

Edinburgh Deaf Festival – Q&A with Craig McCulloch

One of the performers taking part in Edinburgh Deaf Festival is Craig McCulloch. We chatted with him about his career and the festival.



Craig McCulloch
Tell us a little about yourself.

I'm an actor who happens to be deaf, brought up and based in Falkirk. I graduated from Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2018, and was part of the first cohort on the ground-breaking BA Performance in BSL/English course. Since graduating I have worked as an actor, associate director, assistant director, translator, BSL consultant and workshop leader.

What show you are taking part in at the Edinburgh Deaf Festival and what's your role?

I'm co-hosting a cabaret-style show, *Spill Your Drink* which is produced by Solar Bear, at The Blackwood Bar (Deaf Action), Albany Street. It's is a fantastic opportunity to showcase amazing deaf talents. This is my first time as a host and I'm looking forward to putting aside my acting hat, though I can't promise I won't perform as it's in my nature. Some advice for audiences, hold on to your drinks!

Why is the festival valuable and what could it achieve?

This has been a long time coming. We needed this festival to bring everyone together and enjoy theatre, especially with accessibility. At the Fringe it's exciting to see random shows but not all are accessible and I hope we can change that. This festival belongs to us and is for those who want to learn more about deaf culture, language and heritage. It gives mainstream audiences an opportunity to learn about our rich deaf culture. We welcome people to join in and learn because we want to break barriers and create a bridge between deaf and hearing people.

What can be done to create more opportunities for deaf performers and audiences?

There isn't enough deaf representation in theatre, TV and film in Scotland. There's not enough opportunities or funding to create or write stories and develop them into shows. We want to play many characters, not just roles specifically for deaf actors. I don't want to be seen as a box to be ticked. I want

to be seen or heard as Craig McCulloch, an actor or theatre-maker creating original work. I want to be able to have those conversations with directors, theatre-makers, casting directors, producers and start creating more opportunities not just for myself but others too.

Would an annual Deaf Festival, coinciding with other Edinburgh festivals, be useful?

Yes. We are the people to go to about access. We have experienced that our whole life with things not being accessible. Other festivals should come together with Edinburgh Deaf Festival and we can help shape their accessibility and deaf awareness. We can take this further and demand more funding from Creative Scotland and help theatre companies with funding and support with BSL interpreters and captioners so deaf and hard of hearing audiences can enjoy more accessible shows. Also it would create more opportunities for deaf actors to join the other festivals.

- <https://edinburghdeaffestival.co.uk>







