

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015 – Launch of Underbelly's Circus Hub



Circus Hub is being created and programmed by Underbelly, and forms a distinct new addition to its presence at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

The venue will bring to the Fringe a first class international circus programme of 12 shows, and will include two European premieres, four UK premieres, five Fringe premieres, and will feature artists from across the globe, including Belgium, France, Czech Republic, Australia, Canada and Palestine. It will also show case the best in home grown circus with five shows from the UK.

Directors of Underbelly, Ed Bartlam and Charlie Wood, explain the thinking behind the new venture:

‘In recent years we’ve worked extensively in the circus scene internationally, in the UK and at the Fringe. Two things have become clear to us. Firstly, as we’ve seen from hit seasons of show’s like Circa’s *Beyond* which we produced at the festival in 2014, there’s a huge appetite for circus at the Festival. Secondly, while other international festivals have been good at presenting circus, the Edinburgh Fringe has been constrained by financial considerations and the suitability of performance spaces.

With Circus Hub, we wanted to change that, by creating a thriving focus for world class circus at the Fringe – one site presenting the largest and most technically ambitious programme of circus that the Fringe has ever seen.’

Highlights from the inaugural programme include beautiful aerial circus with a double bill from one of the UK's leading companies Ockham's Razor, making their first ever appearance at the Fringe; renowned international circus companies Cirk La Putyka with *Dolls* and Cirque Le Roux with *The Elephant In The Room* (UK premieres); stories of immigration, freedom, society and nationality from Belgium's *Les Inouis* and *B-Orders* from Palestinian Circus (both UK premieres); remarkable physical feats from France's *La Meute*, and *Barbu*, from red-hot Canadian circus family Cirque Alfonse. There is also family fun with *The Hogwallops* and *Trash Test Dummies*. And returning to Edinburgh are *LIMBO*, the show that electrified Edinburgh's Christmas 2013, and *Bromance*, the Total Theatre Award winning show from The Edinburgh Fringe 2014. Finally there is late-night cabaret fun from Fringe favourite *Piff the Magic Dragon: Breakfast At Piffany's*.

Alongside the programme of shows there will be a programme of *Family Circus Workshops* run by Edinburgh's new centre for circus arts Full Circle. These workshops will give parents and kids aged eight and up the opportunity to try a variety of Circus skills including juggling, hula hoop, acrobatics and aerial.

Circus Hub will also host a community project called *The Summer Collective*, working together with young people from Scotland's Impact Arts 'Creative Pathways' programme, Underbelly will run a week long work placement at Circus Hub. Impact Arts are a charity who run Creative Pathways, a successful Theatre Arts programme in Edinburgh, which supports young people to attain new skills, get back into education and find work in the creative sector, with a focus on the Fringe Festival. The young people will be encouraged to develop their skills in a creative workplace while making key contacts for their future. *The Summer Collective* at Circus Hub will give the students a positive experience, working within the creative industries while improving employability skills.

Unfortunately, due to the recent, and forecast, high winds, only the Beauty Tent had been erected fully in time for the opening of the Festival Fringe. The Lafayette programme will commence on Wednesday with the opening day hosting the press performances.

<http://www.underbellyedinburgh.co.uk/>