

Edinburgh Magic Fest will reappear next year!

✘ The Edinburgh International Magic Festival will once again take place during the first week of the school summer holidays. Running from 29th June – 6th July, MagicFest 2012 will bring more amazing magic acts from all over the world to the Capital.

The 2011 festival enjoyed another year of growth, doubling its audience to bring live magic to more than 5000 people in the city, proving there is a strong appetite for quality live magic in the UK.

MagicFest opened with a sell-out Magic and Variety Gala Opening, including performances by John Archer (Former Magic Circle Stage Magician of the Year) and Frenchman Xavier Mortimer, and closed with the hugely anticipated sell-out “Four Nations Magic-Off” which saw the UK’s top comedy magicians fight it out! This year the champ was Portuguese performer Michael Neto.

MagicFest Artistic Director Kevin McMahon said: “All festival shows had successful runs and received great reviews and audience feedback. We are very pleased that all the new formats we tried this year like Magic Dinner, events in Camera Obscura and Magic Shop Windows with Jenners, worked out really well and we hope to be able to bring them back next year.”

One of the festival’s major success stories this year was Magic School which enjoyed twice as many attendees year on year, attracting nearly 200 budding wizards aged 7-12. Magical workshops, from the president of Edinburgh Magic Circle Gary James, proved so popular that several students booked into more than one class, just to hone their skills! As a result organisers will expand Magic School by introducing week long workshops and creating “Street Magic Master Classes” for older

children and teenagers.

This year saw the introduction of the inaugural "Great Lafayette Award", a worldwide award in honour of the Great Lafayette who created the greatest live magic shows of his time. The first recipient of this annual award was Paul Daniels, a legend of British magic, who said: "I'm honoured to win the first ever Lafayette award. This is a great thing that you [MagicFest] are doing here and I must say the Gala show was one of the best magic shows I have ever been to!"

MagicFest's prestigious sleight of hand competition "War of the Wizards" attracted competitors from all over the UK and was hotly contested. The under 18 winner Chris Dougall, from Lanarkshire, will be mentored by Kevin McMahon and the over 18 winner Alan Rorrison, from Port Glasgow, will have the opportunity to present a show at next year's MagicFest.

Kevin McMahon added: "There seems to be a renaissance happening within magic at the moment, similar to the emergence of the Impressionist movement in the 19th century. As painters and artists had to reinvent their work to deal with the modern innovation of photography, so magicians have had to reinvigorate their work with the advent of CGI in movies showing people the impossible. This has inspired a new generation of performer trying to put more emotion into their work and find the magic within the magic. We have so many ideas for growing and developing the Festival into a world renowned event and look forward to showing magic lovers and new audiences how powerful live magic can be."

The Edinburgh International Magic Festival 2011 mostly relied on private donations, ticket sales, in kind support, funding from "Arts and Business" and organiser's own contribution. In order to grow and develop the festival, MagicFest aims to attract a headline sponsor for 2012, offering suitable brands a strategic and creative opportunity to engage with consumers and align their brand with the UK's only public-facing Magic

Festival.

MagicFest Managing Director Svetlana Shevchenko said: "The amount of interest in the art of magic from press and media this year was phenomenal. We are very grateful for all the support that the festival received. Going forward it is essential for us to develop partnerships with arts and cultural agencies and funds as well as corporate bodies in order to sustain and develop this unique event which will benefit Edinburgh and spotlight the Art of Magic, like no other event, on a national scale."