

2022 International Children's Festival launches its programme

With a live programme for schools, families and industry professionals, the Edinburgh International Children's Festival launched today (17th March). The Festival will run over two full weekends, giving families more opportunities to watch shows.

The 2022 programme offers a rich mix of artforms, featuring circus for babies, acrobatic painting, classical music fused with theatre, and productions that incorporate beautiful video projections and soundtracks. While the works are diverse in artform and age range, there are common themes that speak to the complex experiences children are dealing with during the pandemic.

Many productions explore isolation, touch and human connection, while others invite us to reflect on bodies that are different from the norm, and the possibilities, challenges and beauty within this. The theme of mental health and peer pressure also features strongly throughout the programme.



Little Top

Despite restrictions imposed by Covid, the programme remains international and includes a regional focus on Flanders, the Dutch-speaking Northern part of Belgium, one of the world's leaders in producing innovative theatre and dance for young audiences.

Festival Director Noel Jordan said: "We are delighted to be presenting a live festival for 2022 with a varied programme of Scottish and European performances. This year's Festival is full of special moments for children and their families – experiences that will enable young people to reconnect and encourage them to wish, desire and aspire beyond their own lives and immediate neighbourhoods, into their potential future selves. Communal connectedness is crucial in the lives of children and young people and never more timely than this current period in our history."



Whirly Gig by Daniel Padden photo Mihaela Bodlovic

This year's programme includes two new Scottish commissions funded by the Scottish Government's Festivals Expo Fund, that will be touring and reaching children beyond Edinburgh. Both commissions explore the theme of mental health and how to make sense of a confusing world.

The Hope River Girls is a reconceived version for young audiences of groupwork's multi award-winning 2019 debut, The Afflicted. Inspired by real events, the show tells the story of 24 schoolgirls who start behaving strangely and come under intense media scrutiny. The Hope River Girls will tour across Scotland in the lead up to the Festival, including in Glasgow, Stirling, St Andrews, Mull, Wick and Inverness.



We Touch, We Play, We Dance © Zoe Manders

I am Tiger, produced by Perth Theatre and written by Oliver Emanuel during his time as an Imagine Accelerator artist, tells the story of a girl who is given a pet tiger by her parents following the death by suicide of her big brother.

Culture Minister Neil Gray MSP said: “We’re delighted to support the Edinburgh International Children’s Festival’s fantastic line up of fully live events this year with £115,000 from the Festivals Expo Fund. The Festival has a well-deserved reputation for showcasing the very best in children’s theatre and dance productions from around the world. It’s important that children of all ages have the opportunity to experience these national and international multi-artform productions which can ignite their imaginations and creativity and contribute to their well-being.”



Twee Turven Hoog op lokatie – Simone de Jong – Kluizelaar – OstadeTheater – Amsterdam – © Saris & Den Engelsman

This year's programme also features a film package for schools who are unable to travel to Edinburgh, supported by Cirrus Logic. Being Human includes four short films, each exploring the nature of what it is to be human, the things that make us different and the connections that bring us all together.

In order to increase access to more families, the Festival will once again open with Family Encounters, a day of free performances and arts activities at the National Museum of Scotland featuring a range of Scotland-based artists. As well as dance, music and walk about characters, innovative performances have been commissioned in partnership with Merchant City Festival, National Museum of Scotland and Platform, including a new piece for visually impaired children.

The day will also feature a New Stories strand supported by The Year of Stories 2022 Community Stories Funds.



Quinn Rattigan (9) and Fenella Jagger (7) from Montessori Arts School reveal this year's poster © 2022 J.L. Preece

Marie Christie, Head of Development at VisitScotland said: "We are delighted to be supporting the Festival Family Encounters through the Year of Stories 2022 Community Stories Fund. Events play an important role in our communities as they sustain livelihoods and help to celebrate and promote our unique places, spaces and stories. Themed Years are all about collaboration and Museums and Galleries Scotland, National Lottery Heritage Fund and VisitScotland are pleased to work in partnership to create this fund to showcase community stories."

Festival tickets are on sale now. For full programme and booking information, go to www.imagnate.org.uk/festival. Tickets can be booked online or at 0131 226 0019.