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PRESS RELEASE - January 12, 2024 - Asheville, NC

NPR's Fiona Ritchie to host Burns Night fundraiser in Asheville for regional disaster recovery

Event: Asheville Sister Cities Inc. 2025 Robert Burns Night Supper; 5:00 - 9:30 pm Saturday, January 25, 2025; Biltmore DoubleTree (AKA DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Asheville - Biltmore) ashevillesistercities.org/burns

Introduction: The Dunkeld and Birnam, Scotland committee of [Asheville Sister Cities Inc. \(ASCI\)](http://Asheville Sister Cities Inc. (ASCI)) will be hosting a visit by Fiona Ritchie, of NPR's (National Public Radio's) award winning and long running Thistle and Shamrock Celtic roots music program. This will be the 266th celebration of Robert Burns', the Bard of Scotland, January 25, 1759 birthday

Fundraiser: Proceeds raised from 2025 Burns Night Fundraiser charity auction and raffle will fund regional hurricane disaster recovery. Proceeds from ticket sales will be contributed toward The Thistle & Shamrock Roots Music Collection at the University of North Carolina at Asheville (UNCA).

Fiona Ritchie: Ritchie, a native of Scotland, developed The Thistle & Shamrock show in 1981 at WFAE in Charlotte, North Carolina. The program was most recently heard by 237 NPR affiliate stations and has been the most listened-to Celtic music program in the world until Ritchie's retirement in September, 2024.

Dunkeld and Birnam, Scotland: Ritchie led the villages of Dunkeld & Birnam, on opposite banks of the River Tay in Perthshire, Scotland, to become Sister Cities with Asheville, NC in 2017.

Program: The evening's ceremony follows a ritual set down since the first Burns Night in 1801. Entertainment includes piper Alex Stewart, fiddler Andrew Finn Magill, and dancers from the local Asheville branch of the Carpenter Academy of Irish Dance. A Thistle & Shamrock Retrospective Interview with Fiona Ritchie will be co-hosted by Doug Orr during a cash bar reception with complimentary warm Scottish appetizers. A ticketed and optional Scotch and Spirits Tasting will be hosted by Highland Brewing's pioneering local craft brewer Oscar Wong. This Burns Night event includes a full traditional Burns Night ceremony, three course dinner, and wee drams of single malt Scotch Whisky to toast the haggis.

Burns Night: Burns Night is a worldwide celebration of Scottish heritage and traditions as represented by celebrating the birthday of Scotland's greatest poet, Robert Burns 1759-1796 and his ideals which have helped shape Scotland and the world. Western North Carolina and Asheville have strong colonial ties with the Scots. Colonial and Early-American migrants to the mountains of the southern Appalachian region brought a wealth of traditional ballads and tunes from the British Isles and Ireland, a carrying stream that merged with sounds and songs of English, German, Welsh, African American, French, and Cherokee origin.

New in 2025: New to Burns Night this year will be our much anticipated in-person visit by Fiona Ritchie. The Burns Night Fundraiser auction and raffle will be online for the first time. And for those who can't get enough Burns Night, the After-Hours Cèilidh has been added as an option.

Takeaway: We wish all to feel welcome in takin' a cup o' kindness in celebration of Robert Burns and Scottish culture regardless of one's own heritage. Join us in the fun of following a traditional Burns Night Ceremony filled with music and song for a worthy cause!

Contact: Tom Good, ASCI 2025 Robert Burns Night Supper Event Director by text at 802-793-7571 (no voicemail please) or tomgood@ecologicarchitecture.com.

Useful Links:

- A longer version of this Press Release
- ASCI 2025 Burns Night Fundraiser | Tickets Sales | Event Information
- ASCI Robert Burns Night Supper background information | Support ASCI Burns Night | Past ASCI Burns Night Fundraising Beneficiaries | Past ASCI Burns Night Highlights | ASCI Burns Night Partners | ASCI Burns Night Traditions

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