

Six FREE things to do this Friday

We know Edinburgh can be an expensive place – but it won't be if you follow our recommendations. (All of these events are free, but please remember that Edinburgh Fringe performers do have *lots* of expenses, so be prepared to make whatever donation you can at the end of their performances.)

Suggestion 1: experience a spoken word artwork! **Ruth Barker** will perform her poetic monologue, *Place of Pillars (2016)*, described as 'a meandering and unreliable ramble across the peat landscape of Skye's Trotternish peninsula, from the township of Flodigarry ('*the floating enclosure*'), to the river Lealt ('*the half stream*'). It is a circuitous loop through the Staffin crofters' uprising, past handmade dinosaurs, via biro marks on a folded map. It is a route of thought – not so much a train as a sheep track bumping its way between the lochans.' *Place of Pillars* was commissioned by **ATLAS Arts** and composed as a live performance that will also be released as a downloadable podcast. 3pm on Friday at the [Scottish National Portrait Gallery](#), 1 Queen Street (just 2 minutes' walk from St Andrew's Square). It's free and you don't need to book – what's more, while you're there you could visit the **Taylor-Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize** exhibition and vote for your favourite image. Admission to the exhibition is also free. Finally, the gallery has the wonderful **Café Portrait** – sadly not free, but very good value – and you've got to eat somewhere, haven't you? (Gallery closes at 5pm, cafe at 4.30pm).

Suggestion 2: show the children some **Science Magic!** Forget Mr Potter – prepare to enter the magical world of science with the real wizard, multi award-winning comedian and scientist **Dónal Vaughan**; he'll show you how magical science can be, with amazing science tricks using everyday items. From

skewering a balloon without popping it, to conjuring a ghost to blow out a candle, Donal will perform neat tricks and explain the scientific principles behind them. And the best part? You can do all the tricks too! Become a science wizard and impress your family and friends. Winner – **2015 Laughing Horse New Act of the Year**. ‘His hilarious and informative takes on science are why he’s a favourite’ (*Bright Club Dublin*). For families with children aged 6+. 11am on Friday, [Laughing Horse @ The Free Sisters](#), 139 Cowgate. Free, no booking required.

✘ **Suggestion 3: see a BBC Live performance!** The BBC’s new [Festival Hub](#) is at **George Heriot’s School** in Lauriston Place. Don’t worry, you can’t miss it – the school’s a cross between Hogwarts and Balmoral, and only a couple of minutes’ walk from the BBC’s old home in Potterrow. There are lots of free, ticketed shows (click [here](#) to find out how to get into those), *and* also lots of free unticketed ones. On Friday you can see **Calum Baird** at 6.45pm, **Panicky Track** at 7.30pm, **All the King’s Men** at 8.15pm, **The Noise Next Door** at 9pm, **The Mars Control** at 9.45pm and **The Lemon Bucket Orkestra** at 11pm – all of these are free and require no booking. Other events throughout August include **Digital Toybox**, cabaret, drag queen punk rockers, art workshops, jazz, crafts, poetry slams, storytimes and Edinburgh’s own, uber cool, **James Brown is Annie**. For full details of these and many more, visit the BBC’s dedicated pages [here](#).

Suggestion 4: see POP-UP Duets (fragments of love)! A new ✘ production by **Janis Claxton Dance**, this series of short (5-minute) pieces created for public spaces features four world-class dancers in a series of site-specific performances on the theme of love. Award winners **Janis Claxton** (choreographer) and **Pippa Murphy** (composer) have designed the dances to emerge from public situations, surprising and delighting unsuspecting audiences and transforming simple everyday interactions through exquisite choreography and dance. *fragments of love*

will pop up throughout the museum during August. Friday at 3.30pm (somewhere!) in the [National Museum of Scotland](#), Chambers Street (just off the South and George IV Bridges). While you're there you can explore the museum itself – a stunning resource with galleries focusing on everything from the story of Scotland to the natural world, art, design and fashion. Admission is free. Image © Roy Campbell-Moore.

✘ **Suggestion 5: Visit Coburg House's Summer Open Studios!** 80 studio tenants will be showing their work at this thriving hub of artists, designers and makers in the heart of Leith. Coburg House is a former granary – for ten years now it has been home to a dynamic creative community of **painters, print makers, jewellers, ceramicists, illustrators, textile artists, a photographer, sign writers, a landscape designer and an architect**. Come and see what they've been up to! Opens Friday evening 6-9pm, then 11am-6pm on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th August. [Coburg House](#) is at 15 Coburg Street; you can walk there along the beautiful Water of Leith if you're feeling energetic, or take a [Lothian bus](#) from the centre – many routes go to Leith. While you're down there you'll find lots more to see and do, plus plenty of lovely cafés and coffee shops; a peaceful interlude from all the festival frenzy up in the town.

Suggestion 6: an early evening at the Jazz Bar! Today's ✘ free session at this much-loved Edinburgh institution is a **Fringe Preview – Hot Tin Roof** is a trio playing stripped back, bluesy tunes about life and the world we live in, with acoustic and electric guitars plus cajon. The band's shows were a sell-out last year and Highly Recommended by *FringeReview*, whose Paul Levy called them 'a perfect way to tune into Edinburgh...relaxed, accessible, intelligent'. And guess whose comment this is? 'Hot Tin Roof equals excellent blues'. Clue: he's killed off quite a few characters in this very city.* Friday, 7-8pm in [The Jazz Bar](#) at 1a Chambers Street, just off the South Bridge.

So enjoy your Friday – but don't party too hard, you've still got three weeks to go!

*Answer: Ian Rankin of course!