

Leith Festival 10 -19 June 2011

✘ From today 10-19 June 2011, Leith will come alive with a celebration of its strong sense of community, colourful history and artistic residents.

Leith Festival is a community arts festival with charitable status which showcases both professional and grassroots talent, with almost 150 events across 50 venues, predominantly showcasing the wealth of talent within Leith.

The festival has grown each year and 2011 is broader than ever with the addition of a new Youth strand, enabling young people of Leith and beyond to try their hand at activities such as drumming, boxing and break dancing.

The other strands are Visual Arts, Music, Walks & Talks, Film & Literature, Community, Sport, Dance, Theatre and Comedy.

This year, the Dance strand is particularly strong, with opportunities to learn a variety of styles including belly dancing, hip hop and Ceilidh. There will also be a glamorous Deco Dance event on 12 June – an opportunity to dress up in 1930s Hollywood-style gowns, enjoy cabaret performances and learn some vintage dance moves. Another event, an inter-generational project named Strictly Leith, allows young people and over 50s to learn a variety of dance styles from both generations.

The festival opens on 10 June with a series of performances by community and youth groups in Leith's Kirkgate Shopping Centre, as well as the unveiling of a unique CoolWool guerrilla knitting project on Leith Links which will see the trees wrapped in knitted squares created by hundreds of volunteers from Leith, Edinburgh, the rest of the UK and even overseas.

Gala Day follows on Leith Links on 11 June, an ideal event for families, with a pageant, pony rides, bouncy castle, fairground rides and the famous Tug o' War contest. This is set to be the biggest Gala Day yet, with the theme of The Monsters are Coming – drawing on the festival's popular monster mascots.

This year's musical offering is typically eclectic, encompassing jazz, blues, folk, roots, country, soul, acoustic and rock.

Other highlights of the festival programme include the Edinburgh Short Film Festival, a Pirates & Privateers historic walking tour, readings by two of Scotland's foremost poets, Tessa Ransford and Christine De Luca, and a concert by the Sing in the City choir.

Many of the venues for Leith Festival are renowned for their fine food and drink, so festival-goers can enjoy a variety of foodie treats while they are entertained. The programme includes a range of special offers from eateries in Leith such as Los Cardos and Tapa Barra y Restaurante.

In addition, La Cerise is offering a special Leith Festival ice cream, with all profits donated to next year's event, and Roseleaf Bar Café is offering a limited edition 'Sunshine on Leaf Pot-tail', a cocktail in a teapot, for the duration of the festival.

The Leith Festival Tattoo, celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, brings the 10 days of events to a spectacular close on 19 June with a mass of local dancers, pipes and drums.

Leith Festival Manager Adele Conn said: "We're delighted to reveal the programme for this year's festival. There really is something for everyone with 12 strands now, including the new Youth strand. The sheer number and variety of events reflects the vibrancy of the Leith community, which we can be truly proud of as we share it with those in the rest of the city and

beyond.”

Leith Festival offers fantastic value, with free tickets for many of the events. Tickets are available from 23 May, either online at www.leithfestival.com, by telephone on 0131 555 0501, or at the Leith Festival Box Office on 121 Giles Street daily from 2-6pm.

For more information on Leith Festival, please visit www.leithfestival.com