

## Edinburgh International Festival's 2024 Programme Brings Audiences and Artists Closer Together Than Ever Before



Festival Director, Nicola Benedetti, celebrates the launch of the 2024 Edinburgh International Festival with dancer Aakash Odedra and musicians Calum MacCrimmon and Conal McDonagh from Breabach at the National Museum of Scotland. Photo by Mihaela Bodlovic

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**2-25 AUGUST**

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- The **Edinburgh International Festival** unveils an expansive programme of world-leading opera, music, theatre and dance from **2-25 August 2024**, when the original festival that defines Edinburgh as the world's Festival City returns for another year.
- This is the second year under the helm of Festival Director and Scottish violinist, **Nicola Benedetti**. **'Rituals That Unite Us'** is the theme underpinning the 2024 Edinburgh International Festival, responding to an overwhelming desire for togetherness from artists and audiences following on from 2023's question 'Where Do We Go From Here?'.
- From **immersive beanbag concerts** and **virtual reality** to **drop-in rehearsals** and a **site-specific promenade opera**, the 2024 programme is defined by a deepened commitment to creating a closer union between audiences and artists through innovative and informal experiences.
- To reach the broadest possible audience, **50% of tickets** for the 2024 International Festival will be sold at **£30 or under**, free tickets are available for young musicians, and **£10 Affordable Tickets** will be available for **every performance** in the 2024 programme.

**Classical Music:** Yuja Wang, Elim Chan, Marin Alsop, Jakub Józef Orliński, Alison Balsom, Hilary Hahn, Dame Sarah Connolly, Ian Bostridge, Steven Osborne, Nicola Benedetti, Maxim Emelyanychev, Sir Mark Elder, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Sir Donald Runnicles, Gianandrea Noseda, Jennifer Stumm, Thierry Fischer, Philharmonia Orchestra, Bamberger Symphoniker, Ilumina, The Hallé, European Union Youth Orchestra,

**Opera:** Malin Byström, Opéra-Comique, Komische Oper Berlin, Scottish Opera, Kirill Serebrennikov, Sir Andrew Davis, James Gaffigan, Saimir Pirgu, Golda Schultz

**Theatre and Dance:** Internationaal Theater Amsterdam, Jack Lowden, Crystal Pite, Grupo Corpo, Aakash Odedra, David Ireland, Vicky Featherstone, Stef Smith, 1927, Eline Arbo, Christiane Jatahy, Scott Silven, Teatro La Plaza

**Contemporary Music:** Cat Power, Bat for Lashes, Chilly Gonzales, Youssou N'Dour, The Magnetic Fields, The Grit Orchestra, Tirzah, Jordan Rakei, Balimaya Project, Endea Owens, Domo Branch

**Celtic Music:** Breabach, Mànran, Ceilidh Trail, Cätlin and Marko Mägi, Finlay MacDonald and Ali Hutton, Goitse, VRi

**Scottish companies and ensembles:** Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Chorus, National Theatre of Scotland, Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh, Scottish Opera, National Youth Choir of Scotland, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Edinburgh Festival Chorus, Scottish Ballet

**7 March, Edinburgh:** From **2-25 August 2024**, Edinburgh International Festival presents a hand-picked selection of leading international and local artists in the world's Festival City, with 24 days of world-class opera, dance, music and theatre.

The 2024 programme comprises 161 performances from over **2000 artists** across **42 nations**, all joined under the theme, '**Rituals That Unite Us**'. The theme responds to an overwhelming desire for togetherness from artists and audiences following on from 2023's question 'Where Do We Go From Here?'. Reasserting the value of shared experiences, the 2024 International Festival celebrates the practices, traditions and festivities that give us meaning and connect us – as a festival, a city, and as a society.

The second year under Festival Director and Scottish violinist **Nicola Benedetti**, the 2024 programme offers an increased range of innovative and informal audience experiences, designed to create closer union between artists and audiences.

Audiences can enjoy a virtual reality experience filmed within an orchestra, a site-specific promenade opera and, by popular demand, an expanded programme of beanbag concerts placing the audience among performers to experience music in a unique way. The programme also features an all-ages family concert, a participatory dance and music work outside The Scottish Parliament, and post-show talks with artists in **The Hub**, returning with a bigger programme as the International Festival's home and 'green room'. This year the venue will be open to the public for informal dining, drop-in rehearsals and Up Late performances.

There is also a deepened commitment to reach the broadest possible audience, with **50% of tickets** for the 2024 International Festival to be sold at **£30 or under**, thousands of free tickets available for young musicians, and **£10 Affordable Tickets** available for **every performance** in the 2024 programme.

Year round, the International Festival offers three pathways for people of all ages and backgrounds to make the most of their creative potential and create a growing social impact in Scotland. Underpinning the 2024 Festival is an ambition to deepen connections with young people, communities and the arts industry, from a youth takeover day and opportunities for emerging talent to a first-time partnership with an

Edinburgh community space and pop-up performances in NHS healthcare settings.

Highlights of the programme include:

- Two world premiere theatre productions from Scottish creatives: ***The Fifth Step***, a thrilling new play written by **David Ireland**, directed by **Finn den Hertog** and starring BAFTA-nominated Scottish actor **Jack Lowden**; and the stage adaptation of Amy Liptrot's bestselling memoir, ***The Outrun***, brought to life by Oliver Award-winning playwright **Stef Smith**, director **Vicky Featherstone** and Edinburgh's producing theatre, **The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company**.
- Five extraordinary operas, of which three are staged and two are performed in concert, including **Opéra Comique's** production of Bizet's *Carmen* with **Gaëlle Arquez** in the title role; and **Komische Oper Berlin's** production of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, directed by **Kirill Serebrennikov**. A new production of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* by **Scottish Opera** takes over the **National Museum of Scotland**, performed in promenade with a 100-strong community chorus from across Scotland.
- A two-part opening weekend exploring different ways of telling the same great 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***, and 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*, in Mendelssohn's 1841 version.
- The return of beanbag concerts, inspired by Budapest Festival Orchestra's founder Iván Fischer's shows last year, with the audience seated on beanbags to experience classical music in a unique way. A variety of musical performances include family-friendly presentations from **European Union Youth Orchestra** with **Gianandrea Noseda**, and **Barokksolistene's *The Alehouse Sessions***, transforming the Usher Hall into a 17th-century English tavern, complete with sea shanties and folk-favourites.
- The **Opening Event** – a large-scale outdoor opening event for 10,000 people evoking the mythology and history of Scotland's rich heritage, in collaboration with single malt Scotch Whisky, **The Macallan**, with creative producer **Pinwheel**. Further details will be announced closer to the event.
- The **Philharmonia Orchestra** in residency, including performances of Verdi's *Requiem* (conducted by **Sanntu-Matias Rouvali**) and the International Festival's Closing Concert, Strauss's *Capriccio* (conducted by **Sir Andrew Davis**), with **Malin Byström**. The Philharmonia also present the UK premiere of **Julia Wolfe's *Fire in my Mouth***, a multimedia performance conducted by **Marin Alsop**, with the **National Youth Choir of Scotland**.
- A stellar dance and theatre offering full of UK, European and World Premieres with leading creatives and companies such as **Internaational Theater Amsterdam**, **Crystal Pite**, **Kidd Pivot**, **Grupo Corpo**, **Aakash Odedra**, **National Theatre of Scotland**, **Jack Lowden**, **1927**, **Teatro La Plaza**, **Émilie Monnet**, **Waira Nina**, **Christiane Jatahy** and more.
- The **Bamberger Symphoniker** in residence with conductor **Jakub Hruša** for three performances that include works by Brahms, Dvořák and Hans Rott, and a family-friendly explainer event, *Beyond the Score*, taking a deep dive into Dvořák's *New World Symphony*.

- A final residency with **Ilumina**, the São Paulo-based artist collective founded by violinist **Jennifer Stumm**. Known for their model of 21st century creativity and artist-led advancement of diverse talent, their first visit to the International Festival sees them give two concerts with the audience seated on beanbags and two performances in The Hub.
- Projects which go beyond the performances on stage with an ambition to create a growing social impact in Scotland through the performing arts, include: a first-time **Community Connections Hub**, inviting audiences to experience the Philharmonia Orchestra in Virtual Reality within their own community space; **Culture Clubs** bringing together community groups to explore 'Rituals that Unite Us' through a shared meal and performance; **pop-up performances** in NHS healthcare settings; a **Youth Takeover Day** for senior pupils in Edinburgh schools; and schools performances and workshops across music, opera, theatre and dance for secondary school pupils.
- A contemporary music programme including gifted singer-songwriter **Cat Power**; indie-pop sensation **Bat for Lashes**; polymath composer and piano personality **Chilly Gonzales**; beloved orchestral-pop group **The Magnetic Fields**; one of the most famous voices in African music, **Youssou N'Dour**; the mighty 80-piece contemporary Scottish **GRIT Orchestra**; South London electronic singer-songwriter **Tirzah**; a blend of West African folkloric music, the sounds of Black London and the London jazz scene with **Balimaya Project**; and a signature mix of electronic and soul from New Zealand-born **Jordan Rakei**.
- Leading soloists include **Dame Sarah Connolly**, **Yuja Wang**, **Golda Schultz**, **Alison Balsom**, **Hilary Hahn**, **Jakub Józef Orliński**, **Sheku Kanneh-Mason**, **Ian Bostridge**, **Steven Osborne** and more.
- **The Hub**, the International Festival's HQ on the Royal Mile, is once again home to the most intimate performances and discussions from virtuosic musicians sharing their respective culture, traditions and rituals through music and instrumentation. A programme of leading Celtic musicians includes Irish quintet **Goitse**, an International Festival debut from Welsh folk band **VRi** and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **Fèis Rois' Ceilidh Trail**. Further across the globe, innovative musicians from Brazil, China, America, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia, West Africa and India come to Edinburgh in a truly international programme.

As part of the International Festival's ongoing commitment to accessibility, the 2024 programme includes 25 accessible performances, including ten audio described performances, five BSL interpreted performances, and nine captioned performances. The concession ticket for D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people is increased from 30% to 50% off all full price tickets, with options for a free essential companion ticket still available where required. The types of accessible seating options held for members of the free Access Pass initiative has also been expanded to include aisle seats and seats with additional leg room, across all Festival venues.

General booking for the 2024 International Festival opens on **Thursday 21 March**, with tickets currently on-sale to Members and supporters.

**Nicola Benedetti, Festival Director, Edinburgh International Festival** said: "As we join forces with the world's greatest artists and bring them here to Edinburgh, we do so with a deeper dedication to our audience. This year the Edinburgh International Festival inaugurates new and reimagined rituals, honouring tradition and innovation, to bind us closer together. We invite you to seek and gather with us this August – there is always something new to discover."

**Culture and Communities Convener, Councillor Val Walker** said: "It's fantastic to see the 2024 programme for the Edinburgh International Festival. This promises to be a unique and exciting chapter in the Festival's rich history with over 2000 of the world's extraordinary artists performing here this August.

"It's particularly encouraging to see initiatives such as making free tickets available for young musicians, and £10 Tickets available for all performances. Given we are in the midst of a challenging cost of living crisis and our festivals have a key role in providing us all with opportunities to enjoy exceptional and entertaining experiences, these will hopefully contribute towards the goal of choice and access for everyone in our city. The International Festival is an integral part of the Capital's cultural calendar and as a Council we're proud to support it."

**Kaukab Stewart, Scottish Government Minister for Culture and International Development**, said: "As we raise the curtain on another Edinburgh International Festival, we're reminded of the power of art to unite and inspire us all. More than 2,000 artists from 42 countries will exhibit their talents, and these extraordinary performances from a diverse range of cultures and traditions reaffirms Scotland's place as the perfect stage to host major events.

"As the new Minister for Culture, I'm proud to welcome the world to Scotland for the International Festival, and I'm looking forward to enjoying an abundance of exceptional entertainment taking place on our doorstep."

**Arts and Heritage Minister Lord Parkinson** said: "For more than three quarters of a century, the Edinburgh International Festival has provided a platform for the world-class music and performing arts we are so proud to have in this country, as well as for brilliant artists and musicians from across the globe. The millions of people who flock to Edinburgh to enjoy and take part in it each year enrich our lives and fuel our shared economy. That's why the UK Government is so proud to support it.

"The arts have a unique power to bring us together, and to help us see the world through others' eyes. I'm delighted that, this year, the International Festival will focus on the rituals that unite us – and look forward to seeing the diverse and dynamic work that theme inspires."

**Iain Munro, Chief Executive, Creative Scotland** said: "Nicola Benedetti continues to drive the Edinburgh International Festival programme forward in her second year as Director with another inspired artistic offering. This year's thematic focus on unity and togetherness provides opportunities to blur the lines between artist and audience, promoting connection and communal experience in our increasingly divided world. The International Festival continues to earn its reputation as a shining light in the global cultural calendar by uniting people through great art."

#### **Further programme information by genre:**

##### **Classical Music**

Edinburgh International Festival welcomes the world's top orchestras and musicians for 22 spectacular symphonic concerts at Usher Hall and 19 intimate morning recitals at The Queen's Hall.

The symphonic concert series revolves around residencies from three outstanding orchestras and ensembles. Offering unique perspectives on how we experience a contemporary symphony orchestra, these residencies allow for a more profound engagement with Edinburgh communities, from primary school pupils to emerging artists, extending the orchestra's presence beyond Usher Hall. This approach also lowers the environmental footprint for each performance by the visiting artists.

**The Philharmonia Orchestra**, led by conductor **Santu-Matias Rouvali**, is a self-governing orchestra, which pioneers the use of technology to reach broader audiences for orchestral music. The Orchestra is in

residence at the International Festival for three contrasting concerts, a family concert and a VR experience, including the UK premiere of Julia Wolfe's ***Fire in My Mouth***: trailblazing conductor **Marin Alsop**, the Philharmonia and the female voices of the **National Youth Choir of Scotland** unite for an impassioned elegy for the 146 garment workers who were victims of New York's 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. Here every victim is represented by a choir member, in a multimedia performance featuring scenic, lighting and video designs by Tony Award-winner **Jeff Sugg**.

For the International Festival's Closing Concert, Richard Strauss's final opera ***Capriccio*** is presented in concert, with a superb cast led by **Malin Byström**. British conductor and International Festival regular **Sir Andrew Davis** made his professional operatic debut with *Capriccio*, and now in his 80th birthday year, he returns to this masterpiece.

The Philharmonia also collaborates with the **Edinburgh Festival Chorus** and four soloists for an unforgettable performance of Verdi's choral work *Requiem*, telling the story of Judgement Day. In another performance, the Orchestra perform with Festival Director and world-leading violinist, **Nicola Benedetti**, for a relaxed, family-friendly performance of Vaughan Williams's masterpiece, ***The Lark Ascending***.

As part of the International Festival's commitment to connecting with communities off the stage, a soon to be announced Community Connections Hub will also host a specially designed 360 Virtual Reality experience of *The Lark Ascending*, where audiences will be immersed within the Orchestra in the performance.

The second residency welcomes German orchestra **Bamberger Symphoniker**, a testimony to cross-border connection and resilience. In 1946, former members of the German Philharmonic Orchestra Prague met colleagues in Bamberg to reinstate an orchestra whose roots go back to the 18th century. In their International Festival residency, the orchestra explores a powerful lineage of musical mentorship under Czech conductor **Jacob Hruša**.

The programme showcases Hans Rott's monumental First Symphony and two late orchestral works, by Antonín Dvořák and another by Johannes Brahms, which is performed by **Isabelle Faust** and **Sol Gabetta**. Antonín Dvořák's choral masterpiece, featuring the **Edinburgh Festival Chorus**, is paired with his son-in-law Josef Suk's most ambitious orchestral work, and a family-friendly event **Beyond the Score** combines live performance, projections and presentation for a deep dive into Dvořák's New World Symphony for classical aficionados and newcomers alike.

The final residency of the 2024 International Festival programme comes from São Paulo-based artist collective **Ilumina**. Founded by violist **Jennifer Stumm**, it has quickly become a model for uniting leading soloists with gifted young musicians from Latin America, and for nurturing rising artists. In its first visit to the International Festival, Ilumina presents two concerts with the audience seated on beanbags, and two performances in The Hub.

This year, Edinburgh's beloved concert hall, the Usher Hall, continues to morph and shift, guided by its varied musical programme, with an expanded programme of beanbag concerts. Inspired by the Budapest Festival Orchestra's founder-conductor Iván Fischer, the stalls will be replaced with beanbags to offer a unique way of experiencing classical music. There will also be standard seating in the circle or balcony.

Beanbag performances include a late-night performance of Alexander Grechaninov's *Passion Week* from the Edinburgh Festival Chorus; a recreation of a public drinking house in 17th century London, complete with sea shanties and folk favourites, with **Barokksolistene's *The Alehouse Sessions***; and a walk-through of Mahler's Fifth by the **Hallé Orchestra**, led by **Sir Mark Elder**. By popular demand, the piece is performed in full the following day. **The European Union Youth Orchestra**, under **Gianandrea Noseda**, also presents two beanbag performances ideal for young people discovering classical music: Britten's ***The***

***Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra***, and Richard Strauss's ***Don Quixote***.

Opening the 2024 orchestral series will be **Oswaldo Golijov's** stunning ***La Pasión según San Marcos*** in its Scottish premiere. Renowned for crossing cultural boundaries, Golijov melds Latin American and Afro-Cuban musical styles with contemporary classical expressions in this transformative interpretation of Christ's crucifixion. The specially assembled **Orquesta La Pasión** is joined by musicians from the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** and the **National Youth Choir of Scotland**, under the baton of **Joana Carneiro**.

The following evening the same miracle of faith is explored in Johann Sebastian Bach's masterpiece, **the St Matthew Passion**. Felix Mendelssohn's arrangement of Johann Sebastian Bach's sublime work changed the course of music history. Without his groundbreaking performances in Berlin (1829) and Leipzig (1841), the great Bach revival might never have happened. The **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra**, their Chief Conductor **Ryan Wigglesworth**, the **Edinburgh Festival Chorus** and six soloists amass to foreground this masterpiece about Christ's last days before his resurrection.

Also in the Usher Hall, **Sir Mark Elder** conducts the **Hallé Orchestra** for the final time as Music Director after a 24-year tenure in Mahler's Fifth Symphony, with the **Edinburgh Festival Chorus**; women composers hold the spotlight in this concert of 19th-century music from **Kammerorchester Basel** featuring **Hélène Grimaud**; and **Yuja Wang** returns to the International Festival for a solo recital, following her triumphant concerto performance in 2023 with the Oslo Philharmonic and conductor Klaus Mäkelä.

**Alison Balsom** performs the Scottish premiere of **Wynton Marsalis's** Trumpet Concerto, under conductor **Elim Chan** with the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra**. Soloist **Pierre-Laurent Aimard** will also play Schoenberg's inventive Piano Concerto in this special Festival triple-bill concert.

Brazil's leading symphony orchestra **São Paulo Symphony Orchestra** is joined by violinist **Hilary Hahn**, performing the Violin Concerto by Alberto Ginastera. After the interval, **Thierry Fischer** conducts the orchestra in Richard Strauss's *Alpine Symphony*. The orchestra will also perform a rehearsal for schools, presented by **Nicola Benedetti**, as part of the International Festival's ambition to foster a lifelong love of the arts through projects for Edinburgh's young people.

In the Queen's Hall, vibrant countertenor **Jakub Józef Orlíński** and **Il Pomo d'Oro** journey to the great courts of 17th-century Italy for a concert of early Baroque music, performing repertoire from their recent album *Beyond*.

**Sheku Kanneh-Mason**, one of Britain's foremost young cellists, joins forces with pianist and composer **Harry Baker** for a wide-reaching concert exploring the enduring inspiration of JS Bach and his impact upon musicians across the ages, from Janáček to Bill Evans, and Lianne La Havas to Laura Mvula.

Tenor **Ian Bostridge** and Edinburgh-born **Steven Osborne** share the stage for one of Franz Schubert's most visionary vocal works, *Schwanengesang*; and one of the world's greatest living pianists, **Pierre-Laurent Aimard**, brings his compelling insights to the technically challenging to play music of Arnold Schoenberg and other composers who followed Schoenberg's ideas.

Ensemble performances from world-class groups include **Chiaroscuro Quartet**, **Leonore Piano Trio**, **Schola Cantorum de Venezuela**, **Kleio Quartet**, **Irish Baroque Orchestra**, as well as a European premiere from **Takács Quartet** of Nokuthala Ngwenyama's *Flow*.

Recital performances include Festival debuts from pianist **Alexandre Kantorow** and French guitarist **Raphaël Feuillâtre**, and return performances from Iranian-American harpsichordist **Mahan Esfahani** and South Korean pianist **Seong-Jin Cho**, with duo performances including soprano **Elizabeth Llewellyn** and



pianist **Simon Lepper**, and multi-award-winning Japanese violinist **Midori** with long-time recital partner American pianist **Özgür Aydin**.

This year the Queen's Hall also welcomes eminent performers joined by a collective of musicians, including a programme of Mozart with soloists from the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** joined by its Principal Conductor and pianist **Maxim Emelyanychev**, and iconic works of horn repertoire from principal horn of the Berlin Philharmonic, **Stefan Dohr**, and friends.

The International Festival continues its commitment to making industry connections and platforming the new generation of performers with a range of performances pairing emerging musicians with professional mentors. Respected voice professor and performer **Thomas Quasthoff** conducts 12 gifted emerging professionals (selected via an international open audition process) for an intimate performance of Gioachino Rossini's musical swansong, *Petite messe solenne*.

In The Hub, the emerging artists from last year's *Exploring Mendelssohn* concert return to the stage – this time after a rigorous rehearsal and mentorship programme led by the **Leonore Piano Trio**. The Hub also sees two other concerts of Rising Stars (also selected by open auditions): young professionals joining Illumina's founder, violist **Jennifer Stumm** and violinist **Liza Ferschtman**, and a performance focused on brass players, led by trumpeters **Aaron Akugbo** and **Christopher Hart**.

See [www.eif.co.uk/classical-music](http://www.eif.co.uk/classical-music) for information on individual performances.

## **Opera**

The most popular French opera ever written **Carmen**, comes to the International Festival direct from **Opéra-Comique** – the Parisian opera house where it all began. Opéra-Comique's new production of Georges Bizet's masterpiece is brought to the stage by director **Andreas Homoki**, with **Gaëlle Arquez** leading as Carmen. The international cast is joined by the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra**, conducted by **Louis Langrée**, Music Director of the Opéra-Comique. Free tickets will be available for young people to see the production during August as part of the International Festival's Discovery and Participation programme.

Mozart's **The Marriage of Figaro** contains all the ingredients for the quintessential romantic comedy. In a new production of this iconic opera, **Komische Oper Berlin** and their Music Director **James Gaffigan** unite with film, theatre and opera director **Kirill Serebrennikov**. Known for his daring and satirical interpretations of classics, Serebrennikov's take on this enduring story marks his UK directorial debut.

Taking opera beyond the theatre and concert hall, **Scottish Opera** presents a promenade performance of Igor Stravinsky's opera **Oedipus Rex** in the National Museum of Scotland's awe-inspiring Grand Gallery, supported by a 100-strong community chorus from across Scotland. Inspired by Sophocles's ancient drama and imbued with the chorus structure of Greek theatre, this is a timeless piece made anew for audiences today.

With no pit to divide the orchestra and on-stage cast from the audience, operas in concert make room for an intimate exchange of pure performance and focused listening. For the International Festival's Closing Concert, Richard Strauss's final opera **Capriccio** is presented with a superb cast including **Malin Byström**, **Sebastian Kohlhepp** and **Dame Sarah Connolly**. British conductor and International Festival regular **Sir Andrew Davis** made his professional operatic conducting debut with *Capriccio*, and now in his 80th birthday year, he returns to this masterpiece.

**Così fan tutte** continues the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** and its Principal Conductor **Maxim Emelyanychev**'s exploration of Mozart's operas, after last year's acclaimed *The Magic Flute*. The SCO and Chorus unite with a cast of celebrated singers including **Golda Shultz** for this remarkable rendition of one of



Mozart's most varied scores.

See [www.eif.co.uk/opera](http://www.eif.co.uk/opera) for information on individual performances.

## Theatre

The world premiere of ***The Fifth Step***, a thrilling and provocative new play written by **David Ireland**, and directed by **Finn den Hertog**. The taut two-hander features BAFTA-nominated Scottish actor **Jack Lowden**, returning to Scottish stages for the first time since his theatrical debut in *Black Watch* in 2010. Daring dramatist David Ireland (*Cyprus Avenue*, *Ulster American*) collaborates with the **National Theatre of Scotland** to tell a complex story about men, intimacy and our belief systems, exploring the difficult journey to sobriety.

In another world premiere, Amy Liptrot's bestselling memoir ***The Outrun*** is brought to life by Olivier Award-winning playwright **Stef Smith**, director **Vicky Featherstone**, and Edinburgh's producing theatre The Royal Lyceum Theatre. A young woman finds herself washed up back home on the Scottish archipelago of Orkney, with no idea how or if she can rebuild her life after a decade of addiction. Flashing back and forth between Orkney and London, she must find a way to navigate the alluring wildlife and wildness of both environments. *The Outrun* will run for the duration of the Festival.

As part of the International Festival's commitment to working with young people, a group of young people from Edinburgh's Lyceum Youth Theatre will engage with their counterparts in Orkney to make an installation of their creative work in the theatre foyer. A school's performance, with Q&A with *The Outrun*'s creatives, will also welcome young people to engage meaningfully with this world premiere production.

In a UK premiere, **Internationaal Theater Amsterdam** brings a shocking retelling of Heinrich von Kleist's ***Penthesilea***. Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons, belongs to an all-female society of warriors, who can only have sex with men they have defeated on the battlefield. Locking eyes with the Greek army commander Achilles during battle in the Trojan War, Penthesilea falls in love at first sight and vows to defeat him. After her critically acclaimed debut at the 2022 International Festival with *The End of Eddy*, director **Eline Arbo** returns now as newly appointed Artistic Director of Internationaal Theater Amsterdam with a play that defies gender convention and traditional staging.

Also making its UK premiere is Peruvian theatre company **Teatro La Plaza's** take on the Shakespearean classic ***Hamlet***. Rather than telling one man's story, director and writer **Chela De Ferrari's** interpretation hones in on the importance of community. Here the stories of people with Down's syndrome take centre stage, when historically they have been relegated to the background. De Ferrari brings new meaning to the 400-year-old play and asks, how can those with Down's syndrome exist in a world that continually sets out to exclude them?

Award-winning company **1927** present a new family production, and Scottish premiere, ***Please right back***. Combining fantastical animations with bold storytelling to explore the effects of the criminal justice system, *Please right back* sweeps audiences into a magical, mischievous world, inspired by writer-director **Suzanne Andrade's** own childhood. When Kim and Davey's dad, Mr E, disappears, letters become his only means of communication. Staged using song, dance, and absurd, subversive animations, *Please right back* explores the difficulties children go through when a parent leaves the family, while celebrating the power of the imagination to overcome hardship.

Following the struggles of three Afro-Brazilian women as they fight for their community, **Christiane Jatahy's** powerful play ***After the Silence*** explores Brazil's legacy of colonialism and racism. In investigating the lasting repercussions of these brutal systems, Jatahy lays bare the impact that is still deeply felt in society today. Jatahy was awarded the Golden Lion for Theatre at the 2022 Venice Biennale

for her entire body of work, distinctive for blending documentary film-making, installation work and theatre. This captivating production is given its UK premiere, following her critically acclaimed play *Dusk* at the 2023 Festival.

Indigenous artists **Émilie Monnet** and **Waira Nina** come together for the European premiere of ***Nigamon/Tunai***, an immersive contemporary ritual. The words Nigamon and Tunai mean 'song' in the artists' respective languages: Anishinaabemowin and Inga. Monnet, from Canada, and Nina from the Colombian Amazon, join in solidarity against environmental destruction and plundering of resources in their communities by mining and oil companies. Together, the artists create a multi-sensory experience, immersing the audience in the traditional knowledge of their cultures and the struggles that bind them together.

A childhood chance encounter inside a Glasgow magic shop catalysed **Scott Silven**'s lifelong fascination with the world of illusions. Today, the Scottish illusionist performs across the globe – hypnotising audiences both on stage and via a screen. Silven invites you on a journey of his childhood memories growing up near the ancient rivers of Scotland in an unforgettable performance far beyond a traditional magic show.

To bring audiences and artists closer together, there will also be post-show talks after many productions with companies and creative teams. See [www.eif.co.uk/theatre](http://www.eif.co.uk/theatre) for information on individual productions.

### **Dance**

Combining Arthurian cosplay and poetic modern dance, **Crystal Pite** and **Jonathon Young** present the Scottish premiere of major new dance work ***Assembly Hall***, following their Olivier Award-winning piece, *Revisor*. Set in a crumbling community hall, a group of medieval re-enactors gather for their Annual General Meeting. As the meeting progresses, ancient forces are awoken and it becomes increasingly clear that the quest to save their re-enactment society from dissolution is a matter of life and death.

**Aakash Odedra** unveils a spiritual and captivating new dance work in the world premiere of ***Songs of the Bulbul***. Returning to the International Festival after his spellbinding presentation of *Samsara* in 2022, Odedra explores an ancient Sufi myth about a bulbul, a songbird common throughout Africa and Asia. When captured, the bird sings an exquisite tune that reaches an inexpressibly beautiful pitch in the moments before it perishes from despair. Developed with choreographer **Rani Khanam** and composer **Rushil Ranjan**, music, dance and poetry traditions of Sufism combine in an ambitious work that is both ferocious and contemplative.

Legendary dance company **Grupo Corpo** summons Brazilian history, culture and spirituality in two UK premieres. ***Gil Refazendo*** pays a transformative homage to one of the godfathers of Brazilian music, Gilberto Gil, pairing high-energy motion with Gil's eclectic mix of samba, bossa nova and electronica. ***Gira***, meaning 'spin', draws on rhythms and movements, taking inspiration from the rites of Afro-Brazilian religion Umbanda. São Paulo jazz group Metá's soundtrack is inspired by Eshu, the spirit of the crossroads, whose dynamism is evoked in the dancers' perpetual motion.

See [www.eif.co.uk/dance](http://www.eif.co.uk/dance) for information on individual performances.

### **Contemporary Music**

In the Edinburgh Playhouse, the infinitely gifted singer-songwriter **Cat Power** takes on Bob Dylan's legendary 1966 "Royal Albert Hall" concert. From 'Mr. Tambourine Man' to 'Like a Rolling Stone', this is a song-by-song recreation of Dylan's setlist, with the first half of the show totally acoustic and the second half in electric.

Indie pop sensation **Bat for Lashes** unveils new songs in her euphoric art-pop sound, in an early opportunity to experience *The Dream of Delphi*, her upcoming studio album. Natasha Khan - better known

as Bat for Lashes - is renowned for putting on a spectacular show, with her unmistakable falsetto, improvised strings, synths and flutes.

Piano polymath **Chilly Gonzales** combines his comedic flair with classical music training. In recent years, he has collaborated with the likes of Feist, Daft Punk and Drake, demonstrating his extraordinary cross-genre flexibility. After teaming up with Pulp frontman Jarvis Cocker at the 2017 International Festival, Chilly Gonzales returns to the International Festival stage with his brand-new solo show, *Gonzo*.

In the Serer tradition of West Africa, boys create sacred songs to mark their transition to adulthood. This rite of passage has inspired the Senegalese genre known as mbalax, fusing rock, jazz, soul, Latin and more. **Youssou N'Dour** has played a pivotal role in shaping mbalax and has amassed a tremendous reputation for his innovative music-making, with *Rolling Stone* recently ranking him at number 69 on its list of The 200 Greatest Singers of All Time in 2023.

International Festival favourite **the GRIT Orchestra** plays in homage to **Martyn Bennett**, the great pioneer of modern Celtic fusion. Bennett was a virtuoso of Celtic, Scandinavian and Islamic traditions with a passion for techno and breakbeat. Conducted by **Greg Lawson**, the 80-piece orchestra and winner of the Scottish Awards for New Music for innovation in New Traditional Music is bound to push the limits of genre and Celtic culture.

American indie pop band **The Magnetic Fields** returns to the International Festival for a very special anniversary. Twenty-five years ago, The Magnetic Fields released their landmark album, *69 Love Songs*. Spanning three volumes, the concept album was conceived by baritone **Stephin Merritt**, who is often described as one of the greatest singer-songwriters of his generation. To mark the album's anniversary, The Magnetic Fields will perform all 69 songs across two nights.

London's jazz scene collides with West African folkloric musical traditions in this all-male supergroup, **Balimaya Project**. Founded by percussionist and djembe player **Yahael Camara Onono**, the band creates a soul-stirring style which is grounded in a very personal exploration of heritage and identity.

South London's **Tirzah** makes sonically rich music and authentic storytelling to push at the boundaries of pop music. Her latest LP *Colourgrade* arrived not long after the birth of her second child and is filled with the raw emotion of early parenthood. This critically acclaimed record has cemented her as one of the leading avant-garde musicians in the UK.

Grammy Award-nominee **Jordan Rakei** embraces orchestral arrangements, haunting choirs and hypnotic beats. Born in New Zealand and raised in Australia, the musicians that made his childhood – namely, Stevie Wonder, Bill Withers and Curtis Mayfield – are the major source of influence for his fifth studio album, *The Loop*, performed in Edinburgh for his International Festival debut.

This year The Hub features a range of performers, including a series of those who lead a new generation of Celtic musicians: five-piece Scottish folk band **Breabach**; Scottish supergroup **Mànran**, known for their self-penned tunes in Gaelic and English; three-piece folk band **VRĭ**'s innovative, toe-tapping style of Welsh traditional music; and acclaimed Irish quintet **Goitse**, blending new compositions with Celtic traditional tunes. There is also a special performance of **Fèis Rois' Ceilidh Trail**, celebrating their 25th anniversary of promoting the revival of Gaelic music and song, with emerging and established musicians from across the Ceilidh Trail's history taking to the stage.

A full line-up can be found at [www.eif.co.uk/contemporary-music](http://www.eif.co.uk/contemporary-music).

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

Edinburgh International Festival's **2024 Opening Event** is an outdoor event welcoming 10,000+ people to create a new ritual together for the International Festival and the city of Edinburgh. Created in partnership with single malt Scotch Whisky, **The Macallan**, with Creative Producer **Pinwheel**, it evokes the mythology, history and Scotland's rich cultural heritage. It showcases a range of artforms and performers, inviting audiences to step into a transcendent world that explores our past, present and future, inspired by Edinburgh's iconic landscape as a city built on layers. Full details and tickets will be announced closer to the event.

As part of the International Festival's ongoing commitment to accessibility, the 2024 programme includes 25 accessible performances, including ten audio described performances, five BSL interpreted performances, and nine captioned performances.

**Healing Arts Scotland** is part of a world-first nationwide Healing Arts campaign: a week of celebrating and advocating for improved physical, mental and social health through the arts. Spearheaded by **Scottish Ballet** and in collaboration with the **World Health Organisation** and **Jameel Arts and Health Lab**, these events bring together a national coalition of organisations across culture, science, health, education and government. The programme includes a free mass participation event inviting dancers and musicians of all ages and abilities to perform together in front of the Scottish Parliament, and a conference exploring four priority areas where the arts have a measurable impact: loneliness and isolation, young people's mental health, dementia, and mental health in prisons.

Celebrating Edinburgh landmark St Giles' Cathedral and its momentous 900th anniversary, **900 Voices** is a continuously evolving sound installation entirely created from the voices from Edinburgh's communities. The sound piece explores the connective power of listening and the musicality of conversation, whilst listening to the sounds of communities that make up Edinburgh today.

– ENDS –

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For media images – see [here](#)

For the 2024 International Festival trailer – see [here](#)

For b-roll – see [here](#)

For a digital version of the Programme Brochure – see [here](#)

To request media tickets for any performance during the 2024 Edinburgh International Festival, please complete our online accreditation form. To access the form – see [here](#)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About Edinburgh International Festival

Edinburgh International Festival is a global celebration of performing arts, bringing the finest performers of dance, opera, music and theatre from around the world to Edinburgh for three weeks every August.

The 2024 International Festival takes place from 2-25 August, 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.

The International Festival's impact also extends beyond the annual programme, with community learning, engagement and professional development programmes running throughout the year, contributing to the cultural and social life of Edinburgh and Scotland.

For more information visit [www.eif.co.uk](http://www.eif.co.uk).

### **2024 International Festival supporters**

The support the Edinburgh International Festival receives from our public funders – the City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland - plays a critical role in ensuring our stability and success. This year's programme is also supported by the UK Government, following the commitment made in last year's Budget.

The income we also receive through project grants allows us to present work that is often additional to our core programme. This year, and for the ninth consecutive year, EventScotland will be supporting our Opening Event.

This year we are also pleased to receive support through the Platform for Creative Excellence (PlaCE) Programme. PlaCE is a partnership between the Scottish Government, the City of Edinburgh Council and the Edinburgh Festivals that supports strategic development activity.

### **Edinburgh International Festival's Discovery and Participation Programme**

The International Festival connects with thousands of people around Edinburgh, from primary school pupils to emerging artists, through its year-round bespoke Discovery and Participation programmes, supported by Baillie Gifford. Underpinning the Festival is an ambition to create a growing social impact through the performing arts, enabling enriching connections between the people and communities of Scotland with core artforms as well as the artists welcomed on stage.

In 2024, the International Festival will begin a partnership with its first Community Connections Hub, through an open call process to work with an Edinburgh community centre. In August, this will include inviting audiences to experience the Philharmonia Orchestra in Virtual Reality within a community space.

This summer will also see flagship projects that bring groups into the heart of August's performances, such as the Youth Takeover Day for senior pupils from across Edinburgh, Culture Clubs for community groups, and pop-up performances in healthcare settings, working with the NHS.

Secondary school pupils are invited to performances and activities during August across music, theatre, opera and dance in the Discover series, an annual commitment to creating pathways to each artform and foster a lifelong love of the arts. In 2024 the International Festival is working with a range of companies and organisations to support this work, including the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Royal Lyceum Edinburgh, Opéra Comique, Dance Base, Grupo Corpo, Kidd Pivot and the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra.

See [www.eif.co.uk/social-impact](http://www.eif.co.uk/social-impact) for more information.

### **Edinburgh International Festival Tickets & Membership**

Tickets go on sale from midday on 21 March 2024 at [eif.co.uk](http://eif.co.uk), with priority booking for members.

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](http://www.eif.co.uk/membership).

