tunes from the Scottish repertoire.