

Salmond is ready to take on the Fringe

The former First Minister Alex Salmond is back on the Fringe in a new show called The Ayes Have It! The Ayes Have It!

Appearing at the Palais de Varieté Salmond will spar with David Davis MP, former Brexit minister on important matters such as Brexit, independence, abolishing the monarchy and the House of Lords. The two are friends although from differing political backgrounds. This is your best-ever opportunity to play your part in a feisty parliamentary-style debate on the great issues of the day. Take sides with two top-rate teams of politicians and celebrities, led by Former First Minister, Alex Salmond. Remember, every day your vote will decide whether "The Ayes Have It!"

The things he will not be talking about however include his former protégée and successor, Nicola Sturgeon or her successor, Humza Yousaf. Salmond is happy to talk about the chances for the political party he leads, Alba, and he remains focused and remains positive that there will be an independent Scotland in all of our futures.

He said: "When I was leader in 2011, the support for the SNP was almost half the electorate, and support for independence was at 30%. Now we have almost exactly the reverse support for the SNP is down around 30% and support for independence, the concept, the ideal is up at 50%. So it's an interesting question, are you closer to independence when the support is much higher, but the party – the leading party of independence

is weaker? I think the underlying answer is yes, yes you are. You just have to organise yourself correctly, to bring the supporters of independence into the ballot box to vote for the best independence Party and I'd say that was Alba.

"One of the strengths we had back in the independence referendum was that, regardless of people's views on independence, most people agreed that the SNP were doing a cracking job of running The Scottish Government. It was very efficient. We had done a lot of good things we'd built bridges and roads and railway lines all over the place. And folks said yes we've made education free things that people wanted. We didn't have inefficiency, we didn't have any recognisable waste of money. Now, they've lost their way on that over the last few years, no question about that. And they have to recover a reputation for good government. In the meantime, we need people who actually argue for independence who want to mobilise independence majority and above all, have some sort of idea about how to get there."

Asked if he was disappointed in The Scottish Government he replied only that they have "wasted a heaven sent opportunity for independence".

No matter that he was once a serious politician he says he likes the lighter side of life saying "there is no job, I know, which would be tolerable, sustainable, unless you are prepared where appropriate, to have a bit of fun. And, you know, these subjects that David and I are gonna be debating, we have to be very selective because there's only so many things we actually disagree on.

"If it came to human rights, internationalism or defending freedom of speech, David and I are of the same mind. But what we expect is a lively boisterous festival crowd at night in the Spiegeltent. And they can be as raucous as they like as long as it is good natured. If people make a good point then give them a clap or if they make a bad point give them a boo.

You can still have in my view an entertaining debate.”

David Davis MP said: “Hopefully it’ll be quite quick paced. We’re only getting eight minutes apiece on each main speech, which is quite short when you think what parliamentary speeches are like. But you know, it’ll be fun.”

The full list of those taking part includes:

- Right Honourable Alex Salmond, Former First Minister
- Right Honourable David Davis MP, Former Secretary of State
- Right Honourable John Bercow, Former Speaker House of Commons
- Lord Tom Strathclyde, Former Speaker House of Lords
- Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh OBE, Former MP
- Right Honourable Henry McLeish, Former First Minister
- Dame Eleanor Laing MP, Deputy Speaker House of Commons
- Baroness Claire Fox, House of Lords
- Joanna Cherry KC MP
- Mick Lynch, RMT General Secretary
- Mike Graham, Broadcaster
- Iain Dale, Broadcaster
- Alex Neil, Former Cabinet Secretary
- Sir Brian Donohoe, Former MP
- Margaret Mitchell, Former MSP
- Joan McAlpine, Former MSP
- Richard Tice, Leader Reform UK Party
- Fergus Ewing MSP, Former Cabinet Secretary
- Eilidh Whiteford, Former MP
- Paul Sinclair, Former Spin Doctor to PM Gordon Brown
- Right Honourable Sir Vince Cable, Former Lib Dem Leader
- Kenny McAskill MP, Former Cabinet Secretary
- Bernard Ponsonby, Special Correspondent STV News
- Kate Forbes MSP, Former Cabinet Secretary
- Michelle Thomson MSP
- Neale Hanvey MP

- Pupils from Boroughmuir and Craigmount High Schools

[Tickets here.](#)



Alex Salmond and David Davis MP will take each other on for audience votes in The Ayes Have It! The Ayes Have It! at the 2023 Fringe PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter