

Looking ahead to the Edinburgh International Festival 2022

With an element of relief, those involved in bringing us our culture fix are beginning to emerge with all sorts of good things to look forward to.

Today as Burns fans prepare to mark the birth of Robert Burns on Burns Night, the Edinburgh International Festival and the National Theatre of Scotland announce how they will celebrate his life and legacy with *Burn*, starring Alan Cumming, which will premiere at the 2022 Edinburgh International Festival.

Scotland's national theatre company also brings a brand-new staging of Liz Lochhead's powerful adaption of Euripides' *Medea* to this year's Festival. These two theatre productions are the first to be announced as part of the 2022 International Festival, celebrating its 75th anniversary this year.



Photo of Alan Cumming Lawrence Winram
Burn is a creative collaboration between Scottish artist Alan Cumming and the Olivier award-winning choreographer Steven

Hoggett (*Black Watch*, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*). Co-produced by the National Theatre of Scotland, New York City's The Joyce Theater and Edinburgh International Festival, this powerful new piece of dance theatre challenges the traditional 'biscuit tin' image of Scotland's national bard and explores his personal struggles and spectacular successes.

Performed by Alan Cumming in his solo dance theatre debut, *Burn* features the music of acclaimed contemporary musician and composer Anna Meredith, with visually arresting set and video design by Ana Inés Jabares Pita and Lewis den Hertog.

Alan Cumming's trademark blend of cabaret, storytelling and song has made him an International Festival favourite, with recent performances including *Alan Cumming Is Not Acting His Age* in 2021 and *Alan Cumming Sings Sappy Songs* in 2016.



Alan Cumming at Club Cumming during the Edinburgh International Festival in 2017 Photo Martin P McAdam
He also appeared as the god Dionysus in the National Theatre of Scotland's production of *The Bacchae* at the 2007 International Festival.

Former Scots Makar Liz Lochhead makes her International Festival debut with her modern adaptation of *Medea*, in a contemporary re-telling packed with lyrical intensity and poetic flair. The title role is played by award-winning performer Adura Onashile, with the production directed by Michael Boyd, former Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company.



Adura Onashile in *Medea* PHOTO © Peter Dibdin

Lochhead's *Medea* was first staged in Glasgow in 2000 by Theatre Babel, before going on to tour nationally, as well as visiting the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in both 2000 and 2001, where it played to critical and audience acclaim.

The National Theatre of Scotland returns to the International Festival following Hannah Lavery's *Lament for Sheku Bayoh* in 2021 and its acclaimed film *Ghost Light* for the Festival's 2020 digital programme. Previous Festival performances include Jackie Kay's *Red Dust Road*, Tim Crouch's *Total Immediate Collective* *Imminent* *Terrestrial*

Salvation, Midsummer, Realism and The James Plays.

Fergus Linehan, Festival Director of the Edinburgh International Festival said: "It is always a joy to see the National Theatre of Scotland's work in the Edinburgh International Festival's theatre programme, and I am especially pleased to welcome them back with these two tremendously exciting works in our 75th anniversary year. The calibre of the artists involved is exceptional, from former Makar Liz Lochhead to award-winning performers in Adura Onashile and Alan Cumming and two of our most celebrated theatre artists in Michael Boyd and Steven Hoggett."



Alan Cumming PHOTO Josh Going

Alan Cumming said: "I think all any artist wants to do is tell a story. And If I have one regret in my artistic life it would

be that I did not become a dancer and be able to tell a story completely, with my entire body. Robert Burns has always fascinated me. Through his work I feel he tells us the absolute truth of who we are as Scots, but the more I researched him the more I realised I didn't know the absolute truth of him. *Burn* is my attempt at trying to tell more of his story using my whole body."

Dates and ticket information for *Burn* and *Medea* will be announced soon along with full details of the 2022 Edinburgh International Festival programme.

For further information about the National Theatre of Scotland's performances at the 2022 Edinburgh International Festival, visit www.eif.co.uk.