

Heb Celt Festival

23/07/2009

Roots music greats @ Lewis shindig

Stornoway, Lewis

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Few festivals offer the stunning setting of HebCelt. The big-top tent - an impressively strange piece of kit in its own right - is found nestled neatly under the imposing towers of Lewis Castle, overlooking Stornoway's harbour. It's a fantastic place to experience music that's worlds away from all things glitzy.

Now in its 14th year, the festival may have lacked a behemoth to rival past performers like Van Morrison or Runrig, but organisers did attract some of the best traditional musicians from around the world for the Homecoming theme.

La Bottine Souriante, giants of the Quebec music scene, return to the festival for the first time in a decade to close the opening night in spectacular style. It's impossible to imagine any band establishing a more frenetic pace than this 10-piece and, remarkably, Sandy Silva barely takes a break from her force-of-nature percussive dance.

Adam Forrest