

## Islay Jazz Festival

Islay is the southernmost island of the Inner Hebrides located off the West coast of Scotland and just 65 kilometers north of the Irish coast. The 620 square kilometer island is home to eight distilleries whose identities of provenance are protected under Scottish law, and claims a rich tradition of malt whisky production traceable as early as 1779. The distilleries are one of the largest employers amongst the island's population of just over 3000 inhabitants. Islay Jazz Festival is the second largest festival on Islay, after the Whisky Festival.

The festival is coordinated annually by Edinburgh-based promoters Jazz Scotland. Since 1999, the jazz festival has contributed to the island's cultural calendar and tourism industry by bringing together local, mainland and international artists and audiences in venues across the island. Festival performance spaces include distilleries, local halls, hotels, art galleries, cafes, and visitor-centres.

The production costs of Islay Jazz Festival have traditionally been met through a combination of corporate sponsorship, central (distributed through Creative Scotland) and local government funding (Argyle and Bute Council), trust awards, and ticket revenue. Black Bottle Distillery was festival sponsor from 1999 to 2009 and the Lagavulin Distillery from 2010 to the present. The island's distilleries play an intrinsic part in the festival both by providing concert venues and through corporate brand sponsorship:

Since 1999, the festival has programmed an average of just over 15 concerts per year, from a low of eight in its inaugural year to a high of 20 in 2003. In addition to Scottish-based artists, the festival has presented musicians from England, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Luxembourg and the USA, and featured a significant number of Scottish/overseas collaborations. Each year, the festival programme includes 'home-grown' talent, providing a platform for Islay's small resident community of jazz and blues musicians.

The festival presents local, UK mainland and international bands to appeal to a broad audience while taking into account differing musical tastes amongst festival-goers. Programming provides a broad spectrum of stylistic offerings from the mainstream to the experimental, singer-led to instrumental. Between 1999 – 2016 the festival presented 276 concerts featuring predominantly Scottish artists but has consistently, and increasingly, bolstered its international dimension. The festival presents both established bands, and ensembles assembled for specific events made up of visiting musicians. In published billing 64% of programmed performances were headlined by Scottish-based musicians, 16% international (incl. rest of UK), and 20% were joint headlined by Scottish and international musicians.