EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

‘All Rise’ for Edinburgh International Festival 2026

Members of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra play for the launch of Edinburgh International Festival, photo by Jess Shurte

MEDIA IMAGES AVAILABLE HERE
7–30 AUGUST 2026
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- **The 2026 Edinburgh International Festival begins tomorrow** with the first of 147 performances, bringing world-class artists across music, theatre, opera and dance to Edinburgh for 24 days. Embracing the theme **All Rise**, this year's International Festival turns its attention to the United States, featuring **the largest representation of American artists in the Festival’s history.**

- In the opening weekend, audiences can see some of the best live performance in the world: the Festival debut of the legendary **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis**; the UK premiere of *A Trial – After An Enemy of the People,* a modern take on Ibsen’s classic with Brazilian star **Wagner Moura;** and **Together We Rise**, a free, family-friendly celebration in Princes Street Gardens uniting over 300 performers in the sounds of the United States and Scotland. Tickets can be purchased from www.eif.co.uk.

- The International Festival also returns to the 120-year-old **King’s Theatre**

after a major refurbishment, with performances including landmark America play *Angels in America,* Geoff Sobelle's wry portrayal of the American dream in *Clown Show* and an inaugural discussion event, the Global Ideas Stage.

- This year the International Festival is operating a 'Lights Down, Phones Off' policy, asking audiences to switch phones off during performances and rewarding focus with deep connection between artist and audience.

6 August, Edinburgh: Tomorrow, Edinburgh transforms into a world-stage, as the **Edinburgh International Festival** launches with a 24-day global celebration of world-class opera, theatre, music and dance. **Over 2,000 artists from 46 countries** will take part, including more than 700 from Scotland, in 147 performances across the city.

Under Festival Director and celebrated Scottish violinist **Nicola Benedetti,** this year's International Festival theme **All Rise** is a rallying cry for collaboration, resilience and ascendance. Marking the 250th anniversary of American independence, the 2026 programme offers a multifaceted examination of the USA featuring the Festival's **largest-ever representation of American artists.**

Opening the 2026 theatre programme, renowned Brazilian director **Christiane Jatahy** teams up with Brazilian star **Wagner Moura,** fresh from his Best Actor Academy Award nomination for *The Secret Agent,* to reimagine Ibsen's classic in *A Trial - After An Enemy of the People.* Each performance will be unique, with audience members forming a jury to decide the fate of Moura's Thomas Stockmann as he battles to uncover a water pollution scandal.

The International Festival's first-ever jazz residency with the legendary **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra** bursts into Edinburgh with four concerts, marking a historic moment as **Wynton Marsalis** prepares to step down after four decades as its founding artistic director. The residency launches with Marsalis' epic symphony *All Rise,* which has inspired this year's Festival theme, and a world-exclusive collaboration with virtuoso pianist **Yuja Wang**, in a not-to-be-missed programme specially arranged for Wang's charismatic artistry to combine with the jazz orchestra's infectious spontaneity and flair.

Further residencies see the LA Phil take to the stage in their final tour with superstar conductor **Gustavo Dudamel**, before the inimitable **Berliner Philharmonike**r brings the Festival to a close.

The world premiere of *The Galloping Cure*, part of the Anderson Opera Series, sees **Edinburgh International Festival, Scottish Opera** and **Opera Ventures** reunite with the creative forces behind *Breaking the Waves* – Grammy-nominated composer **Missy Mazzoli**, writer **Royce Vavrek** and director **Tom Morris** – in a contemporary

and compelling new opera that tackles themes of addiction that have gripped too many communities around the world.

World-class artists from across genres include the European premiere of *Mere Mortals* from **San Francisco Ballet,** a fusion of classical technique and cutting-edge visuals, with a live score performed by the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** and electronic musician **Floating Points**; in theatre, the newly redeveloped **King's Theatre** reopens with two productions offering incisive reflections on America: **Internationaal Theater Amsterdam's** epic five-hour staging of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America,* the epoch-defining work of the AIDS crisis, and **Geoff Sobelle'**s *Clown Show,* a darkly satirical portrait of the modern American Dream.

Across the opening weekend, audiences will gather for **Together We Rise**, a family-friendly, free celebration in the scenic Princes Street Gardens, where over 300 performers from Scotland and the US come together for an afternoon of music and dance, closing with a finale inspired by Wynton Marsalis's *All Rise.* This event is presented with support from VisitScotland.

Other events for families include the Scottish premiere of *Hostile*, a one-man Spaghetti Western, a Family Concert from the inspirational **Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA)** alongside their Scottish peers **Big Noise**, conducted by **Gustavo Dudamel,** and the International Festival's interactive workshops for children and families, the **Art of Listening,** in Space @ The Broomhouse Hub.

The International Festival also creates a space for shared reflection on today's issues. The inaugural **Global Ideas Stage,** inspired by the Scottish Enlightenment and this year's Festival theme, features surprise performances from stars across the programme and conversations between extraordinary thinkers and cultural leaders **Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown**, filmmaker **Ken Burns,** lawyer and social justice activist **Bryan Stevenson** and journalist **Amy Goodman,** alongside curators **Nicola Benedetti**, Harvard University professor and author **Sarah Lewis** and **Professor Adam Dixon** of Panmure House.

Complementing several of the American stories told on stages, **The Legacy Museum** brings its first-ever international exhibition from Montgomery, Alabama to the University of Edinburgh's Playfair Library, in a free and open presentation of the Equal Justice Initiative's work confronting the history and legacy of slavery in America.

Nicola Benedetti, Festival Director, Edinburgh International Festival *said**:***
"Our 2026 Edinburgh International Festival is an invitation to All Rise. It's a rallying cry to artists and audiences to stand with us, in our belief that through artistic endeavour we will see each other more truthfully and more tolerantly.

"As we mark 250 years since the Declaration of Independence, we've put America

centre stage across our programme. Over 2,000 artists from across the world in opera, music, theatre and dance bring their voices to the stage, meeting complexity with curiosity rather than certainty.

"Over the next three weeks, this city becomes a place to gather, to question, and to imagine differently. We'll rise together, through the dark and the dazzling, the difficult and the transformative, in celebration of artistic excellence and the resilience of the human spirit."

Francesca Hegyi, Chief Executive, Edinburgh International Festival said:
"Every August, Edinburgh becomes a meeting point for the world, and this year we bring together artists from 46 countries in our city, in a shared act of gathering and exchange that few cities can offer. Our Festival is a statement of intent - that culture can bring the world together when so much else is pulling it apart. Presenting world-class artists on a world stage is what this Festival was built to do, and with the scale of this year's offering I'm more excited than ever to see it happen."

Councillor Margaret Graham, Culture and Communities Convener said:
"The International Festival continues to innovate, inspire and expand, and I can't wait for the 2026 edition to begin. From jazz pioneers through to epic theatre and opera performances, free outdoor events for families and much more – there is truly something for everyone.

"Again, I'm pleased that the International Festival has retained its commitment to bringing their programme to as broad a range of audiences as possible. There are a host of discounted ticket options available for young people, arts workers, and those with disabilities.

"We're proud to support one of our city's true institutions, and I have no doubt this year will be every bit as fascinating, captivating and enthralling as ever."

Dana MacLeod, Executive Director of Arts, Communities and Inclusion at Creative Scotland said:
"We'd like to extend a warm welcome to all the visiting international artists, this is such an exciting time where the world's eyes are on Edinburgh and the Edinburgh International Festival illuminates the city with productions of scale and mastery, inviting Scottish artists to shine their light on the largest stages in front of a global audience."

The 2026 edition of the Edinburgh International Festival takes place from 7-30th August. Programme information and tickets are available at www.eif.co.uk.

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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.

This year's International Festival takes place 7–30 August 2026, under the direction of Festival Director and Scottish violinist Nicola Benedetti. Benedetti's vision for the 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 79 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 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, and access to backstage tours and rehearsals during the Festival. In addition to membership, the Festival appreciates donations of any level—and for a limited time, a generous donor is matching all donations 1:1, so every gift creates double the impact. For more information visit www.eif.co.uk/membership.

About VisitScotland
VisitScotland is Scotland's national tourism and events organisation. Its core purpose is to drive the visitor economy, growing its value in Scotland. As an economic growth agency, VisitScotland's activity focuses on three key priorities – market development, place development and business and experience development.

VisitScotland's work helps deliver the ambitions of the national tourism strategy, Scotland Outlook 2030, for Scotland to be a world leader in 21st century tourism, and Scotland's National Events Strategy 2024 - 2035. It leverages tourism and

events as a force for good for all of Scotland's people and places and builds Scotland's international profile as a leading place to visit, live, work, study and do business.

For VisitScotland's press releases, tourism statistics and frequently asked questions go to visitscotland.org or follow us on @VisitScotland on LinkedIn. For holiday information on Scotland go to visitscotland.com.

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 Creative Scotland on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.