

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2012 launched today

✖ The [Edinburgh Festival Fringe](#) was launched today, unveiling a huge 376-page brochure with 2,695 shows, over 42,000 performances involving more than 22,000 individual performances and 279 venues. That's 6% more shows than the Fringe has ever hosted before, flying in the face of potential competition from the London Olympics and the effects of the economic downturn.

The 2012 Fringe shows represent 47 different countries, and there are 1,418 world premieres. New for 2012 is a Spoken Word category, whose enormous range of events includes appearances by Scotland's Makar Liz Lochhead. There's also a significant increase in the Cabaret genre, with 99 shows representing 4% of the Fringe's output.

St Stephen's Church in the New Town makes a welcome return as a Fringe venue, this year hosting a range of events from Northern Stage, representing the north-east of England. And after its year-long closure for refurbishment, the Assembly Rooms in George Street reopen under new management, joining forces with the Famous Spiegel Tent to install a new pedestrianised terrace on George Street.

Meanwhile, Assembly Theatre has added the Roxy Art House to its collection of Old Town venues, renaming it Assembly Roxy for the duration of the Fringe. And C venues have expanded into a new base at C Nova in the India Buildings on Victoria Street.

The Made in Scotland showcase returns with a diverse line-up of 12 shows representing the best in Scottish creativity, from Rob Drummond's [Bullet Catch](#), where one lucky audience member gets to fire a gun that the performer will (hopefully) catch

in his teeth, to a reimagining of Burns's [*Tam o'Shanter*](#). And the Old College Quad is the outdoor home to five Polish shows, including the spectacular [*Planet Lem*](#), [*Carmen funebre*](#) and [*Macbeth: Who is that Bloodied Man?*](#) from Teatr Biuro Podrozy.

And to encourage visits from our Glaswegian neighbours, there will be a box office operating in Queen Street Station from 27 July until 27 August, allowing audiences from the west to buy their Fringe tickets and then hop on a train to the capital.



Edinburgh's Lord Provost the Rt Hon Donald Wilson makes his selection from this year's Fringe shows

Speaking at this morning's launch of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe at the Scottish Café, chief executive Kath Mainland explained: 'We've been selling tickets since January. Why did we do that? Research has shown that Fringe audiences often begin making plans in the early part of the year and are keen to start getting a taste of what will be on offer. Secondly, these aren't our shows or our tickets. They belong to the wonderful and creative Fringe companies and venues who make up the festival. It's our job to respond to their needs and sell their tickets whenever they are ready.'

She continued: 'The Fringe is an amazing thing. It's been around a while, we all love it, and we all think we know what to expect from it. But every year it reinvents itself, shakes itself up and delivers a slightly different proposition.'