

Edinburgh International Festival with 'bookend' events for the public

✘ With eight different versions of its cover page (each having a different portrait) the 2015 Festival Programme was launched this morning at The Hub.

Festival 2015 runs from Friday 7 August to Monday 31 August and welcomes over 2,300 artists from 39 nations to perform in Scotland's magnificent capital city.

The Irishman, who previously headed up the Sydney Festival, Dublin Theatre Festival and Vivid LIVE, revealed big international stars across the performing arts, and new areas of programming for the International Festival including more diverse genres of music and family focused shows.

This year's Festival **opens** with a large, free, public outdoor event which sees a spectacular digitally animated artwork projected onto the front of the Usher Hall, set to music. ***The Harmonium Project***, outside the Usher Hall celebrates Edinburgh's relationship with architecture, learning, music and its role in developing technology. **59 Productions**, which combines technology and art to amazing effect will create an event which celebrates 50 years of the **Edinburgh Festival Chorus**, setting a recording of the Chorus, the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** and principal conductor **Peter Oundjian** performing John Adams's *Harmonium* to stunning visuals projected onto the outside of the Hall. The images are formed by data gathered at the **University of Edinburgh** as part of its research into wearable technologies and facial mapping as well as its work with the Edinburgh Festival Chorus on the physical impact of singing.

Over the last 50 years the **Festival Chorus** has demonstrated the levels of excellence that can be achieved by joining in a creative community. Each member enjoys singing as an amateur but the Chorus has been recognised by conductors from Herbert von Karajan to Donald Runnicles as one of the best in the world. In its 50th anniversary season it sings major works by Brahms, Sibelius, Mozart, Berlioz, Beethoven and Adams with all of Scotland's orchestras and principal conductors as well as the Budapest Festival Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra.

☒ At the end of the Festival there will be another large public event.

One of the world's largest fireworks concerts continues to bring the season to a close. On **Monday 31 August** the **Virgin Money Fireworks Concert** will launch over 400,000 fireworks into the sky above Edinburgh Castle, choreographed to live music from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, an unmissable evening. Virgin Money has recently confirmed its support of the event for a further three years.

Remaining **one of the world's largest and most diverse curated festivals**, as well as one of the **most accessible** with substantial discounts and a low entry price tickets, the Edinburgh International Festival continues to attract people from across the globe, expecting its **audiences to travel from around 70 nations** this year to be part of the global cultural celebration in Edinburgh.

A new partnership with **BBC Arts online** reconceives the Festival's artists' conversations to make them available to a wider audience online. The free tickets will be announced and issued on twitter, more information can be found at eif.co.uk/artistsconversations

2015 also marks the **realignment** of the International Festival with the dates of the other August festivals in Edinburgh,

including the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, the Art Festival, the Edinburgh International Book Festival and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.