

Edinburgh International Festival – tickets for opening event will be on sale on Tuesday

A new free event has been devised to open the Edinburgh International Festival this year in partnership with the 200-year-old The Macallan.

Opening Event: Where to Begin is expected to attract thousands to an outdoor experience at the George Heriot's School on Lauriston Place on three evenings at the beginning of August.

Tickets will be on sale from Tuesday 18 June at midday from www.eif.co.uk at £15 with concessions also available.



The event will respond to the festival theme Rituals That Unite Us. The grounds of the school – never used as a festival venue before – will be transformed with live performance, immersive installation, music and large-scale video projection. Taking place just as the evening falls the projections will be audio described and captioned.

The spectacle will take inspiration from the landscape in the capital where George Heriot's will come alive with a flicker of flames. Thereafter a journey will ensue through video projections which will allow the audience to congregate and experience the story of why everyone is gathered in the one place.

The site-specific experience draws on a combined heritage between the single malt Scotch whisky and the festival of celebrating the creativity, excellence and height of achievement that lies within the Scottish identity. Intricately weaving together stories of Scottish mythology and heritage, participatory moments of the event are anchored in Scottish history, such as the Scottish New Year tradition (Hogmanay) of First Footing and the people of Edinburgh's donations of coal to light up Edinburgh Castle for the

very first International Festival in 1947.

Edinburgh International Festival Director, Nicola Benedetti said: "This year, we've invited everyone to participate in our 2024 theme, Rituals That Unite Us. Opening Event: Where to Begin in partnership with The Macallan, marks the first of a new ritual, both for our Festival and the city. We know audiences will be blown away by this spectacle, and we're proud to show the formidable creative power and potential of Edinburgh and its people to *the world. It's an event that beckons us to find new ways to experience and appreciate our city.*"

Jaume Ferràs, Global Creative Director, The Macallan, said: "I'm proud to see The Macallan's creative partnership with the Edinburgh International Festival *come to life in August. Both the International Festival and The Macallan hold a deep* commitment to excellence and artistic innovation, rooted in our shared, rich Scottish heritage.

"As The Macallan celebrates our 200th anniversary this year, we are proud to partner with the International Festival to create an unmissable start to the festival season. Where to Begin will *captivate audiences with stories of Scotland's past, present and future*, and will offer the inspiration that only a live event like this can offer."

Creative Director of Pinwheel, Katy Fuller said: "I'm thrilled to create a new Opening Event for Edinburgh International Festival in partnership with The Macallan. Our story pays tribute to this most remarkable of cities and the unstoppable creative energy which pervades it every August. We celebrate the alchemy that happens when exceptional artistry meets expectant audience and the connection, emotion and inspiration that characterises a festival in full force. We look forward to welcoming audiences to join us and play their part in igniting the 2024 International Festival."



PHOTO Lawrence Winram