

Edinburgh celebrates 75 years as a Festival City in 2022

After coming into being in the shadow of a worldwide cataclysm, this year is the 75th anniversary of Edinburgh's birth as a world leading festival city and our first festivals sought to use culture as a healing balm to bring peoples and nations together in celebration of our common humanity and help 'the flowering of the human spirit'.

Over the years that spirit has been sustained, making Edinburgh and our festivals a unique hub of cultural excellence, international exchange, inspirational experience and inclusive programming. Now, following the worldwide pandemic and in the face of numerous global issues, the festivals' founding spirit is as relevant as ever – and so in 2022 we will reflect on our past and reimagine our common future.



Nicola Benedetti CBE becomes the Director Designate of the Edinburgh International Festival, and will become Festival Director on 1 October 2022. © 2021 J.L. Preece

Over the years our Festivals have played host to creatives from every continent and premiered work that has travelled the globe, shaping the cultural world in which we now live and becoming an indispensable part of Edinburgh's intangible cultural heritage. That journey will help shape our 2022 programmes – as part of Scotland's Year of Stories – allowing us to tell our unique stories in new and interesting ways.

Our programmes across the 75th anniversary year will be open and innovative, mindful of the past and protective for the future.

- We will celebrate the element of risk and the joy of discovery that festivals bring
- We will shed fresh light on the key issues shaping the future, whether human rights or the climate emergency
- We will inspire our home communities with creative

encounters on their doorsteps

- We will bring the local and the international together, in acts of global solidarity that echo our founding spirit
- We will cultivate cultural talent, and bring Scotland to the world and the world to Scotland, on live and digital platforms
- We will dream, reflect, invent and imagine the world we all want to live in – putting artists, thinkers and audiences centre stage in creating our shared human futures
- We will be distinctively Scottish and fiercely international.
- Full details of festival programmes will be released throughout the year but a number of early highlights have already been announced.



Edinburgh Science Festival Launched late last month © 2022
J.L. Preece

Before we get to August Edinburgh Science Festival, the world's first such festival when it started in 1989, returns

over the Easter holidays [9 to 24th April], with the theme of Revolutions, focusing on the power of circles and revolutionary approaches to everything from personal to planetary health, and with an unashamed emphasis on the urgency of tackling the climate crisis. Following hot on its heels will be Edinburgh International Children's Festival [7 to 15th May], the UK's leading festival of theatre and dance for young people, which has a packed programme of Scottish and international work, including two newly commissioned theatre shows – Oliver Emanuel's I am Tiger and groupwork's The Hope River Girls – alongside its free Family Encounters Day in the spectacular National Museum of Scotland.

Moving in to July, we find the Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival [15 to 24th July], the UK's largest independent Jazz & Blues Festival, which offers a snapshot of the current UK and international scene in a musical menu ranging through New Orleans Jazz of the 1920s and Mississippi delta blues to the latest and freshest sounds in soul and funk.



There's always something 'interesting' to see at Edinburgh Art

Festival © 2021 J.L. Preece

Starting the August ball rolling in 2022 will be the Edinburgh Art Festival [28 July to 28 August], the UK's largest annual visual arts festival, which this year will feature leading international and UK artists alongside the best emerging talent, major survey exhibitions of historic figures, and a special programme of newly commissioned artworks that respond to public and historic sites in the city. The Edinburgh International Festival [5 to 18th August], will present a 75th anniversary programme featuring the finest performers and ensembles which this year will include Tony award-winning star of stage and screen Alan Cumming in *Burn*, a new piece of dance theatre challenging the traditional 'biscuit tin' image of Scotland's national bard, plus a brand-new staging of Liz Lochhead's powerful adaptation of Euripides' *Medea*.

Running alongside will be the Edinburgh Festival Fringe [5 to 29th August] which, being totally open-access, is proud to include in its programme anyone with a story to tell and a venue willing to host them and amongst the hundreds of events already on sale are the likes of legendary comedian Stewart Lee, one of the world's leading performance companies Circa, and award winning theatre show *Myra's Story*.



Tim Marriott played 'Watson: The Final Problem' in 2021's Fringe © 2021 J.L. Preece

The Edinburgh skyline in August will see the return of Scotland's iconic Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo [5 to 27th August] with the show theme 'Voices' a celebration of the connections, cultures and languages that bring us together – which will take place at the unique setting of Edinburgh Castle where audiences will enjoy the legendary sound of the Massed Pipes and Drums alongside a host of international acts. Later in the month the Edinburgh International Book Festival [13 to 28th August] takes root in it's new home around the grounds of Edinburgh's College of Art where it will bring leading and emerging authors and thinkers together to inspire each other and audiences in an extensive programme of public events – including a new mass-participation project centred around gathering and creating stories from and for people in response to Scotland's Year of Stories.



Edinburgh International Book Festival will once again be at Edinburgh College of Art. © 2021 J.L.Preece

And the August festival calendar is completed by the Edinburgh International Film Festival [12 to 20th August] whose programme will see major features, short films, experimental cinema and documentary films – including this year Scotland's Stories On Screen across iconic and exciting places and spaces, as part of Scotland's Year of Stories.

After a short post summer break, we're back on the festival trail with the Scottish International Storytelling Festival [14 to 30 October]. From storytelling performances to panel discussions, and a lively family strand of storytelling activities around Halloween, there's something here for all Festival-goers to get involved with – centred around the Scottish Storytelling Centre, the only purpose built home for storytelling in the UK.



Missing in action for two years at New Year...

As the year comes to a close we join the festival legend that is Edinburgh's Hogmanay which has evolved to become one of the greatest outdoor celebrations of New Year's Eve in the world, taking place across three days and seeing a host of live music and street arts. As the bells strike midnight, join hands with friends from across the globe in the world's biggest rendition of Auld Lang Syne! Then get ready for the next year of the Edinburgh Festivals.