EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Edinburgh International Festival 2024 Set to Ignite Edinburgh Festival Season in its Opening Weekend

Opening Event: Where to Begin, photo credit: Jess Shurte

MEDIA IMAGES AVAILABLE HERE

2-25 AUGUST
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- The **2024 Edinburgh International Festival** begins tomorrow with the first of more than 160 events in an exhilarating 24-day celebration of opera, dance, music and theatre in Scotland's capital city. More than 2,000 internationally renowned artists from across 42 nations, including more than 1,000 Scottish artists, will perform.

- The International Festival opens with ***Opening Event: Where to Begin,*** an immersive outdoor experience in partnership with The Macallan single malt Scotch whisky. The event is set to welcome thousands in central Edinburgh, blending installation, projection and live

performance for only three nights, from **2-4 August.**

- First week highlights include: the world-premiere staged adaptation of Amy Liptrot's bestselling memoir ***The Outrun,*** the Scottish premiere of Argentinian composer Osvaldo Golijov's ***La Pasión según San Marcos*****,** and the UK production premiere of ***Carmen****,* direct from Paris's legendary opera house, Opéra-Comique.

- To ensure that cost isn't a barrier to cultural discovery, 2024 sees our most generous concessions policy to date: **50% of tickets** for the 2024 International Festival are sold at **£30 or less.** More than 4,000 **£10 Affordable Tickets** across every event in the programme have already been allocated to those who need them, and many more are still available. Tickets can be purchased from www.eif.co.uk.

1 August, Edinburgh: Tomorrow, the Edinburgh International Festival opens its 24-day programme of more than 160 events for its 77th edition. The original festival, the one that started it all in Edinburgh, runs 2-25 August, and features a hand-picked programme of the world-leading artists in theatre, dance, music and opera, framed by the theme of 'Rituals That Unite Us'.

More than 2,000 artists from across 42 nations will perform at the International Festival this August, in a major moment in the international arts calendar. Over 1,000 of these performers are from Scotland, and all five Scottish national performing arts companies are represented in this year's programme.

In 2024, Festival Director Nicola Benedetti's second year, the International Festival brings **5 world premieres**, **13 UK and Scottish premieres**, and **2 European premieres** to Edinburgh, including an extensive opera programme, with promenade opera *Oedipus Rex* in the National Museum of Scotland and two staged operas from major international companies: *Carmen* from the Opéra Comique and *The Marriage of Figaro* from Komische Oper Berlin.

Kicking off the International Festival, **Opening Event: *Where to Begin*** invites nearly 10,000 visitors and locals alike to ignite their festival season with a communal experience which evokes the mythology and history of Scotland's rich heritage. The new event in Edinburgh's festival tradition will transform the grounds and magnificent renaissance architecture of George Heriot's with immersive installation, live performance and video projection.

Presented in partnership with The Macallan, with creative producer Pinwheel and support from EventScotland, the Opening Event runs across three nights from Friday 2 August to Sunday 4 August. Tickets are available online for £15 and concessions from £7.50 are available.

The first week of the International Festival also features not-to-be-missed performances from some of the world's leading artists, including:

- The world premiere of ***The Outrun,*** the stage adaptation of Amy Liptrot's best-selling memoir. Brought to life by Olivier Award-winning playwright **Stef Smith,** director **Vicky**

Featherstone and Edinburgh's producing theatre **The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company,** *The Outrun* will run throughout August at the Church Hill Theatre.

- The most popular French opera in the world, ***Carmen*****,** direct from **Opéra-Comique** – the Parisian opera house where it all began. The new production of Georges Bizet's masterpiece is brought to the stage by director **Andreas Homoki**, the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra**, and Music Director of the Opéra-Comique, **Louis Langrée,** with an international cast led by **Gaëlle Arquez** as Carmen; runs 4-8 August at the Festival Theatre.

- A two-part opening weekend exploring different ways of telling the same story, with two distinct interpretations of the Passion: Latin American and Afro-Cuban musical styles mix with contemporary classical expressions in the Scottish premiere of **Osvaldo Golijov's** ***La Pasión según San Marcos,*** on 3 August at Usher Hall. On 4 August at Usher Hall, the **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra,** their Chief Conductor **Ryan Wigglesworth** and **the Edinburgh Festival Chorus** take on Johann Sebastian Bach's masterpiece, the ***St Matthew Passion.***

- The Scottish premiere of ***Please right back,*** *a*ward-winning company **1927's** new family production combining fantastical animations with bold storytelling to explore the effects of the criminal justice system; runs 2-11 August at The Studio.

- The UK premiere of ***Penthesilea,*** **Internationaal Theater Amsterdam's** production of Heinrich von Kleist's classic. Ferocious and emotionally charged, *Penthesilea* is a powerful fusion of a rock concert and an ancient tragic love story, likened to Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet;* runs 3-6 August at The Lyceum.

2024's programme also offers an increased range of innovative and informal audience experiences, designed to create a closer union between artists and audiences.

Beanbag concerts are back after popular demand, designed to immerse audiences in an orchestral experience. Inspired by the work of Budapest Festival Orchestra founder and conductor Iván Fischer, audiences can take in the thrill and drama of the orchestra from the comfort of a beanbag or choose standard seating in the circle or balcony. Beanbag seating is still available for concerts by Brazil's **Ilumina,** the **Edinburgh Festival Chorus** and the **European Union Youth Orchestra** conducted by Gianandrea Noseda**.**

The Hub, the International Festival's home on the Royal Mile, once again hosts the most intimate performances in informal surroundings. During August, The Hub is home to The Hub Club Cafe (11am-6.30pm; food service until 5pm) & Bar (6.30pm - late), with drop-in open-doors rehearsals and 'Ask the Artist' moments on select days. The Hub music series is truly international – spanning Scotland, Ireland, Wales, India, China, Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, US, Germany, Egypt, Estonia and West Africa, with these artists sharing their musical heritage, cultures and rituals.

Edinburgh International Festival Director, Nicola Benedetti said:
"As we raise the curtain to open this year's Edinburgh International Festival, we're reminded of the power of art to unite and inspire us all. One of the most moving things in the world, to me, is to see mass, collective effort at work. Each person adding their expertise and experience to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts – and this year's International Festival programme is the epitome of such a thing. I can't wait for us all to come together this month, to seek, feel and discover something new."

The 77th Edinburgh International Festival continues to 25 August. To purchase tickets and for more information, visit www.eif.co.uk.

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The full 2024 programme can be found at www.eif.co.uk or for an online brochure, see here.

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Media images can be found here.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Edinburgh International Festival
The original festival. We're the one that started it all, the igniting spark that established Edinburgh as the world's Festival City. Founded in 1947, the International Festival was the inspired idea of Rudolf Bing, a cultural pioneer and Jewish refugee, working with a group of civic and artistic leaders. Together, they created a festival that transcends political boundaries through a global celebration of the performing arts.

For 77 years our hand-picked programme of world-leading dance, opera, music and theatre has continued to bring people of different cultures and viewpoints together every August. Meanwhile, our sister festivals have grown up around us – each of them contributing to the atmosphere of unparalleled excitement that transforms the city each summer.

The next International Festival takes place 2-25 August 2024, under the direction of Festival Director and Scottish violinist Nicola Benedetti. Benedetti's vision is to create the deepest level of experience, through the highest quality of art, for the broadest possible audience.

Shining far beyond what you see on stage, we also offer year-round pathways for people of all ages and backgrounds to discover and participate in live performance, focusing on youth, community and industry connections.

Edinburgh International Festival is supported by Creative Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council. This year's programme is also supported by the UK Government.

For more information visit www.eif.co.uk.

Membership at Edinburgh International Festival
Membership starts from £60 and includes priority booking, plus access to backstage tours and rehearsals during the Festival. For more information visit www.eif.co.uk/membership.

About The Macallan
The Macallan is renowned worldwide for its extraordinary single-malt whiskies. Two centuries have passed since Alexander Reid, founder of The Macallan, distilled the first batch of whisky in his curiously small stills in Speyside, Scotland, in 1824, beginning the extraordinary legacy of the single malt Scotch whisky.

An obsession with quality and craftsmanship is the hallmark of The Macallan. The outstanding quality and distinctive character of each whisky is influenced by exceptional oak casks seasoned with sherry wine - a commitment to natural colour underpinned by mastery. Designed by internationally acclaimed architects, The Macallan Distillery is located on a beautiful 485-acre Estate and takes inspiration from the surrounding ancient Scottish hills.

The past 200 years have been a prologue for everything that is still to come. This is a journey through time. This is The Macallan, 200 Years Young. Crafted without compromise. Please savour The Macallan responsibly. For further information visit https://www.themacallan.com/en and become a member of The Macallan Society to explore the stories behind the whiskies.

About Creative Scotland
Creative Scotland is the public body that supports culture and creativity across all parts of Scotland, distributing funding provided by the Scottish Government and The National Lottery. Further information at creativescotland.com. Follow us on X, Facebook and Instagram. Learn more about the value of art and creativity in Scotland and join in at www.ourcreativevoice.scot