

# Best Fringe ever

✘ The 64th Edinburgh Festival Fringe which finished yesterday has announced that at the final reconciliation an estimated 1,955,913 tickets will have been sold.

Speaking about the great successes that the Edinburgh Festival Fringe has enjoyed in 2010, Fringe Society Chief Executive, Kath M Mainland said:- “Audiences have come to know the Edinburgh Festival Fringe as the place to see every kind of art; from the most imaginative children’s theatre to topical and incisive comedy and theatre which challenges audiences to discuss and re-consider their world. Edinburgh is without doubt the world’s leading festival destination and audiences continued to be inspired and enthralled by the many and varied events on offer.

“I have seen and met performers from all over world from established names to those make their first foray into the industry. They have attended the Fringe for every possible reason, to make audiences laugh, think and imagine, and to get their work seen and develop their creative skills. The Fringe Society exists to support performers, directors, producers and venues and to allow them to make their own creative choices and tell their own stories. That every person who has performed as part of the 2010 Edinburgh Festival Fringe over the last three weeks chose to be here is exactly why the Fringe is greatest show on earth.”

This year’s Fringe programme boasted 2,453 companies and more performances than ever before. Amongst the companies attending the festival in 2010 the range of work included new writing for theatre and comedy, performances of much loved classics and many new and returning companies.

The Fringe High Street Events team registered 662 acts from street performers to buskers and Fringe performers.

Several venues across the city the 2010 Fringe marked an anniversary. Gilded Balloon celebrated 25 years on the Fringe with Karen Koren collecting the Jack Tinker Spirit of the Fringe award and hosting 3 anniversary shows boasting world famous comedians from the venue's life on the Fringe. Assembly celebrated 30 years on the Fringe and hosted a cabaret programme at their new venue in Princes St Gardens. Bedlam Theatre also celebrated 30 years on the Fringe with a programme including Fringe First Winning **Another Someone** (*Rash Dash*). Zoo Venues saw their 10th birthday in with award winning shows including Herald Angel and Stage Awards winning **Operation Greenfield** (*Little Bulb Theatre*) and the triple award winning **Bound** (*Bear Trap Theatre Company*). Venues ReMarkable Arts at Hill Street and The Jazz Bar both won Herald Angel Little Devils for showing tenacity and ensuring the show must go on in adverse circumstances. Free comedy gained its first Edinburgh Comedy Award nominee with **Imran Yusuf's** (*Laughing Horse @ Espionage*) newcomer nomination and the Fosters Edinburgh Comedy Award was awarded to three-time nominee **Russell Kane: Smokescreens and Castles** (*Pleasance*). David Bates returned with the Famous Spiegel tent and was awarded a Total Theatre Award for making a significant contribution to the Fringe.

Controversy, discussion and sparking debate were at the forefront this year with **Roadkill** (*Ankur Productions/Pachamama Productions, Traverse*) winning awards across the festival for its gritty and honest discussion of sex trafficking. David Benson's (*Festival Highlights, Gilded Balloon*) won acclaim for its verbatim portrayal of Jim Swire's fight for answers about the atrocity 22 years ago. **The Author** (*News from Nowhere Presents, Traverse*) saw audiences debating the Royal Court Production's theatrical style and content and the boundaries of live performance.

Programmes within the Fringe – including the second *Made in Scotland* programme, *Escalator East to Edinburgh* and *Culture*

*Ireland's* supported shows – have seen some award winning work coming to the fore of the festival. The *Made in Scotland* programme won a combined total of 11 awards and companies have been invited to tour to Netherlands, USA and Australia. **Sex Idiot** (*Zoo*) won the Total Theatre Emerging Artist Award and **Bunny** (*Theatre Colchester, Underbelly*) and **Lidless** (*HighTide, Underbelly*) were Fringe First winners as part of the Escalator East to Edinburgh programme. Enda Walsh's **Penelope** (*Druid, Traverse*) won a Fringe First as part of the Culture Ireland supported programme.

Famous names at this year's Fringe included Clarke Peters, Gyles Brandreth, Carol Ann Duffy, Abi Titmuss, Simon Callow, Caroline Rhea, Jennifer Coolidge, Arj Barker, Paul Merton and a returning contingent from BBC Radio including Scott Mills from Radio 1 and Richard Bacon from 5 Live and Radio 4 Comedy live from the Royal Mile.