

Keep it Lit – The Scottish International Storytelling Festival

Launching its 2022 festival theme – Keep It Lit – on Wednesday The Scottish International Storytelling Festival (SISF) invites audiences to join them round the hearth of storytelling this autumn, a symbolic fire where experiences and memories are shared, and the torch of oral storytelling is passed on.

In celebration of Scotland's Year of Stories, the 2022 festival programme is the largest to date, inviting everyone to the ceilidh – locally, nationally and globally. From 14 to 31 October, more than 240 events will form the world's largest celebration of storytelling, anchored at the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh, and spreading tales across the city and wider Scotland, and around the world online.

During this difficult year, a story shared is a trouble eased, and the festival will host 145 free events so everyone can find a seat round the hearth.





Shona Cowie and Neil Sutcliffe © 2022 J.L. Preece

The festival opens on Friday 14 October with its Opening

Concert: 'Speak Out the Other'; a blend of voice and music navigating the belonging, becoming, and 'otherness' of queer identities that permeate Scottish myth. Performed by the Young Edinburgh Storytellers (YES), members Mark Borthwick, Ailsa Dixon, and David Hughes will perform for their freedom from the fictional Fey court, where the fair folk in the audience decide their fate.

The festival's Opening Concert leads a series of commissioned events around Interpreting Scotland, which invite creatives from within and beyond the storytelling community to create new work around contemporary discussion points through stories past, present, and future. Examining how Scotland shapes its sense of self during this period of change.



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Donald Smith, Festival Director of SISF. © 2022 J.L. Preece

Other highlights in the series include -:

- ‘Fàilte Gu BSL | Welcome to BSL’ (Sun 16 Oct), exploring the relationship in Scottish culture between Gaelic and BSL through a collaborative performance led by Gaelic speaker, and d/Deaf musician, Evie Waddell.
- ‘A Fairie Tale’ (Tue 18 Oct), which explores Scottish race and gender identities through a mediaeval inspired landscape, reimagining the folk classic Thomas the Rhymer, through a brand-new piece of storytelling and live music.
- ‘Scotia Botanica: Workshops and Seed Stories’ (Sat 22 & Thu 27 Oct), reflecting on Scotland’s evolving culture to revalue natural habitats, and exploring how we adapt to climate change and recognise diversity.

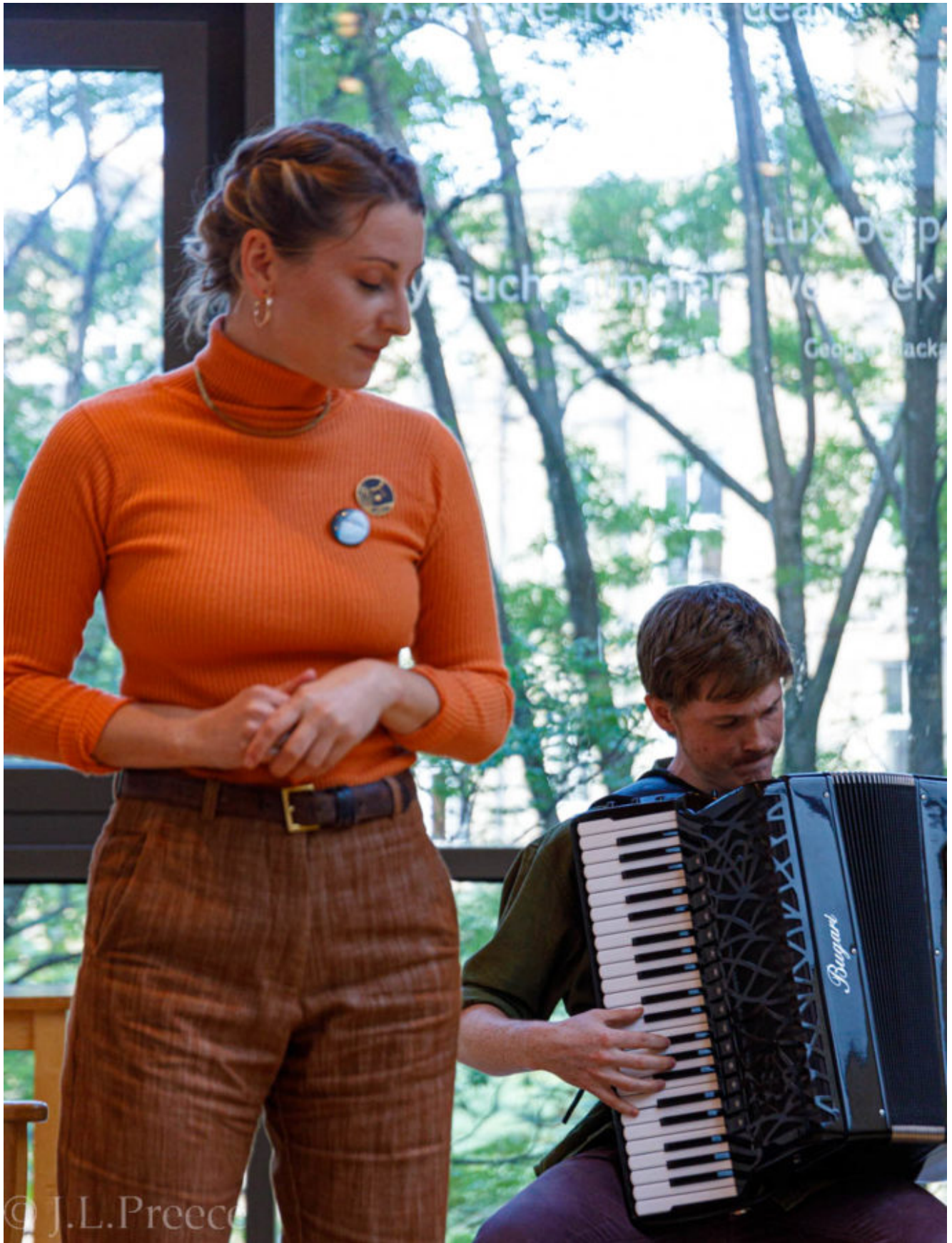
Elsewhere in the programme, SISF celebrates language, landscape and identities with its ‘Map of Stories’ events (Sat 15 Oct – Sun 6 Nov); an ambitious new project from Transgressive North for Scotland’s Year of Stories. Supported

by EventScotland, the 'Map of Stories' film ceilidhs, acknowledge the rich and diverse oral storytelling heritage of Scotland with multimedia performances from some of the country's leading storytellers.

Performed as part of SISF's Edinburgh programme, each performance will then tour to its region of focus – Dumfries & Galloway, the North East, Perth & Kinross, the Outer Hebrides, and Orkney respectively – and explore the distinctive stories, memories and folklore arising from that particular community and landscape.









The Map of Stories live events form part of SISF's Tales, Tongues and Trails strand; with other highlights from the programme including -:

- Hungarian storytellers Lily Asch and Csenge Virág Zalka connecting continents and traditions in 'Lost Stories' (Tue 18 Oct); tracing movement between tradition and transformation, and how such stories are still active through who we are today.
- Stories and traditions from the Mi'kmaq and Gaelic speaking cultures in 'A' lorg Sruthan Falaichte | Finding Hidden Streams' (Sat 22 Oct), examining how North America's First Nations and Gaelic speaking emigrants handed on their culture through oral tradition.
- A magical interlude of ancient ballads and stories from folk music duo Pictism and storyteller Stuart McHardy with 'Female Powers: Fairy Queens and Witches' (Sun 30 Oct), focusing on Halloween and its feminine themes.
- An epic retelling of 'Sgiath: Warrior Queen of Skye' (Mon 31 Oct), from storyteller Marion Kenny, and musician John Kenny.

As events in Edinburgh explore traditions and stories from around the world, SISF will invite audiences from further afield to join them at the fireside with its Global Platform, a series of digital storytelling and development sessions. Hosted by Festival Director, Donald Smith, the Global Platform will cover the 'Art of the Storyteller' (Mon 17 – Fri 21 Oct), as well as guide discussion around the history of oral storytelling and its contemporary renaissance worldwide through its Global Labs (Mon 24 – Fri 28 Oct), held in association with The Earth Stories Collection and Earth Charter International.



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Sun for a plough
A fire for clo...
A hole for the...

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B...
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Daniel Abercrombie, Associate Director of SISF. © 2022 J.L. Preece

There's plenty for young budding storytellers at SISF, with

tales old and new to enjoy. Celebrate the new children's storybook 'Silver Unicorns & Golden Birds: Scottish Traveller Tales for Children' (Sat 15 Oct); an interactive, sing-along eco adventure, 'Plop! In the Ocean' (Mon 17 Oct), based on an ancient Greek slapstick comedy all about friendship; and prepare to become a Viking poet in School for 'Skalds with Macastory' (Sun 23 Oct), where families can create their own mini-saga and learn to tell it in the style of the ancient Viking Skalds.

Alongside these events, this year's Festival Exhibition will be hosted at the Scottish Storytelling Centre. John Slavin: 'Land of the Ravens (Thu 6 – Mon 31 Oct) is a multiform exhibition, inspired by the international folk tale Jack and the Two Ravens. Plus 'The Big Scottish Story Ripple' (Wed 12 Oct – Wed 30 Nov) returns, pairing local storytellers with schools and community groups to start a ripple of stories and kindness across Scotland.

Looking ahead to this year's event, Scottish International Storytelling Festival Director, Donald Smith said: "This is the biggest Storytelling Festival since it began in 1989. It is our widest reach culturally, socially and geographically, marking Scotland's Year of Stories.

"We are responding to the cost-of-living crisis with 145 free events, reducing ticket prices, offering a uniquely generous Festival Pass and keeping a specially commissioned digital programme to provide worldwide reach for those who cannot or choose not to travel. Everyone is welcome at our hearthside."



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The Scottish International Storytelling Festival will take place from 14 – 31 October. This year, when people's lives are

under pressure on all sides, SISF says it is striving to make it affordable for everyone. Tickets to each event cost a maximum of £10, with family events costing £5 per ticket.

For those planning on attending multiple events, the Festival Pass offers discounted tickets to many live festival events, online and at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, as well as a discount at the Scottish Storytelling Centre's bookshop and Haggis Box Café.

To purchase tickets and browse the full programme, click [here](#).

Scottish International Storytelling Festival

14 – 31 October 2022

In person in Edinburgh and across Scotland, and online

For tickets and more info visit www.sisf.org.uk