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## Edinburgh author Lucy Ribchester's latest novel *Murder Ballad* is due to be published later this month.

The enthralling new historical fiction book explores the dazzling world of Edinburgh's eighteenth-century performing arts scene through a macabre, mysterious tale of friendship, betrayal and deadly secrets.

The year is 1791 and Edinburgh's renowned Canongate Playhouse has been closed for a little over two decades.

The new jewel in the performance crown, St Cecilia's Hall, built in 1763, is nestled at the bottom of one of the Canongate's many cobbled side streets.

Used by the exclusive Edinburgh Musical Society, the dramatic Laigh Hall sets the stage for a dark tale.

As a low-class orange seller, Isobel Duguid is far from your typical prima donna.

But despite this, and her inability to hold a tune, Isobel enjoys an opulent life as an esteemed singer thanks to her relationship with opera star Clepsidro, who refuses to sing without her.

Amid the artistic bustle of Edinburgh's Old Town – set against

Scotland's anti-theatre puritanism – Isobel is best known for her dark Scottish ballads, especially *The Fiddler's Wrath*, which tells the tale of a singer who embarks on a sordid affair, which ends with her husband being sent to the gallows.

Yet to Isobel, this ballad is more than fiction, and when the truth of the ballad comes to light she must confront ghosts from her past and face chilling retribution for a secret kept far too long.

*Murder Ballad* will be Lucy Ribchester's third historical novel.

Her first, *The Hourglass Factory*, was selected by Waterstones Edinburgh as their Book of the Year, longlisted for the Historical Writers Association Debut Crown and picked by Val McDermid for her New Blood panel at Theakston's Old Peculiar Crime Writing Festival.

She has also received a New Writers Award from the Scottish Book Trust and a Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship. Her short fiction has been shortlisted for the COSTA Short Story Award and the Manchester Fiction Prize.

As well as writing fiction, Lucy is a journalist and copywriter and has contributed to *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The List* and the *National Trust for Scotland*.

She reviews dance, circus and cabaret during the Edinburgh Festival and has published two contemporary thrillers under the name Elle Connel.

*Murder Ballad* is due to be published on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024 in HBK (£16.99) by Black & White Publishing Ltd., part of Bonnier Books UK