

Fringe figures all add up to a great year



All the companies who organise various venues have been getting in touch with us today to tell us their good news. It is clear that this year has been outstanding for everyone involved with Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Even before the final curtain has come down and the fireworks let off we can tell you that everyone is reporting better figures than last year.

After 50,266 performances of 3,269 shows in 294 venues across Edinburgh, the curtain falls for the last time tonight and the house lights go up on the 2016 Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society has announced that by Monday afternoon, with hundreds of performances still to take place, an estimated 2,475,143 tickets had been issued for shows across Scotland's capital. The number of tickets issued reflects a 7.7% increase in comparison to tickets issued by the same point last year.

This year marked Shona McCarthy's first Fringe as Chief Executive of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society.

Shona McCarthy said: "In 2016, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe has once again been a spectacular success, welcoming performers and audiences from across the globe, and issuing an estimated 2,475,143 tickets. We hope that all those who attended ticketed shows, as well as the thousands of people who attended the 643 free shows in the programme, truly enjoyed their Fringe experience."

"The Fringe plays an essential role in the global arts

community, providing a platform for artists from around the UK and the rest of the world to showcase their work and make new connections. With 48 countries represented in this year's programme, the breadth and diversity of talent on offer has been astounding."

"We are now looking forward to our 70th anniversary celebrations in 2017 and hope that as many people as possible will join us to mark this fantastic milestone in the history of Edinburgh's festivals."

Underbelly have reported a good year both critically and at the box office:

- Scotsman Fringe First for JOAN.
- Scotsman Fringe First for FABRIC.
- Edinburgh Comedy Award Nominees for 'Best Show' – Randy Writes a Novel and Zoe Coombs Marr.
- John Robertson's 'The Dark Room' and Abandoman – Arts Award's Voice – Pick Of The Fringe 2016.
- The Stage Edinburgh Awards 2016 for JOAN, FABRIC and BLUSH.
- Total Theatre Award Nominations for Lucy McCormick: Triple Threat, Ada / Ava and Perhaps Hope.
- Dear Home Office – nominated for an Amnesty International's 'Freedom Of Expression' Award.
- 8% increase in ticket sales from 2015.

Underbelly reports an 8% increase in ticket sales from the 2015 Fringe, with 249,000 tickets sold, demonstrating that Underbelly continues to attract a paying audience in the context of a growing, wider Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Underbelly programmed 143 shows over 17 venues and employed 400 staff for the duration of the festival.

Charlie Wood and Ed Bartlam of Underbelly said "Did anyone 70 years ago – the first Fringe producers in the world – have any idea what they were unleashing? Well, there are about 2.3m

people applauding their genius now. As we head into the Fringe's 70th anniversary next year, this year has been one of the best, for tickets sales yes but also for creativity.

"We're delighted and excited to be a part of it and we'd like to thank all of the wonderful shows and audiences that chose to make a date with Underbelly this year."

Underbelly is also one part of a joint initiative with Assembly, Gilded Balloon and Pleasance who have collectively operated 80 performance venues, presented 729 shows, employed 1,695 staff and welcomed over 8,000 performers this year.

Known as EdFest.com the four operators have sold over 1.3 million tickets which is a 7% increase on last year and accounts for over half of the Fringe tickets sold this year.

William Burdett-Coutts from Assembly said : "The Edinburgh Fringe is the single most important event in the country for supporting and generating new work, creating a platform that gains companies national and international recognition. It's a marathon event, where I have walked over 200 miles.

"Edfest.com lies at the heart of the Fringe and is the engine that gives this festival so much of its appeal. I salute all our partners, companies, performers and staff for their unstinting work in making this yet another successful year".

Karen Koren from Gilded Balloon said: "2016 has been another phenomenal year for all involved at the Edinburgh Fringe – a festival made possible by the wonderfully talented artists, the teams that work with them, and the incredible, dedicated staff that populate our venues. Edinburgh's festivals are constantly evolving, and together we shall continue to look forward and think creatively and cooperatively in order to showcase the greatest performances at the biggest arts festival on earth.

"It is a privilege to contribute to the Edinburgh Festival

Fringe, and I'm thrilled that we can continue to do so."

Anthony Alderson from Pleasance Theatre Trust said: "What a festival we have had; with more tickets sold than ever before, and some of the highest quality work this festival has ever seen! Year on year the Edinburgh Festival Fringe has such a huge impact on the landscape of the arts, and for that we should all be incredibly proud.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff that make this festival possible but most importantly, all the brave, talented and incredibly dedicated artists who make it what it is."