2025 Edinburgh International Festival Sees Fullest Theatres and Concert Halls in More Than a Decade

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- The 2025 Edinburgh International Festival programme was received with record enthusiasm this year, as **88% of all the tickets were sold**, filling theatres and concert halls to **the highest percentage in over a decade**. More than half the performances across the programme sold out and the programme received critical acclaim with **81% 4* and 5* reviews**.

- **The most international audience in recent years - from 91 countries** - flocked to the International Festival this summer. Drawn by more than **2,000 artists and participants from across 41 countries,** audiences experienced the world's greatest **theatre, dance, music and opera**, often in unconventional settings.

- The Festival was **more inclusive and affordable than ever**, with its sold-out first-ever dementia-friendly concert, the highest number of discount tickets issued to D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent audience members and record

subscriptions to the Festival's free 'Access Pass', and **half of all tickets priced at £30 or less.**

25 August, Edinburgh: The 2025 Edinburgh International Festival concluded yesterday after an extraordinary three-week celebration of opera, dance, music and theatre in Scotland's capital. The third under the leadership of Festival Director and Scottish violinist **Nicola Benedetti,** this year's Festival was distinguished by a bold programme that both challenged and rewarded audiences. Over 2,000 artists from across 41 nations shared a range of perspectives, taking to stages in unconventional formats and settings across the city.

Over 111,000 audience members attended from 91 countries to enjoy the finest and most exciting performers from across the globe, including 7 world premieres, 8 UK and Scottish premieres, and 2 European premieres. Kicking off with the world premiere of blockbuster play *Make It Happen,* which alone was attended by over 22,000 people, other highlights included the eight-hour choral epic *The Veil of The Temple;* an Australian circus reimagining of opera *Orpheus and Eurydice;* and Nederlands Dans Theater's extraordinary *Figures in Extinction*. The overall quality of the programme was recognised by audiences and critics alike, with **81% of starred reviews receiving 4 or 5 star ratings** from critics and exceptional sales across the programme, with 66 sell out performances, and 88% of the total tickets available were issued.

Maintaining its industry-leading concessions, the International Festival prioritised affordability, with targeted pricing initiatives for those who need it most. **Half of all tickets were priced £30 or under**, including over 5,000 £10 tickets which were offered across every performance in the programme. In partnership with Tickets for Good, over 1,000 tickets were also donated to NHS staff, charity workers and low-income benefit recipients.

Expanding the Festival's offering to the broadest possible audience, this year saw the first-ever dementia-friendly concert sell out as well as 18 performances and workshops in healthcare and community settings across the city. Exceeding 2024 totals, **7,271 free and heavily discounted tickets were issued to D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergen**t people and 763 new audience members signed up for the free Access Pass, bringing **total membership to a new high of over 2,00**0.

This year the International Festival also championed youth and emerging talent, creating pathways into transformative cultural experiences. A **record-breaking 2,695 tickets were issued to young people** from across Scotland to attend performances for free through the Young Musician's Pass, as well as hundreds of Edinburgh's secondary school pupils who deepened their engagement with the arts through performances and workshops. 24 Rising Star artists collaborated with International Festival mentors and

performers on stage this year, contributing to a cohort of 45 early career classical musicians who have been supported with professional development opportunities since 2023.

In 2025, the **Edinburgh Festival Chorus celebrated 60 years** as the beating heart of the International Festival. Each year, non-professional singers from across Scotland come together to perform cornerstone works with some of the world's greatest soloists, conductors and orchestras. This year, the **160 volunteer chorus members performed for 10,000 attendees** in a range of events including the monumental Opening Concert *The Veil of the Temple,* two performances as part of the London Symphony Orchestra residency, and the Closing Concert, *Mendelssohn's Elijah*. Inspired by their dedication, the 2025 programme offered an open invitation for people from all walks of life to come and sing: *The Big Singalong* in Princes St Gardens welcomed thousands to join Scottish legend Dougie MacLean in a rousing rendition of *Caledonia,* and **750 amateur singers enjoyed a full-day workshop** taking on highlights from Mendelssohn's epic *Elijah*.

Festival Director, Nicola Benedetti said: *"This year's International Festival has been one of extraordinary contrasts, from grandeur and scale to intimacy and informality. Through the theme The Truth We Seek, we were determined to challenge as well as entertain. In presenting innovative and risk-taking work we were able to spark debate, dialogue, and a healthy friction that audiences responded to in unprecedented numbers.*

"I've seen this year how art can build bridges, change minds and find connection in a world that so desperately needs it. This Festival reminded us why we gather, why we create, and why we believe."

Chief Executive, Francesca Hegyi said "*This year's International Festival has been a remarkable celebration of ideas, welcoming audiences from across Scotland and 91 other countries. Its success reaffirms Edinburgh's place as the world's leading Festival City, and the International Festival itself as a global cultural beacon each August. Our commitment to accessibility, youth engagement and artistic excellence has never been stronger, from our sell-out first-ever dementia-friendly concert to record-breaking take-up of the Young Musician's Pass."*

"The International Festival is not only a showcase of world-class performance, but also a vital meeting place for cultures, ideas and audiences worldwide. It's this collection of talent and annual exchange of ideas that sets it apart on the global stage."

– ENDS –

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Edinburgh International Festival

Edinburgh International Festival is the original festival. It's the one that started it all, the igniting spark that established Edinburgh as the world's Festival City.

The next International Festival takes place in 2026, under the direction of Festival Director and Scottish violinist Nicola Benedetti. Benedetti's vision for the International Festival is to create the deepest level of experience, through the highest quality art, for the broadest possible audience.

The Edinburgh International Festival was founded in 1947, 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.

Over the following 77 years the International Festival's 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, the International Festival's sister festivals have grown up around it – each of them contributing to the atmosphere of unparalleled excitement that transforms the city each summer.

Shining far beyond what you see on stage, the International Festival also offers year-round pathways for people of all ages and backgrounds to discover and participate in live performance. Learn more at **eif.co.uk/about .**

Membership at Edinburgh International Festival

As a charity, the Festival relies on support from members, donors, funders and partners to fulfil our mission and vision. Membership starts from £60 and includes perks such as priority booking, plus access to backstage tours and rehearsals during the Festival. For more information visit **www.eif.co.uk/membership.**