

Scotland's second poetry festival, 'Push The Boat Out', launches its inaugural programme

Launching its inaugural programme today (Wed. 8 Sept) in Edinburgh, 'Push The Boat Out' (PTBO) is Scotland's newest and most boundary-bending poetry festival, .

Taking place from the 15 – 17 October 2021 within the creative hub of Summerhall, 'Push The Boat Out' will be the second poetry festival ever to be held in Scotland and its aims to do what it says on the tin, by challenging perceptions of what poetry is and how it can be enjoyed.

Named after the poem "At Eighty" by the first Glasgow poet laureate Edwin Morgan, PTBO is inspired by the vibrancy and range of contemporary poetry, hip hop and spoken word coming out of Scotland, the UK and indeed the world. The aim of the festival is to not only give poetry a new platform, but to create an environment where all variations of this vital artform are encouraged to grow, evolve and even collide.





Taking place within the creative spaces of Summerhall in Edinburgh, the PTBO programme will seep into every nook and cranny of this established arts venue through multiple means, including film, imagery, song, music, dance, singing, debate and other forms of poetry performance.

Underpinning the festival are four key themes; social justice and representation; healing and recovery; climate crisis and ecopoetics; and virtual and other realities. Audiences can expect first-class performances from around 60 poets, emerging and established, including the newly appointed Scots Makar Kathleen Jamie.

Other key programme highlights include performances by Scottish hip hop legend Solareye / Dave Hook of Stanley Odd, celebrated Caribbean poet Lorna Goodison, and the author the first-ever poetry collection to win The Guardian First Book Award, Andrew McMillan. Joining them on the many and varied Summerhall 'stages' are Roseanne Watt, Hannah Lavery, Nova Scotia the Truth, Harry Josephine Giles, Ray Antrobus, Clare Pollard, Caroline Bird, Salena Godden and many more.





Another key element to the PTB0 programme is the Poetry Mile initiative which, through a dedicated web app, allows users to experience Edinburgh differently, filtered through the eyes and ears of some of the country's finest poets. Featuring over 50 specifically commissioned poems from over 25 poets, all locations featured are within a square mile of Summerhall. The app generates bespoke walking tours depending on the type of experience the user requests to have.

The brainchild of director Jenny Niven, former head of literature at Creative Scotland, and co-founder Kevin Williamson, writer, publisher and founder of the Edinburgh arts events collective Neu! Reekie!, PTB0 is convinced of the need for poetry more now than ever before, particularly as we emerge from lengthy lockdowns and seek new ways to express ourselves.

Jenny Niven, co-founder of 'Push The Boat Out', said: "We are so excited to be launching our inaugural 'Push The Boat Out'

programme after what has been a difficult year for everyone, not least those working within the arts.

“That said, poetry is all about using language in new ways, to express new experiences, so if ever there was a time to explore this vital and vibrant art form, it is now.





“We feel incredibly lucky to be hosting our inaugural festival in a city so full of talent, at a time when there is so much to say, and off the back of a summer festival season that saw performance take over more city spaces than ever before.

“With performers and artists spanning the full spectrum of this spectacular artform, from classical verse to hip hop, we can’t wait for audiences to come along and enjoy.”

Hot on the heels of a fringe festival that was soul food for a

city starved of culture and live performances, 'Push The Boat Out' founders and organisers hope to harness this sense of the city as a natural backdrop as the inaugural festival takes its first steps onto Scotland's stage.

The newest festival [@PTB0poetry](#) will take place next month from 14 to 17 October and here founders [@williamsonkev](#) and [@jennyniv](#) explain what it is all about pic.twitter.com/703tdb1wgR

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [September 8, 2021](#)

'Push The Boat Out' will go ahead in keeping with whatever Covid-19 regulations are in place on the 15 – 17 October in Scotland. Born out of a time of turbulence, the festival team, venue, founders and friends will continue to manage the festival in a safe and agile way.

For the full programme visit:
<https://shows.pushtheboatout.org/>