EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

# Edinburgh International Festival Adds New Names to 2024 Programme, including Declan McKenna, Nadine Shah and New Keynote Series Featuring Gordon Brown

Isabella O'Sullivan, Heiyi Lok, Alex Wishart and Summer Williamson from Oi Musica perform outdoors at Usher Hall to announce details of the Healing Arts Scotland Opening Celebration as part of Edinburgh International Festival's 2024 programme. Photo by Maxime Ragni.

**MEDIA IMAGES AVAILABLE HERE**
**VIDEO TRAILER AVAILABLE HERE**
**B-ROLL AVAILABLE HERE**

**2-25 AUGUST**
**eif.co.uk** / @edintfest

- The **Edinburgh International Festival** expands 2024 programme, including gigs from **Declan McKenna, Nadine Shah** and **Lisa O'Neill,** and keynote speaking events from Former Prime Minister **Gordon Brown,** rapper and activist **Akala**, and *Invisible Women* author **Caroline Criado Perez**

- Music reaches into Edinburgh neighbourhoods and unites artists and audiences as never before. Activity includes a **VR experience in a community hub** in Southwest Edinburgh**,** a **mass outdoor celebration** with 250 performers of all ages at the Scottish Parliament as part of the world-first **Healing Arts Scotland week** and **pop-up performances in Edinburgh hospitals**

- Scottish violinist **Nicola Benedetti's** second year as Festival Director promises an exhilarating 24-day celebration of the arts in Edinburgh, featuring world-class artists

spanning opera, dance, music, and theatre from **August 2-25**

23 May, Edinburgh: New events have today been added to the 2024 Edinburgh International Festival programme, culminating in a total of 167 performances across 24 days from the world's leading performers in opera, dance, music and theatre.

Anchored by the theme '**Rituals That Unite Us'**, this year's International Festival is an invitation for both artists and audiences to come together and celebrate the powerful impact live performance and collective experiences have on us all.

Three gigs are added to a dynamic contemporary music lineup this year, with **Declan McKenna, Nadine Shah** and **Lisa O'Neill** joining a stellar array of performers that include **Cat Power, Jordan Rakei, Chilly Gonzales** and **Bat for Lashes.**

Under Festival Director **Nicola Benedetti's** direction, a renewed focus on dialogue and debate initiates a new series of keynote talks from leading voices calling for change: **Former Prime Minister the Rt Hon Gordon Brown, rapper and activist Akala** and **Caroline Criado Perez,** best-selling author of *Invisible Women.* Further information about speakers found below.

Cast additions for several International Festival staged shows include *The Fifth Step,* where **Sean Gilder** joins **Jack Lowden** in the world premiere play at The Lyceum from 21-25 August; and **Isis Hainsworth, Paul Brennan, Ros Watt** and **Alison Fitzjohn** join the cast of *The Outrun,* which also makes its world premiere in August at the Churchill Theatre from 3-25 August.

Former Scottish Opera emerging artist **Shengzhi Ren** takes centre stage as Oedipus, King of Thebes, in the cast of *Oedipus Rex*. Joining him in this promenade opera staged in the National Museum of Scotland's Grand Gallery are **Kitty Whately, Roland Wood, Callum Thorpe** and **Emyr Wyn Jones.** Additional tickets for the production are now available.

As part of the International Festival's ambition to become cultural convenors in neighbourhoods and healthcare settings across Edinburgh, a range of events will bring artists into new spaces across the city.

**Space @ The Broomhouse Hub** becomes the International Festival's inaugural Community Connections Hub, following a city-wide call-out to community centres to engage in ongoing collaboration during festival season and throughout the year. After interest from 22 community spaces from across the city, the first partnership with Space @ The Broomhouse Hub will see events and activities take place across the next 18 months, with an ambition to collaborate with more of these spaces in the coming years.

During August, Space @ The Broomhouse Hub hosts a free VR experience from 2024 resident orchestra **the Philharmonia** runs from 19 – 24 August. This 360° experience of Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* makes its UK premiere and features Festival Director **Nicola Benedetti** as the solo violinist. In Virtual Reality, viewers are placed right at the heart of the orchestra to experience the performance in astonishing detail.

Audiences can also experience the performance live, as part of a relaxed Family Concert on Sunday 25 August at Usher Hall. The Family Concert is also live captioned and BSL interpreted by deaf musician **Paul Whittaker,** who will interpret the pieces of music as well as spoken text.

The first-ever **Healing Arts Scotland** also launches as part of the Edinburgh International Festival this year**,** a week-long celebration of arts and health events highlighting the joy they bring to those who take part, and their importance to the nation's physical, mental and social health.

It is the first ever countrywide Healing Arts Week, following previous city-wide celebrations around the world, including New York, Paris, London, Venice and Jaipur, and is led by Scottish Ballet as part of the Jameel Arts & Health Lab's global 'Healing Arts' campaign, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation.

The Healing Arts Scotland Opening Celebration event takes place on Monday 19th August at the Scottish Parliament as part of Edinburgh International Festival, featuring over 250 performers and participants from across Scotland in an energetic celebration of music and dance that captures the spirit and healing power of coming together through the performing arts. Ensembles featured include **Scottish Ballet, National Youth Pipe Band, TRYST, Oi Musica** and **SambaYaBamba Youth Street Band.**

Scottish Ballet will present a specially commissioned dance piece featuring an ensemble cast of community performers, including **Scottish Ballet's Youth Exchange company, NHS staff, Dance Base's PRIME Elders Dance company** and **Dance for Parkinson's** Scotland group. The work will be performed to the song Mackay's Memoirs by the late Scottish Celtic fusion artist Martyn Bennett, which celebrates its 25th anniversary – it was originally commissioned for the opening of the Scottish Parliament building on 1 July 1999. 2024 International Festival artists are also performing across Edinburgh in four NHS hospitals in August.

In partnership with **NHS Lothian Charity: Tonic Arts,** the performance series brings Festival artists into Edinburgh hospitals, creating bespoke moments of musical and creative connections. Every Friday during August, artists will perform in hospitals including the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People and the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, delighting audiences who may not be able to experience International Festival performances in traditional venues. This is part of a year-round programme of monthly music moments in hospitals across Edinburgh and Lothian.

In another outdoor series of performances, the Usher Hall takes the festival experience from the stage to the open-air, with pop-up performances across August. Groups such as **Commotion (Edinburgh Women Samba Drummers)**, **the Edinburgh Samba School's TESS group, Rainbow Ukes** and **Southside Strummers** ukelele groups will light up the Usher Hall forecourt, in a series of free encounters with music makers from across the community.

**Edinburgh International Festival Director, Nicola Benedetti,** said: *"The Edinburgh International Festival has always been proud to provide a platform for some of the most*

*exciting voices in music, performance and thought leadership. Over 77 years, this original festival that started it all, has brought people of different cultures and viewpoints together to share, debate and exchange ideas through art, and this year's no exception."*

*"Our inaugural Community Connections Hub, NHS Festival Fridays and the world-first Healing Arts Scotland week are a perfect example of the Festival bringing together communities and ideas in spaces and places outside of a theatre in August. Art has the power to transform, and I encourage everyone to seize this opportunity to come together and be thrilled, challenged, and discover something new."*

**Scottish Ballet CEO/Artistic Director, Christopher Hampson** said**:***"Healing Arts Scotland 2024 will be an inspirational week-long celebration of the huge impact the arts has on the nation's health and well-being. Scottish Ballet is proud to be leading on this global outreach project in collaboration with the WHO and a host of partner organisations such as Edinburgh International Festival. I'm really excited about the largescale participation performance taking place outside Scottish Parliament – it will be a true testament to all the wonderful arts health work that happens every day across Scotland."*

**Neil Hay, CEO, Space @ The Broomhouse Hub** said**:**
*"The inaugural Community Connections Hub is fantastic news for Broomhouse and Southwest Edinburgh. This partnership will open up the Edinburgh International Festival to new audiences, allowing local people and families to enjoy cultural experiences our communities don't normally access. We look forward to seeing all the exciting things the partnership will bring this summer and the coming year."*

**More about the 2024 International Festival artists and speakers:**

**Declan McKenna, 12 August at Edinburgh Playhouse**
Vibrant indie-pop protagonist Declan McKenna is set to make his dazzling Edinburgh International Festival debut at just 25. Following his breakthrough win at Glastonbury Festival's Emerging Talent competition in 2015, McKenna now has three critically acclaimed albums under his belt, and will perform songs from his latest, *What Happened to The Beach?.*

**Nadine Shah, 22 August at the Queen's Hall**
Mercury Prize nominee Nadine Shah adds profound depth to the International Festival's contemporary lineup with her powerful voice, socio-political lyrics and a unique blend of jazz, post-punk, and indie rock.; She comes to The Queen's Hall stage after an explosive start to 2024 supporting Depeche Mode on an arena tour and the release of fifth studio album, *Filthy Underneath.*

**Lisa O'Neill, 21 August at the Queen's Hall**
A striking voice on the Irish folk scene for the last 10 years, Lisa O'Neill brings her distinct blend of folk tradition and contemporary nuance to Edinburgh. A raconteur in the truest sense of the word, O'Neill inimitable voice is raw and loaded with emotion, as evidenced in latest record *All of This Is Chance*. Her remarkable adaptation of Bob Dylan's 'All the Tired Horses' soundtracked the final scene of epic TV drama *Peaky Blinders.*

**Former Prime Minister the Rt Hon Gordon Brown, 25 August at the Festival Theatre**
In a keynote speaking event, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Rt Hon Gordon Brown imagines a world where peace and fairness are the order of the day. He explores the connections between his imagined future and the International Festival's founding vision. Now serving as the UN Special Envoy for Global Education and the WHO Ambassador for Global Health Financing, a passion for global access to education, healthcare and improved living standards continues to motivate everything he does.

**Caroline Criado Perez, 18 August at the Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh**
Award-winning author and activist Caroline Criado Perez's work is centred around meaningful change. Her campaign work spans across the physical and digital realm, achieving real results from petitioning for a female historical figure on Bank of England banknotes, to getting the first statue of a woman (Millicent Fawcett) in Parliament Square, London. Following her best-selling book *Invisible Women, Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*, Criado Perez delves into her continuing research on how to leverage the transformative power of accurate data, and what it takes to create a world that works for all.

**Akala, 10 August at the Festival Theatre**
From activist to hip-hop artist to social entrepreneur, Akala is a true polymath with a constantly evolving career. He speaks on a wide range of topics, including race, British and African-Caribbean culture, the arts, and music and youth engagement. *Natives*, Akala's 2018 memoir-polemic, discloses what it was like for him to grow up mixed race and working class in 1980s Britain, linking his own testimony of structural racism with the history of colonialism and the British Empire's damaging legacy. At the International Festival, Akala confronts home truths, and inspires us to challenge the status quo in a talk that embodies the need for us to unite.

All keynote events will have BSL interpretation and live captioning.

**– ENDS –**

**Media contact:**
Isabella Feros, Media Manager, Isabella.feros@eif.co.uk
Hugo Mintz, Head of Communications and Digital, hugo.mintz@eif.co.uk
press@eif.co.uk / eif.co.uk
Join in the conversation eif.co.uk / #edintfest / @edintfest

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.

**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. The three pathways of the programme are:

**Youth Connections**
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 Paolo Symphony Orchestra.

The second-ever Youth Takeover Day on 16 August sees senior pupils from across Edinburgh come together for a conversation about the future of the International Festival, traditional and innovative approaches to audience experience and growing audiences.

A Youth Exchange project connects young creatives in Edinburgh and Orkney, to explore themes of home, nature and identity in connection with world premiere theatre work *The Outrun.* They will produce a creative outcome to be exhibited in the Church Hill Theatre throughout August.

The Philharmonia Orchestra perform a family-friendly classical programme that explores the animal kingdom, including a solo from Festival Director and world-leading violinist, Nicola Benedetti. The Family Concert is also live captioned and BSL interpreted by deaf musician Paul Whittaker, who will interpret the pieces of music as well as spoken text.

## Community Connections
In 2024, the International Festival begins 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 at Space @ The Broomhouse Hub in Southwest Edinburgh.

This summer sees flagship projects that bring groups into the heart of August's performances, such as Culture Clubs for community groups (a shared meal before attending an International Festival performance together) and Festival Fridays bring pop-up performances in healthcare settings, working with the NHS Lothian Charity (Tonic Arts).

## Industry Connections

This year, 25 classical musicians will be supported and mentored in their first Edinburgh International Festival performance experience. Under the International Festival's commitment to building new talent, three tailored mentoring programmes will culminate in public performances during the 2024 Festival: Rising Stars of Brass (five emerging brass players) Rising Stars with Ilumina (six emerging string players) and Exploring Rossini with Thomas Quasthoff (twelve early-career singers).

See www.eif.co.uk/social-impact for more information.

### 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 Tickets & Membership

Tickets go on sale from midday on 24 May at 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.

### About Scottish Ballet

Scottish Ballet, founded in 1969, is Scotland's national dance company. Based in Glasgow, the company performs regularly across Scotland, throughout the UK and internationally – promoting Scotland's pioneering spirit far and wide.

Scottish Ballet is a National Centre for Dance Health delivering specialised programmes for those living with dementia, Parkinson's, MS and Long Covid

Under CEO/Artistic Director Christopher Hampson, Scottish Ballet presents bold, adventurous performances rooted in strong classical technique, accompanied by the

Scottish Ballet Orchestra. The company's broad repertoire includes new versions of the classics and ground-breaking commissions, both on stage and screen.

Scottish Ballet runs an extensive engagement programme, tailored to the needs of diverse communities, promoting confidence, fostering wellbeing, and encouraging creativity through dance. Scottish Ballet is funded by the Scottish Government.

For more information, visit: www.scottishballet.co.uk

**About NHS Lothian Charity: Tonic Arts**
NHS Lothian Charity is the official charity of NHS Lothian and the only charity dedicated to supporting all its work, all its staff and all the patients and families it cares for.

Our expertise and experience, and the support we provide, help create opportunities that enable NHS Lothian to foster innovation, explore ideas and transform the way that care is delivered.

Tonic Arts is NHS Lothian Charity's Arts in Health Programme, improving and supporting the health and wellbeing of NHS Lothian patients, visitors and staff by enhancing the NHS Lothian healthcare environment and enriching the patient experience.

In partnership with NHS Lothian, specialist arts organisations and cross-sector partners, Tonic Arts delivers a comprehensive programme that includes major art and design enhancements; a relevant and accessible art collection; an engaging exhibitions programme; and stimulating participatory activities, artist residencies, performances, and events. Find out more: www.tonicarts.nhslothiancharity.org

**About Space @ The Broomhouse Hub:**
Space @ The Broomhouse Hub is an award-nominated Scottish charity championing community development and bringing people together. We address wellbeing and economic challenges through services and social enterprises. We see a future in which our communities thrive; where people belong and lead fulfilling lives. We believe that connections build communities.

Space is a founding member of the Go Beyond network and participates in numerous cross-service and cross-sector collaborations across Edinburgh.

**About Healing Arts:**
Healing Arts is the global outreach campaign of the Jameel Arts & Health Lab in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). The Lab was established in 2023 by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the Steinhardt School at New York University, Community Jameel, and CULTURUNNERS to coordinate and amplify scientific research into the effectiveness of the arts in improving health and wellbeing. Leveraging data, artist-led advocacy and a global 'Healing Arts' campaign. The Lab aims to drive policy implementation across 193 UN member states.

The four major strands of the Jameel Arts and Health Lab are:

Research – Rigorous studies to demonstrate measurable impact
Outreach – Events and communications campaigns to engage the public
Policy – Government engagement to drive policy implementation
Capacity Building – Arts & Health training and resources for practitioners and researchers

For more information visit https://wwhtsww.healingartsscotland.org/.