

No fireworks to end the Festival this year

The Edinburgh International Festival did not initially make an official announcement, but there is to be no firework display from Edinburgh Castle to end the three week long cultural event.

Organisers have confirmed that there is no sponsor for the pyrotechnics and so it will not happen this year. The last time there were fireworks in August was in 2019, and any during the pandemic were cancelled due to restrictions. The pandemic also put paid to fireworks to music for the 75th year's celebrations in 2022. Since the display began in 1982 around 400,000 fireworks were used in each display sponsored by the Bank of Scotland and then Virgin Money.

When the display was first put on crowds of up to 250,000 lined the streets around Princes Street and George Street to get a view of the spectacular display.

An EIF spokeswoman said: "The International Festival won't be staging the fireworks this year.

"The fireworks have always been dependent on a major sponsor, and we do not have one to support the event this year.

"We will be speaking with the other August festivals and The City of Edinburgh Council to see what form a large-scale closing event might take in the future, that would replace the fireworks."

On the final weekend there will be recorded music piped into Charlotte Square Garden. This is described by the festival as a “musical oasis”. When we spoke to Festival Director Nicola Benedetti earlier in the week she explained more about it.

It seems rather surprising to use this garden which was vacated by the Edinburgh International Book Festival in recent years, owing to works needed to drain the garden properly, and using recorded music when the month will have been full of live events.

And there was no mention of any fireworks. When we asked Ms Benedetti about this she explained: “I think the idea for us is just a little bit more of a casual and social interaction with music. So things that you can happen upon. For some people, the notion of sitting still for an hour or two hours, that’s not for everyone. So we want to be able to still make the greatest of art available for those who would like it in more of a sort of fluid environment.”

Last year live music from the Philadelphia Orchestra was streamed to the Ross Bandstand at the end of August.

There is an opening celebration which will be held in Princes Street Gardens free to all with a celebration of professional and community music-making from artists from all over the country.

And as part of the EIF a capsule programme curated by the Edinburgh International Film Festival will be screened showing the work of local and global filmmakers. The full programme will be announced in June.



Virgin Money Fireworks 2019 – Edinburgh International Festival. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com