

Edinburgh International Festival takes over £4million in ticket sales

The announcements are flooding in even before the day is out. It appears that the festivals this year have without exception been record-breaking.

The 2016 International Festival welcomed audiences from 84 countries to Scotland's capital city. At the helm of his second International Festival programme, Director Fergus Linehan brought over 2,400 world-class artists from 36 nations together in a Festival programme for everyone.

Audiences have packed theatres and concert halls across Edinburgh, with the International Festival taking over £4million in ticket sales income for the first time. Classical music ticket sales in particular enjoyed a record year, with the Queen's Hall series achieving its highest ever sales.



Free, outdoor events such as the *Standard Life Opening Event: Deep Time* and the closing *Virgin Money Fireworks Concert* take the International Festival outside of the city's established venues. Approximately 27,000 people attended the *Standard Life Opening Event: Deep Time*, which saw Edinburgh Castle transformed by digitally animated projections inspired by the city's past, created by 59 Productions.

Tonight, an estimated audience of 250,000 is expected to enjoy the *Virgin Money Fireworks Concert* performed live by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra in Princes St Gardens, and enjoyed by many others across the city.

The 2016 International Festival saw top rated shows and

incredible performances across the programme. Artists at the top of their game enjoying phenomenal success included world-renowned mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli in Bellini's *Norma* which opened the Festival programme; actor Cherry Jones in John Tiffany's production of *The Glass Menagerie*; pianist Daniil Trifonov proved both his virtuosity and versatility across three programmes at the Usher and Queen's Halls; prima ballerina Natalia Osipova transfixed audiences by taking a new direction in her specially commissioned contemporary dance programme; and performer James Thierrée brought incredible genre-busting energy to the stage in *The Toad Knew*.

Other audience highlights included concerts by Sigur Ros, Mogwai and Greg Lawson's presentation of Martyn Bennet's GRIT, all of which mesmerised fans at the Edinburgh Playhouse; singer-songwriter Karine Polwart's *Wind Resistance* quickly emerged as a must-see; Scottish Ballet's searing performance of work by Crystal Pite and Angelin Preljocaj stunned audiences over three evenings; and the hugely popular *Alan Cumming Sings Sappy Songs* which sold out over three weeks at The Hub.



Though rooted in the city centre, the International Festival reaches into wider communities and throughout August worked with local school children of all ages, taking artists and workshops into schools, as well as bringing pupils to Festival shows. The International Festival's Young People's Jury of 25 pupils from six Edinburgh High Schools attended – and judged in their own inimitable style – 19 performances across the programme. The International Festival also moved outward from the city centre into locations across Edinburgh and the Lothians with *Songlines*, an event which saw communities take part in a unique celebration of singing, featuring 12 choirs and soloists across 8 venues stretching from Dalmeny across Edinburgh to Haddington.

The 2016 International Festival programme also included the Edinburgh International Culture Summit, a biennial event which brought together culture ministers, artists, thinkers and arts leaders from around the world. Policy makers underlined the value of placing arts and culture at the heart of both local and global communities, and reinforced their commitment to the arts and cultural industries as vital means of international cooperation and exchange.

International Festival Director, Fergus Linehan said: 'At the end of three incredible weeks, all that remains is for us to thank the hundreds of artists and hundreds of thousands of audience members who continue to make the Edinburgh International Festival one of the wonders of the arts world.

"The International Festival has always been a place for people of all nationalities to meet and exchange ideas and we've seen that everywhere across the city these past three weeks. In uncertain times, events like this feel ever more important, and we at the International Festival are honoured to have been able to host, inspire, entertain and moreover welcome so many artists and visitors from all over the world to our city'.

