

# Edinburgh International Festival 2020 – a wee bit of opera and a bit of ballet

Although the Edinburgh International Festival was cancelled a few months ago the Director Fergus Linehan was determined to bring some culture to Edinburgh this summer.

As it turns out there is a lot of culture on offer and it takes a bit of picking your way through. All of the videos can be found on the Edinburgh International Festival's [YouTube channel](#).

In this article we focus on ballet and opera – and how you can see the performances.



Scottish Opera presents a fresh and witty digital adaptation of Gian Carlo Menotti's opera, *The Telephone*. This one act romantic comedy for two singers and a chamber orchestra, was filmed at the iconic King's Theatre in Leven Street.

Cast as young lovers Lucy and Ben are soprano Soraya Mafi and baritone Jonathan McGovern (*Flight 2018*), joined by supporting actor Hannah Birkin, and conducted by Stuart Stratford, Scottish Opera Music Director. They are accompanied by 24 players from The Orchestra of Scottish Opera.

In Menotti's 1947 work – now updated to modern-day Edinburgh – Ben has met Lucy for a quick drink before he has to catch a train. What Lucy doesn't know is that Ben is about to propose, but she can't tear her eyes away from her mobile. A reminder that real life is so much more interesting than what is on our phone screens, *The Telephone* is a Scottish Opera film, commissioned by Edinburgh International Festival, directed by Daisy Evans (*Opera Highlights 2018*) with designs by Loren Elstein.

All cast and crew observed social distancing throughout the making of the film.

Director, Daisy Evans said: “The Telephone is a story that resonates with us all, too often do our eyes drift to our phone screens as notifications pop up, friends call and social media beacons. This opera is a light-hearted, loving window into the lives of a young couple; Ben has an important question to ask Lucy, but can he beat the lure of the telephone?’

## **Spend an evening with Scottish Ballet and watch them perform in Catalyst from the Festival Theatre.**

A new work, emerging choreographer Nicholas Shoesmith, who danced the role of John Proctor in *The Crucible*, presents the world premiere of *Catalyst*. This specially commissioned work is performed on the Festival Theatre’s empty stage in a gesture of creative resilience.

Helen Pickett is the pioneering choreographer behind the 2019 International Festival’s acclaimed *The Crucible*. She revives her shorter duet work *Trace*, alongside Resident Choreographer Sophie Laplane’s *Oxymore*, both of which were commissioned for the 2013 International Festival.

Alexander Whitley investigates the relationship between technological progress and the human capacity for forethought with *Prometheus & Epimetheus*, created in collaboration with Digital Artist in Residence Zachary Eastwood-Bloom.

Three existing digital performances are also made available for International Festival audiences. *Frontiers* challenges outdated gender norms in classical ballet, created by San Francisco Ballet choreographer Myles Thatcher. *Idle Eyes* is an

electric piece by Sophie Laplane featuring dancers from Scottish Ballet alongside the company's Youth Exchange Programme. Tremble features 26 dancers performing in an abstract dining room, from award-winning choreographer-directors Jess and Morgs.