

Christmas lights will be switched on this Sunday in Edinburgh



The theme of this year's Light Night, Edinburgh's Christmas's Opening Ceremony, is *Christmas Songs and Carols*.

Edinburgh's Lord Provost, the Rt Hon Donald Wilson, said: "Getting Edinburgh's Christmas festivities off to a dazzling start, Light Night is an outstanding display of fireworks, carol singing and lights. As ever, the charitable event is by and for Edinburgh's citizens. It is a community event and this year much needed funds will be raised for Cash for Kids. I encourage everyone to mark the date in their diary and take part as Edinburgh is lit up for Christmas".

Light Night returns to George Street with an all-singing, all-dancing extravaganza not to be missed, hosted once again by one of Edinburgh's most familiar voices, Arlene Stuart from Forth One. Last year, over 26,000 people took to George Street to celebrate the official start of Edinburgh's Christmas.

This year we are delighted to welcome a very special "festive guest" to the Gold stage to switch on this year's Christmas lights, where they will be joined by an award winning fundraiser, from the Edinburgh charity **Cash for Kids**, whose fantastic work Edinburgh's Christmas is very proud to support.

With seven stages set along the length of George Street, this event is all about community. We have 60 school, community and other local groups with an estimated total of 1,350 performers, each performing an act, a dance, a song or a piece of music to celebrate their favourite Christmas song or carol.

Light Night is the largest **FREE** community event staged in Edinburgh. Performers from in and around this great city will be performing everything from traditional carol singing to a soul band's twist on Christmas classics, add into the festive mix some traditional piping and drumming to bhangra and contemporary dance, Edinburgh's community can expect a fantastic array of performances which encapsulate the true spirit of Christmas and celebration.

Charlie Wood and Ed Bartlam, directors of Underbelly, and the directors of Edinburgh's Christmas and the Light Night event, said: "We're delighted to be bringing back this newly re-imagined Light Night to Edinburgh which we conceived to directly involve the Edinburgh community, who will sing and dance their favourite Christmas song to celebrate the advent of the festive period right in the City centre."

Last year's event was the first time the community got involved and it was good fun on a dark November afternoon, but the crowds were huge. So be warned particularly if you have small children. A buggy is not ideal as there was no room to move on George Street last year, and wrap up warm!

Selected highlights from across the seven stages include:

- **Edinburgh's Got Soul**, a community focused choir who've grown hugely since their beginnings in 2012. In their own words, they are " Powerful, passionate, professional... a soul shakin', pulse racin', foot stompin', celebration of sound and vision"
- **Edinburgh Bhangra Crew**, with fast paced routines and beautiful costumes, are not to be missed. For one night only, they'll be performing traditional dances to some well-loved Christmas songs – it's Bhangra with a festive twist
- **Highland Piper Brighde Chaimbeul**, from St. Mary's Music

School is Scotland's Under 18 piping champion.

- **Elite Studio Centre**, since opening in 2012 this ground breaking dance studio has not only offered intensive dance training but also runs a scholarship program offering youth dancers from all parts of Edinburgh the opportunity to take part in weekly dance training.
- **Braidburn School**, which provides a range of diverse support for learners with additional support needs. A selection of their pupils will be joining us for a truly unique performance using innovative Soundbeam Technology.
- **Elite Dance Pro**, Edinburgh's busiest cheerleaders will be joining us direct from cheering at Gumball 3000, supporting Poppy Scotland and shaking pom-poms poolside at the Commonwealth Games this Summer.

Before switching on the Christmas lights, the special festive guest will join Arlene Stuart and the Edvard Grieg Choir from Norway to lead the assembled masses on George Street in a festive sing-a-long(song sheets provided).

John Donnelly, Chief Executive of Marketing Edinburgh said: "Christmas is a wonderful time in Edinburgh as the city comes alive with show-stopping events and festive fun. Light Night, on 23 November, officially marks the start of Edinburgh's Christmas and is the perfect opportunity to showcase our festive line-up to both residents and visitors. We're looking forward to welcoming people into the city centre to enjoy the jam-packed programme of events, as well as experiencing our infamous food, drink and retail offering. This will be a fantastic occasion for families and friends to celebrate the start of the six week long festive line-up and get into the Christmas spirit."

With an expected audience of over 26 000 people, **Light Night** culminates with our very special festive guest switching on of

the Edinburgh Christmas lights attended by the **Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh** and the **County Convener of Hordaland County Council, Norway**. Then look to the skies and witness a spectacular firework display in the very heart of our iconic City.

Please note that we expect this event to be very busy, so please arrive in plenty of time, travel by public transport if at all possible to avoid congestion in the city centre and dress accordingly.