

# Edinburgh International Book Festival – Hans Köchler

*Was there a cover up over the Lockerbie Bomber?*

“Eight senior Scottish judges got it wrong, but the question is why? It is not because of a lack of intellectual skills”, said Hans Köchler this morning at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, suggesting an international government cover up over the conviction of the Libyan bomber Abdelbaset al-Megrahi.

Speaking at the first keynote event on the opening morning of the Book Festival, Köchler, who was an observer at the Pan Am Flight 103 (Lockerbie) bombing trial and subsequent appeal, argued that the verdict was reached for political motives and that the Scottish judges at Camp Zeist passed a ruling which was not logical upon examination of the facts.

Joining Köchler in the event was John Ashton, author of *Megrahi: You are My Jury*, as well as Jim Swire, whose daughter was killed in the Lockerbie bombing of 1988.

Ashton, who worked on Megrahi’s legal team and has written the biography of Megrahi on his request, agreed with Köchler, arguing that the Crown Office withheld evidence in the initial trial, “their incompetence was shameful” he said.

Following a meeting with the Lord Advocate in February of this year, Jim Swire spoke of his fury that the Lord Advocate did

not know why evidence was withheld by the Crown Office in the original trial, specifically the evidence surrounding a break in to Heathrow airport around the time Pan Am Flight 103 took off from London.

Megrahi, who died in May this year, was released on compassionate grounds from Scottish prison in 2009 – a decision that was deeply divisive. “Megrahi’s cancer was a gift from God for everyone involved in this case. It was a tragedy for Megrahi but everyone else was punching the air”, said Ashton, suggesting that the release allowed for improved relations between the UK, Libya and the United States, having earlier said it was “plain as daylight” there was a deal between Tony Blair and Colonel Gaddafi.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival opened yesterday and runs until 27<sup>th</sup> August 2012. The full programme can be browsed online at [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk)

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## Great Music in Store this Tuesday



This Tuesday night at 9.30pm at Whistlebinkies Edinburgh Glasgow 4-piece band Sixth Avenue Traffic will play in

Edinburgh for the first time since the Hard Rock Rising competition last March.

After the successful release of their 5 track E.P. entitled *Whisper, Smile & Wave*, Sixth Avenue are hitting the road for a few gigs to warm them up for a bigger tour later in the year, entry to the gig is free and I would recommend getting there at a decent time as this may just be one of those gigs you will happily announce to people:- "I was there."

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## Edinburgh Festival Fringe review: Morning \*\*\*\*



British playwright Simon Stephens has past form in dealing with violence between young people: his 2009 play *Punk Rock* depicted a shooting rampage in a Manchester school. But he takes things further in his new play, *Morning*, where the lives of a group of teenagers collide and intersect, revealing their overwhelming neediness and volatility.

Seventeen-year-old Stephanie is about to lose her best friend Cat, who's moving to college elsewhere, and her mother, who's dying of cancer. She finds her saintly boyfriend Stephen boring, and takes advantage of his gullability to carry out a shocking act – perhaps a cry for help, or simply for fun.

And it's not just in the brutal event that forms the play's centrepiece that Stephens focuses on casual violence, but also in the blunt, confrontational exchanges between characters throughout the piece.

It's a play to admire and certainly to think about, but perhaps not to enjoy. The highly effective staging by Lyric Hammersmith artistic director Sean Holmes keeps us well aware that everything is artifice, with the trappings that create theatrical magic exposed for us all to see, and a young God-like tech guy twiddling knobs to control lights and sound right in the centre of the stage.

The performances by the six-strong young cast are compelling, and fascinating to watch, not least in their unpolished ruggedness, entirely in keeping with the play's extreme themes. Scarlet Billham is powerfully convincing as Stephanie, nicely balancing insecurity with casual amorality, and Ted Reilly is memorable, and appropriately wide-eyed as her boyfriend.

But ultimately it's unclear what Stephens is trying to say. There's hope in the form of a more naïve, loving couple, and in the tenderness of Stephanie's brother Alex towards their dying mother. It's Stephens's refusal to explain or justify the play's violence that makes the work both strong and weak, though, denying us easy answers to its tough questions about today's young people, yet also dislocating its events from any of our familiar morals.

[Morning](#) is at the [Traverse Theatre](#) until 19 August (times vary).

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## Foodies Festival 2012



We had a lovely time at Foodies yesterday. The weather certainly helped, but this is a good event for anyone interested in good food and how to cook it. There are cooking classes, demonstrations, and all kinds of food galore.

From the Arbroath Smokies to the ice-cream and the champagne, everything we tried was delicious and there was a wide variety of food-related equipment and all kinds of ingredients on offer.

From the city centre, take a 23 or a 27 and then walk through the Botanic Gardens to get there. It is a good way of combining the best of these two adjacent green spaces.

Our photos might give you a flavour of the Foodies Festival, but the only way to find out for yourselves is to get along to Inverleith Park and try it out. Sunday is the final day. [More details here](#) and the gates open at 11a.m.

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## Fenlon frustrated at losing out on signing targets



Despite bringing in seven new signings to Easter Road this summer, Hibs boss Pat Fenlon has spoken of his frustrations about missing out on potential targets due to the financial restrictions that he is working under at Easter Road.

Fenlon readily accepts that Hibs have to work within a budget, but he can't understand how other clubs at a similar level to Hibs are able to pay considerably more in wages.

Speaking candidly at the weekly press conference at Easter Road, Fenlon confirmed that he is still hoping to bring in new faces to supplement a squad which lost sixteen players since the end of last season.

He said: "I'm still working away. "There's a couple of targets at the moment that we are talking to, but it's difficult. Every supporter that I meet is saying why haven't we signed a forward, but we are trying but unfortunately there are clubs within our own country who are paying a lot more money than we are, which is amazing, but that's the way it is I suppose.

"It drives me mad when you see the situation where, what's happened this season and clubs can go and spend a fortune. It doesn't make sense.

"People who run other clubs have to worry about how they run it and we have to worry about how we run it, but we've been trying to sign four or five players over the course of the close season who would have strengthened the squad. We've got two or three of them but we'd like another two or three if we can, but financially it's difficult to get to where some other clubs are getting to.

When asked if he was thinking about a third division club in particular, Fenlon laughed and said "It might be."

"I think there are other clubs in the same level as us that are paying a bit more money and that's frustrating, but what can we do?

"The players will basically tell you that they are going somewhere else because they are getting more money, that's the normal gist of the conversation.

"I understand that players have got to move and get the best deals but you also want players who want to come and want to buy into what you are trying to do here."

Fenlon also revealed that it's not only in Scotland that he has lost out on targets.

"We've lost out on players to teams in League One and League Two in England and even that's frustrating but that's where the market is I suppose, at the moment for Scottish football, we've just got to not put up with it, but we've got other attributes and we've to make sure we can get players here to see the place and sell it to them that way and match what they are doing financially."

An added problem that he could have done without this weekend is the dugout ban inflicted after making a gesture towards Hearts fans who were taunting him during the Scottish Cup Final, although he accepts that he was in the wrong.

"The dugout ban will drive me mad on Sunday, although from a football point of view you can probably see a little bit more but it's getting that message across on occasions it's difficult.

"I want to be on the pitch playing and not managing to be honest, but I have to put up with it, it's my own fault so there's nothing I can do about it."

Hibs fans are hoping to get some revenge for the cup final humiliation in May, and also to end a run of eleven games without a win over their rivals.

Meanwhile the club has welcomed a new sponsor of the South Stand with the announcement of a new sponsorship deal with Rainbow Communications.

The agreement starts straight away, through to August 2013 and sees significant investment from one UK's leading independent telecoms companies.

Corporate and Commercial manager Russell Smith told Hibs TV: "We are delighted to welcome Rainbow Communications as a new

partner of Hibernian Football Club. This is a fantastic new partnership agreement for the Club in what continues to be a challenging marketplace for all companies. Our new deal delivers vital income and another high profile partner for the Club.

“As a key rights holder within Scottish Football our partnership package will provide real value for Rainbow Communications.

“The agreement provides for an extensive range of marketing and networking platforms in Scotland and the UK and everyone at the Club is looking forward to helping to support the development of Rainbow Communications.”

Eric Carson, Director of Rainbow Communications, who provide calls and lines, mobiles, broadband, VoIP, systems and more, said: “Earlier this year we celebrated our 15th anniversary and we are delighted to have secured a partnership with a high profile name such as Hibernian FC.

“We supply telecoms services to business customers throughout the UK and Ireland, and look forward to strengthening business relationships and providing the highest level of quality and service to Hibernian FC.”

Former Hibs’ favourite Kevin Harper who now works in the sales department for Rainbow Communications was at Easter Road to launch the deal.

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# Google asks Auld Reekie



# residents to rate restaurants



In a (slightly noisy) Grassmarket café, Edinburgh Reporter Radio met Sarah Drinkwater, Community Lead for Google+ Local in the UK.

Sarah told us how Zagat – which was acquired by Google in September 2011 – has come to the capital in the form of the [Zagat survey of Edinburgh restaurants](#). The survey aims to capture “any food worth talking about”, and invites members of the public to rate and review their experiences of eating and drinking out – whether it be an evening of fine dining, or just grabbing a quick coffee.

In addition, during August 2012, Zagat are running a [competition](#) in which one reviewer will win £250 of vouchers to spend in the Edinburgh restaurant (or restaurants) of their choice. (Full terms and conditions are available on the competition site.)

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## Edinburgh Festival Fringe – Puppet State Theatre bark up the right ‘Trees’



Edinburgh Reporter Radio came face-to-face with a puppet pooch when it visited the Scottish Storytelling Centre to hear about

‘The Man Who Planted Trees’.

The irreverent Dog – who howled at our suggestion that he’s the star of the show – explained that the environmentally-themed play, which is based on a 1953 novel by Jean Giono, was “as much for any parent as any child”.

You can see Puppet State Theatre’s production of ‘The Man Who Planted Trees’ at the Scottish Storytelling Centre until Tuesday 14 August 2012. Tickets cost £9.00. (Concession rate: £7.00.)

Further information – and images from the play – can be found on the [Puppet State Theatre website](#).

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## **Edinburgh Festival Fringe The Girl with no Heart \*\*\*\*\***

 Sparkle and Dark’s Travelling Players

Bedlam Theatre

11b Bristo Place

Puppetry (PG) 55 mins

Anyone Who Has A Heart, Should Look At This.

Supported by The Japan Foundation, and on the anniversary of the second atomic bomb being dropped above Nagasaki, Sparkle & Dark invited both visitors and audiences, present and later, to participate in creating symbolic origami paper cranes. These metaphorical birds, symbolising Life’s beautiful fragility, fluttered about and above the cafe/bar. It’s always a welcoming Venue, The Bedlam, with its slightly fading bohemian informality.

Drawing on classical Japanese fables, the narrative unfolds through the ingenious combination of full-body shadow and silhouette, combined hand-puppetry and object manipulation.

Samura (Nichole Anderson) embarks on a journey from a magical land where every wish becomes true (a Midas touch that fails to satisfy her burning curiosity). She inevitably encounters alternative and all together more cathartic realities when she moves through the mystical stone gate guarded by seriously shadow-shaped lion.

Though embracing and poignant the story's cultural and historical antecedents are, and, whilst not labouring the symbolism of the awful consequences of the Hiroshima/Nagasaki horror, at times the narrative errs towards confused and introspective ambiguity. One wished that the beauty and visual potency of the shadow motifs were allowed more opportunity to express their magical wonder for their own part alone and, reinforce the dialogue. In particular how we might visualise the impending threat to the city by the sieging 'Adult Army': a picture is worth a thousand words. The references to the ash that covers all about them in a patina of unspoken dread was, we assumed, the toxic fall-out from the atom-bomb. Younger ones in the audience might have needed more literal expositional context about this. The play, after all, is all about magical possibilities juxtaposed against stark realities. Unlike Samura, we would have opted for more visual fantasy any time, the scarier, the better! Especially like when the Stone Gate Lion growled his dark shadowed mane across Samura's path.

Throughout the performance, composer/cellist, Lawrence Illsley's sympathetic score draws on oriental soundscapes and evocative aural textures that enhance the play's sometimes ambivalent, but ever increasing and inclusive wonder. Tom Oakes, co-composer played, guitar/ukulele.

There is enchantment and heartache in this production and it

well deserves playing that Fringe wild-card of, 'Let's be damned, and go out on a punt!' indulgence. Perhaps the kids will see and embrace wildly different interpretations and will have to explain it to their parents after the show.

A sincere, imaginative and beguiling passion coupled with crafted intelligence infuses and defines this company's admirable ethos. No clues about the denouement, but a comforting tissue might wisely be kept tucked up a sleeve in readiness.

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## Hibs sign Alan Maybury on one year deal



After weeks of speculation, former Hearts full-back Alan Maybury has finally put pen to paper on a one year deal with Hibs.

The 35 year-old has been training with the club throughout the pre-season and Pat Fenlon made no secret that he wanted to sign him, but financial obstacles prevented this until now.

Speaking at the weekly press conference at Easter Road, Irishman Maybury said: "They offered me the chance to come in and train, no promises or anything; we'll just see how it goes. It's taken a wee bit of time; I've been involved in all the games. They asked me to go on the pre-season tour with a view to getting this done but it's taken a wee bit longer trying to juggle a few things."

The experienced defender insisted that his previous spell at Tynecastle, won't affect his performance if selected in Sunday's fixture, and hopes that the Hibs fans get behind him and the team.

He continued:- "If you play well you'll be all right, if you don't you won't. It's a good game to be involved in. I know what the derby's all about so it will be good.

"I did my time at Hearts; it's a long time ago now. I've given my all for every club and I'll never be a fan's favourite, where I play position wise, but I think most fans will appreciate that I do give everything. I understand the rivalry but this is a great opportunity.

"I'm sure some Hearts fans won't be happy and some will, I hope remember that I gave my all for them, but I've moved on, I'm here now and I will give my all for this club."

Hibs go into the game as underdogs, not having won a derby for three years, but Maybury insists that this statistic won't affect the players and denied that revenge will be on their minds for the cup final defeat.

He said: "It's a new era, the managers trying to start things afresh and this year there has been a big turnover in the summer.

"Pre-season's been good. There's a good bunch of boys all willing to do the work, trying to take on what the manager asks.

"I don't think there is a revenge issue but there is a steely determination that this won't happen again. I wasn't connected with the club at the time but there is enough lads here who were and they are determined that this cannot happen again."

The Dublin born star hopes that he has a better start to Sunday's game than he experienced during his first taste of

the Edinburgh derby when Ulises de la Cruz scored after twenty seconds in a game which the Easter Road side eventually won 2-1.

“I had no idea what to expect, and we went one nil down after twenty seconds. I was just blown away, just not grasping it. I knew a few of the Hibs boys, Grant Brebner and Nick Colgan and was chatting to them in the tunnel before then it was straight into the game thinking ‘What is this all about?’ I’d come from reserve team football down in England and there was a huge difference.”

Manager Pat Fenlon expressed his delight at the signing and said: “I’m delighted to get it done to be honest. Alan and Gary (Deegan) this week are good signings for us and I’m happy to bring a bit of experience as well and Alan brings a bit of versatility to the squad as well which we need.

“It was important that we wanted him and he wanted to come so it was important that we got it right in the end so it’s a good week to do it I suppose.

“I had an eye on getting him in last week but we just didn’t get there so it’s important that we got him in as quick as possible to strengthen the squad.”

The game kicks off at 12.30pm on Sunday.

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## Edinburgh Fringe Review: The

# Letter of Last Resort/Good With People \*\*\*\*



It's Britain's shadowy nuclear deterrent, and in particular Scotland's role in maintaining it, that's the fragile yet potent theme binding this duo of plays by two of the country's finest dramatists. David Greig's *The Letter of Last Resort* is a dark political comedy bristling with wit, while David Harrower's *Good With People* explores political exchanges on a human level. But the Trident submarines based at Faslane cast threatening shadows over both plays, which chart the personal and political costs of their weapons' existence.

In *The Letter of Last Resort*, a new prime minister is required to compose a missive to the submarine commanders detailing what action they should take in the event of a decapitating nuclear attack on the UK. Greig is thorough in his investigation of the philosophical and moral conundrums of the issue, yet he plays it with an admirable lightness – ice-cold jokes and chilling absurdities fly around the room as, of course, the ultimate futility of the situation is comprehended. Belinda Lang is fiery yet controlled as the new PM, concealing her increasing frustration underneath a blustering exterior, and Simon Chandler is oily as the official from 'arrangements' who requests the letter.

Harrower's two-hand *Good With People* brings together a young man and an older woman whose son he mercilessly bullied at school, to explore their memories and prejudices in the playwright's trademark gritty yet poetic language. Blythe Duff simmers as Helen – whether with anger or passion we discover over the course of the play – and Richard Rankin has an appropriate swagger as the posturing but wounded Evan.

It's very much a performance of two halves – in subject, content and tone – but the telling thematic connections and exemplary stagings make for a thought-provoking pairing.

[\*A Letter of Last Resort/Good With People\*](#) continues at the [Traverse Theatre](#) until 26 August (times vary).

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## Edinburgh Fringe Review: The Turn of the Screw\*\*\*\*

[The Turn of the Screw](#)

Venue 82, Zoo Southside



HookHitchTheatre's  
"The Turn of the  
Screw"

Henry James' classic *The Turn of the Screw* is one of the great ghost stories, a psychological thriller that mesmerises with its ambiguity.

The story is one of tarnished purity, and of madness, as an idealistic young governess is made sole charge of a brother and sister. Left to her own devices in a rambling country house, the governess soon becomes convinced that the children have fallen under the power of malevolent forces. But the origin of these forces is the subject of considerable ambiguity.

For such a young cast, the performances here are of an



impressive standard. The use of puppets to portray the children Flora and Miles is an ingenious touch, allowing the puppeteers to perform double duty as the evil Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, but also hinting at the manipulation of the children by the adults around them.

[HookHitch Theatre](#) have stayed true to the original work, leaving much of the action to take place in the minds of the characters – and the audience.

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## Five things you need to know today



**Foodies Festival – Book Festival – Parliament Exhibition –  
Edinburgh Reporter Radio – Time for a Super Hoyway?**

The Foodies Festival starts today at 10.00 in Inverleith Park for the next three days, and aims to bring the best of Scotland's food and drink to you. [Here is the website](#) for more details.

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The Edinburgh International Book Festival starts tomorrow. Whether you're concerned about suffering from Olympic withdrawal symptoms, or have had enough sport to last you a lifetime, the Edinburgh International Book Festival, which starts this weekend, could have the solution. With over 800 authors, poets, journalists, politicians and commentators from 44 different countries, the Book Festival offers an event to

suit every mood.

If you're looking for more sporting action, enjoy journalist Richard Moore talking about *The Dirtiest Race in History*, the notorious 1988 Olympic mens 100 metre final, or Chris Cleave discussing his novel, *Gold*, the story of two world-class athletes on the eve of the London Olympics, or biochemist Professor Chris Cooper exploring the moral, ethical and political issues of the science behind drugs in sport. Father and son TV Presenter Geoffrey and Ben Beattie join together to discuss the unique pleasures of running.

If sport isn't your thing, try 2012 Man Booker Prize nominees Ned Beauman, with his book *The Teleportation Incident*, and Michael Frayn who brings *Skios*, his farcical and sharp new novel. Pat Barker launches *Toby's Room*, her long awaited sequel to *Life Class* and London MP David Lammy looks back to this time last year when his constituency was ablaze in the 2012 riots. Comedian Russell Kane reads from his first book, *The Humorist*, and Scottish actor John Gordon Sinclair launches his debut novel *Seventy Times Seven*.

The future of Scotland is a theme which runs through the Book Festival this year. Former PM Gordon Brown will speak for the first time in public on the subject on Monday 13 August, while his Chancellor Alistair Darling, who now heads up the Better Together Campaign, speaks on Friday 24 August. On Sunday 12 August former Scottish First Minister Henry McLeish is joined by SNP veteran Paul Henderson Scott to discuss their views.

The Book Festival also welcomes a number of major international authors who are bringing their work to the UK for the first time. Dutch actor Herman Koch launches his European bestselling novel *The Dinner*, while Sweden's Sven Lindqvist discusses his classic novel *The Myth of Wu Tao-tzu* which has never been out of print since it was first released in 1967 and is now published in English for the first time. The 2011 Man Asian Prize Winner Kyung Sook Shin flies

in from South Korea to talk about her haunting tale of an elderly mother who loses her family while David Bellos looks at the challenges in translating everything from literary fiction to Asterix.

The 2012 Edinburgh World Writers' Conference, an ambitious programming partnership between the Book Festival and the British Council, is bringing 50 authors from around the world to discuss the importance of fiction in a modern society with the Book Festival audience in Charlotte Square Gardens. Egyptian author, Ahdaf Soueif, opens the event with a talk on whether literature should be political on Friday 17 August.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival runs from Saturday 11 August to Monday 27 August. Tickets are still available for events across the adult and children's programme, and full details of all events can be found at [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk).

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### 'Special Delivery' Opens at Scottish Parliament

The only two original letters with a direct link to William Wallace have gone on display at the Scottish Parliament in a new exhibition.

On public display are a 700-year-old letter about William Wallace from the French King Philip IV and the famous Lübeck Letter, issued by Wallace and Andrew Moray as Guardians of Scotland after the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297.

The exhibition, entitled 'Special Delivery: The William Wallace Letters', runs until Saturday 8 September as the letters' age and fragility mean they can only be shown for a short period of time.

Audio-visual screens and panels in the exhibition display help to tell the story of William Wallace and the struggle for power that took place across Europe in the early 1300s. They

include work by seven Scottish school classes and two Dovecot Studios tapestries.

Speaking as the exhibition opened, the Presiding Officer Tricia Marwick MSP said:

“While centuries have passed since the letters were written, this time in history clearly continues to excite, inspire and inform people today. Placing these two items of history in a contemporary setting like Holyrood helps bring Scotland’s history to life. Seeing them together in Scotland like this is rare, a once in a generation opportunity, and one I hope our thousands of visitors will enjoy.”

Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop said:

“This exhibition is of tremendous importance and I am delighted that the people of Scotland will have the opportunity once more to discover the story of Scotland’s legendary hero.

“These two rare and fragile documents are some of the only few surviving artefacts with a direct link to William Wallace and are a fascinating fragment of our nation’s history.

“I am proud that the Wallace letter will now remain in Scotland on a longer term basis and It is particularly exciting that the exhibition coincides with the first ever International Culture Summit, giving Culture Ministers and delegates from around the world the opportunity to see the Wallace letters and gain an insight into Scotland’s rich culture and heritage.”

George MacKenzie, Keeper of the Records said:

“There are only two surviving documents with a direct link to Scottish hero William Wallace and neither is kept in Scotland.

It’s hugely exciting to show them together in the Scottish Parliament and let people experience these unique, 700 year

old objects.”

Oliver Morley, Keeper and Chief Executive of The National Archives in Kew, said:

“We are extremely pleased to have worked so closely with National Records of Scotland to enable another loan of this intriguing document, to be shown alongside the Lübeck letter in this exhibition, giving the public a further opportunity to view both of these documents relating to William Wallace together.”

Dr Jan Lokers, Director of Lübeck City Archives, said:

“The Hanse town of Lübeck is very glad and proud to lend the so-called ‘Lübeck letter’ to the Wallace exhibition at the Scottish Parliament for the enjoyment of the Scottish people. As one of only two surviving documents inspired directly by William Wallace, this letter is one of the greatest treasures in the collections of the Archives of Lübeck. It also reminds us of the long history of European economic relationships during the times of the ‘Hanse’.”

This unique exhibition has been developed by the National Records of Scotland in partnership with the Scottish Parliament, The National Archives, Kew, and Lübeck City Archives.

The exhibition in the Main Hall of the Scottish Parliament is open until Saturday 8 September. (Please note: the Parliament is closed to the public on Sunday 12 – Tuesday 14 August inclusive).

Special events are also taking place at the Parliament including two historical sessions in the Parliament’s annual Festival of Politics, a Glow (Scottish schools’ intranet education tool) session and education workshops for schools visiting the exhibition.

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We are having an Edinburgh Reporter Radio round table on Sunday at noon at Hemma on Holyrood Road. Come and join us and tell us what you have seen, what you would recommend and what you are going to see. [Last week's discussion is here.](#)

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Folowing the success of our cyclists at the Olympics the cycling lobby is growing to improve the lot of cyclists using our city streets. [The Edinburgh Guide](#) sets out the case for a Super HoyWay, particularly starting with Leith Walk where there is already £5.5m set aside for improvements to the streets and pavements.

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## Edinburgh cyclists to start fundraising trip today

A team of local Edinburgh men are set to complete a 150 mile cycling challenge this weekend to raise £5000 for charity. Michael Pratt, who lives in Cramond, and seven of his friends aim to complete the ambitious challenge over 2 days in just 15 hours for Macmillan Cancer Support. The event will start on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> August at the Cairngorms , and will take them through Rothiemurchus and Perthshire before finishing on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August in Aberfoyle.

Michael, a married father of two, has previously walked 54 miles with friends in the 2010 *Caledonia Challenge* and took part in the Rob Roy Challenge last year. However, this time round has greater personal significance as he has been closely affected by cancer. The 38 year Project Manager said: "When someone close to you tells you they have cancer, you feel helpless. Something I feel I can do is support a charity that provides the help people affected by cancer need."

His mother, Kate Pratt, 67, who currently has secondary Cancer, has influenced Michael's decision to raise funds for Macmillan due to the support they provide at Edinburgh's Western General.

Visit: <http://www.justgiving.com/Mike-Pratt1>

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## **Edinburgh Festival Fringe – Review Slapdash Galaxy \*\*\*\*\***

Bunk Puppets & Scamp Theatre.

Underbelly, Cowgate. Venue 61. 50mins

Comedy, Puppetry.

Listen kids! Already gluten-free gorged on all things worthy your parents have dragged you to see at the Fringe so far? Want to go a show where you can really get your own back on that annoying little mite of a younger sibling by telling them

this show doesn't contain 3D snakes and bats and spiders flying in their faces? Or, is that Canadian, found-junk shadow-Punk, puppeteer, Jeff Achtem's, other return Fringe show, 'Swamp Juice'? Whatever!

From his Slapdash Galaxy far, far away, international award winning, Achtem, returns, yet again, to Planet Fringe 2012 in his mothership of eclectic inventions. With bric-a-brac scrap, make-do and glue, mend and bend, stick and stitch, his menagerie of mischievous characters become an alt. Frankenstein frenzy of fun and wonder. Our minds were boggled, our awes were struck and the remaining cynically disgruntled become rapidly un-gruntled.

We witnessed parents begging sweeties from their inner-child. Elbowing their sprogs aside to get a better look as the fantasia of creative mayhem unfolded, Slapdash Galaxy tells of the epic mission undertaken by star-struck brothers, Sam and Junior, who summon up both courage and guile to kick some serious Space-Baddie's butts! Think Jedi Clangers and Warp-Speed Wombles and get on board this Hadron-Collider white-knuckle ride across the universe. It is Achtem 100% guaranteed try and he will swear on the magic, life-saving fish to that.

A family Fringe must. (Warning: contains constant giggles and amazement for all ages – not for dads who think solar-flares what Brian Cox wears are cool).

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# Edinburgh Festival Fringe review Man Feelings\*\*\*\*



Laughing Horse Free Festival/Mechanical Tiger Productions

Jekyll & Hyde, Hanover Street

Comedy (14+)

It is showtime for free at The Jekyll & Hyde, the Old Reekie shlock-goth theme-pub, barely 300 yards from Robert Louis Stevenson's Heriot Row birthplace. And, if one were to, quite reasonably, anticipate that this two man sketch-show, 'Man Feelings' will be a rapid-fire, quick-witted, off-the-cuff, exposition of punch-line gag closure lunacy – then clever you! Written and performed with polished economy and snappy timing, these New Town Resurrection Men of giggle-driven snappy one-line gufforial silliness have no gender agenda with their quick-fire satire and machine-punning derring-do, and dare to do anything with abandon. Which might explain the opening sketch about an Edinburgh bee with a prawn-cocktail allergy bee(ing) swatted to oblivion by an irate Finance Metro reader – possibly!

Fearlessly tilting their satirical lances at topical windmills (maybe, even the ones that will eventually power the 12 volt Princes Street trams?) they recognise that issues of Scottish Independence are complex and emotive, threatening to see socio-political claymores rent asunder once tight-knit families and communities. And, with a Salmond-leap into the surreal, completely ridicule the whole caboose!

The confused cowboy-builders taking on the a six-day creation of the World contract is a delightfully irreverent poke in the Creationists' eye leaving one wondering how Nature allowed the likes of them to evolve in the first place. At a cat's - whisker short of 55 minutes you really ought to treat yourselves to this show. If only to appreciate that Man Feelings are not just about groping. Embryonic talents. Be

there at the birth so you can brag about it! (Contains some naughty language and bodily references.)

You can access this and all of our other articles when you are out and about in Edinburgh by using the [Wikitude App](#) on your smartphone. This allows you to search for The Edinburgh Reporter and. using technology called Augmented Reality, you will find the articles which are written about the area of Edinburgh where you are at the time. All of our articles are geotagged with an appropriate location. So for example if you want to read all of our Hibs related articles then when you are at Easter Road you can find them by using the app.

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# Edinburgh Festival Fringe

## Lady M \*\*\*\*\*

Het Vijfde Bedrijf – The Fifth Act

(The Netherlands)

Edinburgh College Of Art Venue 50.

1hr5mins, PG

Being all things the antithesis of a society hostess, Lady

MacBeth, a mother grieving for her lost infant, invokes Satanic succor to commit regicide by displacement proxy. Subsequently goes insane. Finally commits suicide. Thus, in the Scottish Play, her candle burns fiercely but briefly.

But, how things might have been so different if she had but confided in her devoted lady-in-waiting recently risen from swineherd/kitchen-skivvy to her now intimate status. This one-lady show, part eulogy for a fallen Queen, part visceral rant at Shakespeare's (possible!) dismissive misogyny for writing her as dumbed-down foil to the bumbling Doctor's observations as Lady M, descends into guilt-ridden insanity, and really should set The Fringe ablaze. She has some other serious issues with the bard that merit spleen-venting of a decidedly perspirational profuseness. And, just why a pissed Porter gets a whole soliloquy of duff jokes, even by the Bard's low standard of groundling pleasing gags, really gets her goat.

We see character role-play shifting with seamless dexterity as, Dutch actress, Annemarie de Bruijn, revels in her interpretive battle to unlock the psycho-dynamism that drives ambitious people to leap from the pinnacle of achievement in to a bloodbath of hubris.

Along the way we gain valuable culinary insights as to how one can best prepare haggis using a black balloon. With unlimited licence and experimental surreality taken as a given, Bruijn's tour-de-force performance explodes with passionate rage and helpless, tender incredulity as she eves-drops on her mistress's conspiratorial regicide. The minimalist set and evocative use of light and shadow create an atmosphere of seething mystery and unspoken fears. That 'blood will have blood' she is powerless to prevent. Our focus of impending

horror centres on a red, silken bed pillow. Redolent in potent symbolism it is a precursor to her now ugly drunken Lady's imminent self-immolation. She can but observe, lamenting, something to the effect, that she only '...begs with a token of her love, devotion and loyalty/and vows of silent complicity.'

Unquestionably and unequivocally an Edinburgh Reporter Fringe must-see.

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## Five things you need to know today



**Speed of Light – Pele gets honorary degree from Edinburgh University – Edinburgh Reporter Radio – Family Fun at North Edinburgh Arts – Fringe preview**

Speed of Light gets going for real tonight on Arthur's Seat, and that is where our main photo was taken from just last night. We were at the Dress Rehearsal and have some photos for you in [our article which you will find here](#) and also on Flickr which you can see here. If you take part then feel free to send us your images or tell us about your experience. [The Scotsman](#) reports that some runners have pulled out due to safety concerns.

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The University of Edinburgh is giving Brazilian footballer Pele an honorary degree today....in London. While we understand the eyes of the sporting world are on the London Olympics could he not have been persuaded to come to Auld Reekie to get the honour? The University say:-“Pelé will receive his degree – his first from a European university – at a reception, held at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London on 9 August, which showcases both the sporting and cultural achievements of the University of Edinburgh.

He will also be presented with a University football strip.”

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You can get involved in [our radio project](#). Come along and be interviewed about what you have seen at the Fringe at Hemma on Holyrood Road on Sunday 12 August at 12 noon. If you would like to record a review of a show on Soundcloud then you can tag it with **EdinburghReporterRadio** and so long as it does not contain anything defamatory, any swearing or bad language then we may use it on the website. By tagging your audio in this way we will assume that you have consented to our free use of it on The Edinburgh Reporter website. we need your help and feedback to make this project work so if you would like to be involved then please tell us now.

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Families in North Edinburgh will be treated to a free day of fun activities today at the North Edinburgh Arts Centre. Charity Save the Children, who are organising the afternoon, are encouraging members of the community to come together and meet with local services, who can advise families on a range of issues.

The event, held at the North Edinburgh Arts Centre will be held from 1-5pm and will include face painting, a bouncy

castle and storytelling to entertain local children during the school holidays. Other highlights will include kite making, water fun and a free tea, coffee, soft drink and snack for everyone who comes along.

For parents, there will be a range of information available with representatives from a number of local organisations including Muirhouse Youth Development Group, Arts Cool, the Poverty Alliance and Muirhouse Library.

**Fiona Morrison, Save the Children's programme officer said:**

"This event will be a great day for the whole family and we want to bring everyone together. North Edinburgh's local community has so much to offer and we hope to make everyone aware of this and encourage them to access all of the services on offer to them. Part of it is making sure the local children have a really fun afternoon and make it a memorable part of their school holidays".

## **DETAILS**

DATE: Thursday 9 August 2012

TIME: 1 pm – 5 pm

PLACE: North Edinburgh Arts Centre, 15a Pennywell Court, Edinburgh, EH4 4TZ

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We saw the Boy with Tape on his Face last year. Let us just say he was very funny indeed and we recommend seeing the show which is called More Tape at this year's Fringe. [Booking details here](#) for his show at 21.40 at Pleasance Courtyard.

You can access this and all of our other articles when you are out and about in Edinburgh by using the [Wikitude App](#) on your smartphone. This allows you to search for The Edinburgh Reporter and. using technology called Augmented Reality, you will find the articles which are written about the area of Edinburgh where you are at the time. All of our articles are geotagged with an appropriate location. So for example if you want to read all of our Hibs related articles then when you are at Easter Road you can find them by using the app.

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## NVA Speed of Light



We were invited along to Arthur's Seat to experience the NVA's *Speed of Light* before it opens to the public on Thursday evening, just ahead of the Festival itself starting with the sell-out Opening Concert, Delius's Mass of Life at the Usher Hall.



This is one of four national projects commissioned by Legacy Trust UK's Community Celebrations programme. The aim of the scheme is to build a legacy from the staging of the Olympic and Paralympic games in London this month. In Edinburgh we have the perfect stage for the spectacle.



There are big white tents in Holyrood Park, which is where you will start if you pay to be a walking observer. There are both runners and walking groups taking part in the performance, so actually if you pay to join in, you become the

public art.

We walked up the hill the hard way, lugging camera gear with all the other photographers. We hope that we bring you a flavour of what you might experience. You have to be reasonably fit to be involved, and a head torch is a good idea, although at points you might have to turn it off. We walked off the back of the crags onto the road and then back down to the car park, although others carried on to the top of Arthur's Seat with the runners and walkers. If we had known this is where we would end up, we would have taken a car to the middle of the park and walked the couple of hundred yards to the vantage point, but we were accompanied and directed by NVA and EIF staff at all times. As a walker you will also be subject to their direction and guidance, as this is obviously a bit of a dangerous place to be after dark.



The walkers carry light sticks which have an altimeter in them. Somehow, magically after reaching a certain height, the sticks start to emit music which will apparently be different each evening. The sticks contain an individually encoded micro-computer which has had a musical score uploaded to it. Movement triggers the music created by the Resonance Radio Orchestra which is described as having a layered effect. As we walked down the hill back to the starting point we could begin to hear the slightly eery music from the top of the hill.



Being staged throughout the Edinburgh International Festival 2012, this event means that Arthur's Seat becomes the focus for a fusion of innovative public art and sporting endeavour. The mass choreographed act of walking and endurance running will illuminate the area allowing a mesmerising visual display to unfold as hundreds of runners wearing specially commissioned light suits take to the intricate path networks



below.

If you wish to find out more about the Speed of Light, please visit <http://www.eif.co.uk/speedoflight>



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# Interactive festival encourages next generation of game-makers



*“Digital media is transforming pretty much every area of the creative industries, the arts, the media...”*

Established in 2002, Edinburgh Interactive is a short festival that aims to bring the future of interactive entertainment to the Fringe.

Edinburgh Reporter Radio met Brian Baglow of Information Dynamics, who told us about the big names from the games and technology industries who'll be appearing at this year's conference – and about the event's free public day, where 11-16 year-olds can learn how to build their own games.

The Edinburgh Interactive conference will be held at the Radisson Blu hotel on Thursday 9 and Friday 10 August 2012; the free public day takes place at the same venue on Saturday 11 August 2012.

You can find out more on the [Edinburgh Interactive site](#).

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# Edinburgh Fringe Interview: Jeff Achtem



Shadow puppeteer  
extraordinaire Jeff  
Achtem

Since first arriving on the Fringe in 2009, [Jeff Achtem](#) has built a solid reputation for innovative and visually arresting family theatre. Appearing this year with cinematic new show [Slapdash Galaxy](#) as well as a reprise of last year's hit [Swamp Juice](#), Achtem took some time out for a chat with the Edinburgh Reporter about the hard work behind the magic.

**Could you speak a little about the process you go through when developing a show?**

Usually I start with a simple idea, or an image. I think of the mechanics and changes in movement, or how a shape forms. Then I pull out bits of equipment, and I begin to play with certain materials and simple tools, like soap bubbles or a fog machine. And then, after that, really it's just play time. Hours and hours of bending, twisting and exploring the limits of what the tools will produce. For instance, for the new show *Slapdash Galaxy*, I spent a lot of time working with soap bubbles in shadow. Playing and exploring the lovely effects that are created when moving fluid is stretched into a thin film of color.

Once I've got an idea for a handful of effects, then I begin to think about plot and characters, and I derive a story that can be told with the new effects that I've been exploring. The process actually gets easier as I go along, because so many things don't get used, but you remember them for another date.

I've got big boxes of little tricks patiently waiting for their turn to be in a show!

Do you have a particular audience in mind for your work, and could you describe whom you are targeting?

Not really. Part of the feedback we get along the way is that many people say things like: "I wouldn't normally go to a puppet show, I came to yours and it was brilliant." That's lovely, because it means we are reaching a wider audience, beyond the usual niche.

**Can you sum up the underlying ethos of your work, and what message would you like audiences to take away from your shows?**

I'm never trying to push a message in the show, as such. I just want to create a lovely 60 min experience of images, story, senses and emotion. An experience to walk away, and be able to remember at a later date. The message is a memory.

There seems to be a noticeable increase in the amount of puppetry in the Fringe programme this year, do you see yourself as part of a movement? What do you feel is the appeal of the genre, and what do you envision for the future, both for your own work and in a more general sense?

There is no question that interest in puppetry in the UK is growing. It's great, because as audiences see more styles and shows, they develop their own tastes, which pushes the companies to create new work in new directions... and bang! You've got the elements for a very fertile creative relationship !

Underbelly at Bristo Square 16.30 14-27 August 2012 [Booking details here.](#)

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# Edinburgh Festival Fringe – La Clique Royale\*\*\*\*\*



If like some of us you really don't know what to choose from the biblically proportioned Fringe Guide, then this is possibly the very show for you. It is bit like an old time variety, with artists well able to demonstrate a multitude of very well-honed talents, and who are poised to royally entertain you. There are shades of Cabaret here too, with loud make-up and huge false eyelashes that would knock you out.

Some of the performers actually have shows of their own, but La Clique Royale offers them an opportunity to give you a wee taster for those. And it is true to say that you will want to see more. There are acrobatics, singing, comedy, magic, slapstick (absolutely of its own kind however!) and real majesty here. Her Maj, otherwise Gerry Connolly, opens the show complete with tiara and handbag, but making a speech that the real thing might want to make, rather than what she would be obliged to say.

The trapeze artists should really be in London competing for medals, (although they might have to wear a little more than they do) but these girls, [The Wau Wau Sisters](#), compete instead for laughs, and a little bit of your heart. They are extremely talented and are on tonight 8 August 2012 at 6.30pm in the Spiegeltent as well as taking part in the later performance of La Clique Royale at the same venue. If you miss them today, then they are on again on Monday 13 August 2012 in their own show at 8.00pm.

One of the rather more interactive sets (yes sit at the end of

the row and he may well leap on you!) was the Balkan Elvis. [Mikelangelo](#), who plays the piano accordion and sings in a deep crooning voice which cannot fail to entertain you. He also has his own show in the Spiegeltent on 13 & 20 August. In those performances he will have a seven-piece backing band playing Balkan gypsy style music, but at La Clique he sings solo, allowing you to enjoy his full vocal abilities and to marvel at his beautifully coiffed hair...

Along with an MC who multitasks as a comedian and magician too, and skilfully so, there were other sets involving much-practised acts of balance and aerial acrobatics by good-looking young men. So you can see that this is really a show with something for everyone. Be prepared to be entertained. But don't sit back and relax, as the pace and the sights will leave you breathless.

You can access this and all of our other articles when you are out and about in Edinburgh by using the [Wikitude App](#) on your smartphone. This allows you to search for The Edinburgh Reporter and, using technology called Augmented Reality, you will find the articles which are written about the area of Edinburgh where you are at the time. All of our articles are geotagged with an appropriate location. So for example if you want to read all of our Hibs related articles then when you are at Easter Road you can find them by using the app.

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## Edinburgh Festival Fringe –

# 4.48 Psychosis \*\*\*\*



Fourth Monkey

theSpace on Niddry St

Drama/Physical Theatre

1hr5mins (Age 14+ guidance)

A disturbing transition confronted the audience as an unsettling sense of detached discomfort and observational intrusion became close to self-conscious voyeurism in this latest interpretation. Some have called it an extended suicide-note in dance and movement. Playwright, Sarah Kane committed suicide prior to its controversial premiere in 2000 and, since then, 4.48 has caused confusion, sometimes outrage, but also an empathic recognition of its visceral exposition of a tortured souls descent into psychosis and its chaotic manifestations. That this production was going to be an intense, possibly alienating experience, was taken as a given.

There is a desperate need to grasp at some, indeed any, sense of sense, some means of untangling the contorted threads of narrative chaos as we helplessly witness a young woman's psychotic disintegration. Is it madness? Is it manic depression? Or is it just the familiar teenage tantrum anthem of, 'Nobody understands me!' shrieking hysterics? It is but a

short while into the play before any doubts are put aside as the audience wince at the exploding emotional shrapnel from her disintegrating personality.

Tearing down the fourth wall between us with metaphorical bleeding fingernails she declares her intention to commit suicide. Co-directors, Steven Green and Charleen Qwaye, draw together a young and accomplished, all female, young ensemble cast whose intense, impassioned physicality is focused on the anonymous protagonist played by a confident and insightful Charlie Bate. This production exploits the device of Greek Tragedy chorus, where the conceit is to enable the large cast to assume the cacophony of disparate voices that tease, haunt and interrogate the tortured 'patient' .

Dressed in shredded hospital gowns they prowl and provoke her inner demons. Sometimes as frozen angels of helpless mercy, but increasingly, they are in her alter-ego's nightmares, vengeful, blaming Harpies. Seeking asylum in the hands of professional care, she finds that the inmates of her mind have already taken possession. How does she hope to balance howling abstracts against objective realities? 'My mind is the subject of these bewildered fragments' she tells both the asylum's good Psychiatrist/bad Psychiatrist.

Much of the action is played out on an under-lit floor with symmetrical in-laid light pods that represents a form of martial regularity but also become a bizarre template for games of 'Twister' (designer, Pablo Fernandez Baz). The dark, parody musical hall scene where featured chorus characters boast of yet another incremental success with the increasing dosage of psychotropic drugs sees 'the patient' reduced to catatonic compliance. She has become, in her own words, '...the eunuch of castrated thought.'

There is much to comment this production, where the sobriquet

of 'experiment' has an acute sense of its self-irony. Jamie Flockton's sound montages play an integral part in enhancing the visual dynamic. Whilst not allegorical, there are themes to be interpreted from this production that have a contemporaneous applications that are sympathetically referenced by the co-directors. The promissory elixirs of 'beauty enhancement' products targeting and increasing susceptible young women's sense of negative body image 'Because they're worth it,' perhaps? Compounded by the revelation that even their celebrity role-model's illusory beauty has been digitally enhanced.

Madness in the public domain.

Disturbing, but not graphic scenes with explicit, but not contrived graphic language throughout confirms the 14+ advisory age.



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## **Cyclist identified as Tollcross man**

Lothian and Borders Police can now identify the cyclist who died following a collision with a vehicle in the Scottish Borders on Monday 6 August 2012.



He is Mark Sanderson from Lochrin Place, Edinburgh.

The 53-year-old died at around 4.20pm on the A703 Edinburgh to Peebles road, approximately 300 metres north of Peebles.

Mr Sanderson, who was travelling north, lost control of his bicycle and veered into the southbound carriageway, colliding with a Fiat Panda.

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## Five things you need to know today



**Call for public enquiry into Legionella outbreak – Free Fringe Music – Brave at Edinburgh Castle – Leith Business Association – Hand in your Fringe Programmes**

The well-known expert on viruses, Professor Hugh Pennington of Aberdeen University has made a formal call for a public enquiry into the cause of the Legionella outbreak earlier this year which resulted in three deaths according to [The Scotsman](#). Although the official line was that the source might be a cooling tower in the west of the city, it was admitted that the actual cause might be difficult if not impossible to trace.

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At National Museum of Scotland Chambers Street until 26 August, 12:45 daily

Enjoy musical performances in the Grand Gallery from Russian soprano and piano duo Oskana Mavrodi and Silviya Mihaylova and Russian pianist Olga Jegunova, as part of our Free Fringe music programme. For the full programme visit [www.nms.ac.uk/fringe](http://www.nms.ac.uk/fringe)

In partnership with Live Music Now Scotland.

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If you have taken the children to see the film 'Brave' and are wondering what to do to entertain them now that the summer holidays are drawing to a close, why not take them up to Edinburgh Castle, one of the beautiful attractions in Scotland which inspired the film?

Historic Scotland has compiled a special quiz celebrating the release of Disney Pixar's film Brave so you and the children can find out fascinating and unusual facts about Edinburgh Castle's history.

The quiz will be available at Edinburgh Castle daily now that the film is on general release in Scotland.

Nick Finnigan, Executive Manager of Edinburgh Castle said: "If you've seen 'Brave, bring the children and explore one of the real castles which inspired the film.

"Come along on a fun, fact-filled mission around the castle by taking part in our quiz inspired by the themes in Brave, and seek the answers to questions such as how many lions stand guard within the fireplace in the Great Hall and which red haired queen, who practised archery not far from the castle, gave birth to her only son in the Royal Palace.'

"Fill in your details at the end for the chance to win a Historic Scotland membership and a children's goody bag."

[Visit the website](#) to find out additional information about the film and Historic Scotland attractions.

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Leith Business Association are inviting you to meet and greet them tonight between 5.30 and 8.00 at the "I Love Cafe" in Haddington Place on Leith Walk. Go along and find out what they might be able to do for you. If you have a business in Leith Walk then you should definitely try to get along!

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The Library is reminding everyone that if you have any Festival programmes then rather than recycling them or just throwing them away they will gladly take them off your hands. They have been collecting all these bits of memorabilia since 1947 when the Festival started and they have a Scottish Collection to which any of your programmes could be added. [More here on the Tales of One City.](#)

You can access this and all of our other articles when you are out and about in Edinburgh by using the [Wikitude App](#) on your smartphone. This allows you to search for The Edinburgh Reporter and. using technology called Augmented Reality, you will find the articles which are written about the area of Edinburgh where you are at the time. All of our articles are geotagged with an appropriate location. So for example if you want to read all of our Hibs related articles then when you are at Easter Road you can find them by using the app.

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# Edinburgh International Festival ready for the off



On the eve of the opening of the 66<sup>th</sup> Edinburgh International Festival Director Jonathan Mills said:- 'Artists are arriving from around the world, the venues are ready, the doves have taken off across town and we're ready to start showing people just how wonderful the shows we have lined up for audiences this year are. If you haven't already booked there are some tickets still available and I urge you to join us.

'2012 has proved that through sport and culture people can find common celebration and understanding even in complex and difficult times. It is a special year and we are proud that with the support of our public funders, the City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland, Event Scotland, and the Scottish Government through the Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund, as well as our many sponsors and supporters and generous individuals we are able to present an enhanced Festival. With the additions of our theatre spaces at Lowland Hall and NVA's *Speed of Light* on Arthur's Seat we are proud to be making a significant contribution to London 2012 Festival and the World Shakespeare Festival.'



Jonathan Mills

**This weekend sees over 12,000 people** gathering across the city's theatres, concert halls, the Festival's new venue Lowland Hall and Arthur's Seat to enjoy theatre from Ireland, Japan and Poland, dance from Brazil, musicians from across the UK, America, Germany and South Africa and runners from all corners of the world as the Edinburgh International Festival opens its doors for 2012 on Thursday 9 August.

The Festival is expected to welcome audiences from a third of the world's nations to Scotland's capital city over its three weeks culminating in celebrations across the city for the *Virgin Money Fireworks Concert* on Sunday 2 September.

The Edinburgh International Festival opens on **Thursday 9 August** with *NVA's Speed of Light*, a participatory light and soundscape on Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh's city centre extinct volcano. It is still possible to play an artistic role in the Festival this year by securing a ticket to be one of the walking audience. Carrying a light stick which emits sound, the audience plays a crucial part in the unfolding performance while enjoying views of hundreds of runners in light suits forming shapes and streams of light around the hill, and vistas across the city.

On **Friday 10 August** the **Edinburgh International Festival's Opening Concert** plays to a sold out audience at the Usher Hall. Honouring Frederick Delius's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and one of the core inspirations of this year's Festival, a celebration of the best of humanity, the Festival opens with *A Mass of Life* Delius's most ambitious works for double chorus, soloists and large orchestra, for a rousing beginning to three weeks of the best orchestras and musicians from around the world performing at the Usher Hall.

On **Saturday night 11 August 2012** the Festival's new theatre venue, the Lowland Hall at the Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, opens with an electrifying Polish adaptation of *Macbeth* by director Grzegorz Jarzyna and his company TR Warszawa. Audiences in Edinburgh have seven opportunities to

catch this powerful version set in the Middle East, **2008: Macbeth**.

The Festival's new partnership with Lothian Buses has created the **Lowland Hall Bus Link** leaving from George Street 90 minutes before performances. Tickets must be bought in advance from Hub Tickets on +44 (0)131 473 2000 or at [eif.co.uk](http://eif.co.uk)

It has taken an expert team of 80 people 16 days and 10,000 crew hours to convert the Lowland Hall into three theatre auditoriums involving over 50 tonnes of kit. In addition to the theatre spaces the team has installed two public bars plus dressing rooms for 56 actors, portable showers and a temporary office space to allow the companies and audiences the most enjoyable experience on site.

Shows open across the city on Saturday. At the Edinburgh Playhouse Brazil's Deborah Colker Dance Company takes to the stage with **Tatyana** its sexy and sensual adaptation of *Eugene Onegin* transferred from Russia to the sultry streets of Rio.

At the Royal Lyceum Barry McGovern entertains full houses with his one man play **Watt** based on a comic novel by Samuel Beckett.

The newly refurbished King's Theatre is the venue for the great Japanese theatre director Tadashi Suzuki's first visit to the UK in almost 30 years with his production **Waiting for Orestes: Electra**.

Sunday 12 August begins with the traditional Festival Service at St Giles' Cathedral, this year featuring a performance from Festival artist Baritone Njabulo Madlala. The service begins at 10.30am and is free for everyone to attend.

Sunday also sees the opening of ***Encounters***, a series of provocative and wide ranging key note talks and debates around the ideas and inspirations behind the Festival, in partnership with the British Council Scotland.

At 2pm on Sunday 12 August Robert McCrum delivers the key note speech addressing *What Does it Mean to be British?* followed on the Monday by an exploration of the *Four Nations of the United Kingdom* with writers from Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales.

On Saturday and Sunday evenings in the Usher Hall the Festival presents Edinburgh's own Donald Runnicles conducting the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in a performance of the *Alpine Symphony*, and Waltraud Meier, the world-renown German mezzo soprano in a wonderful programme of dramatic songs.

Over three weeks the Edinburgh International Festival is set to welcome over **3,000 artists from at least 47 nations** including Russia, Brazil, Japan, America, Chile, France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Australia, India, Ireland, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Israel, Italy, Norway, Spain, South Africa, Venezuela, and of course Scotland and the rest of the UK to share the live experience of theatre, dance, opera and music.

Following the opening weekend of the Festival, and the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games, the first **International Culture Summit** will be hosted at the Scottish Parliament on Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 August.

The Edinburgh International Festival in partnership with the Scottish Government, the UK Government and British Council, offers this platform and opportunity for cultural delegations from around the world to join in discussing the power and role of culture in international dialogue.

**Festival backstage**, a partnership with Standard Life and the Scottish Screen Academy at Edinburgh Napier University continues to grow, giving audiences further insights and access behind the scenes of the Festival through a series of films online with contributions from Nicola Benedetti, Sophie Bevan, Kirsty Wark, David Greig and many backstage staff who ensure the Festival show goes on. [www.eif.co.uk/festivalbackstage](http://www.eif.co.uk/festivalbackstage)

There are still tickets to some of the Festival's big shows this year. In a Festival that remains **remarkable value**, those aged 26 and under are able to buy the best remaining tickets for just £8 on the day. All young people, students, senior citizens, unemployed, Young Scot, Equity and Musicians Union card holders can buy **tickets half price**.

Hub Tickets +44 (0)131 473 2000

[eif.co.uk](http://eif.co.uk)

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# Edinburgh Festival Fringe – Feet don't fail me now

These guys were just ripping the stage apart at Parliament Square today with their live music and rapid-fire tap dancing, attracting us to them. There was a huge crowd also fascinated by their skills. They are a bit loud so be careful with our sound here!

Their show is on from 1-27 August at Assembly George Square Theatre at 3.40p.m.

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## Edinburgh Festival Fringe Bristol Revunions

Bristol Revunions are a lovely bunch of people who we met on the Royal Mile earlier. They are performing Destination Adventure which relates the story of the Junior Maritime Rangers. You are invited along to support the nautical do-gooders as they earn their Sketch Comedy badges of glory.

They were so eager to sing we just let them do that too...

[listen to 'Bristol Revunions' on Audioboo](#)

The Caves in the Fancy Room at 2pm from 2-26 August 2012 (but not the 14th)

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# Edinburgh Festival Fringe Trojan Women

We recorded a little snippet of this show by Lancaster Offshoots on the Royal Mile today to offer you a flavour of what you might hear in the show itself.

The show is billed as a ramshackle travelling folk band in a unique production as they recount the tale of the Women of Troy. Original verse and song tells each woman's story.

At the Space @ Symposium Hall from 3-26 August 2012.

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## Jimeoin at the EICC



Sunday left me double booked. Hibs were playing in Dundee and I also had tickets to see Jimeoin's 'What' show at the EICC.

Thankfully the kick off time at Tannadice had been brought forward to 1pm which made both possible if not certain, depending on the traffic, but the one good thing about being a Hibs fans these days is that there is not usually an inclination to stay to the bitter end of games. By the time Michael Gardyne scored Dundee United's third, I was southbound on the M90 swearing at the radio.

When I reached Edinburgh, I realised that Hibs were now bottom of the SPL, so I definitely needed cheering up, and Jimeoin was the perfect tonic.

Jimeoin is one of those comedians who can make an audience laugh without saying a word. His facial expressions, particularly his frequently raised eyebrows are enough to start the giggling in the auditorium.

Quick to distance himself from the new brand of alternative comedians who don't tell jokes, but instead merely give their opinions on subject that he doesn't know or care about, Jimeoin just wants to make people laugh.

Whether he is talking about shirts, supermarkets, shopping, wives or doing jobs about the house, his surreal take on everyday behaviour had the crowd in stitches. His perceptive take on human behaviour had young, old, men and women with tears of laughter.

If there are any comedians with better timing, I haven't seen them. His strong Belfast accent would make you laugh even if he was reading out the telephone book.

These days, stand-up comics seem to go out of their way to shock or cause offence, but Jimeoin has no need to rely on such material, although the subject of 'hanky panky' occasionally arose.

He finished off with a few songs, including the hilarious 'What' which had the audience singing along, and didn't bother leaving the stage before his well-deserved encore.

I have seen many of today's comedians live, including Jimmy Carr, Dara O'Brien, Sarah Millican, Michael McIntyre Omid Djalli, Rich Hall and Steven Merchant, but Jimeoin is right up there with the best of them.

Although not a sell-out, once the word gets round he will be,

so if you are looking for a show which will guarantee laughs then don't miss this and at only £11 per ticket you won't find better value.

It was several hours after leaving the EICC that I remembered the Hibs' performance, but even that couldn't remove the smile from my face.

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## The Asps Triumph In London

✖ Last Saturday Edinburgh band, The Asps, played three gigs in one day between London's Hyde Park and Victoria Park as part of BT London Live a series of concerts during the Olympic Games.

The band played at Edinburgh's Hard Rock Cafe George Street on Thursday Night and then drove down to London on Friday in readiness for their trio of concerts the following day.

PJ Dourley the band's lead singer said this about the whole day:-

"We arrived at Victoria Park and were ushered to our very own dressing room. This was immense because we had spent all morning on London Transport which was extremely busy, so it was nice to get a bit of down time.

The stage at Victoria Park was massive, the sound was definitely the biggest we have ever played. The gig itself was great, it was really chilled at Victoria Park, but there were a lot of people spread out and once we started playing they started moving over to us. After that we had to move quickly to Hyde Park. When we got off the tube and arrived at Hyde Park, we were in shock at the crowds. We moved over to the

gate and as we arrived the security shouted:- “Ahh! The Asps have arrived!!” It was so nice to know that not only were we not lost but that in the many millions of people waiting in queues, we were actually anticipated by security.

We were quickly ushered through and again moved to the back stage area where we had another dressing room. First gig we did in Hyde Park was at 5:20 and it was an instant hit with the crowd. They were going mad. There must have been easily 30,000 people watching and within earshot of the band, but the highlight gig was our headline slot at the Live Connection band stand later that evening at 9.30pm. Jessica Ennis had just achieved a world record and team GB were winning everything coining the name ‘Super Saturday’.

Later on we were the main source of music and everyone there just hit the band stand. It was thousands deep and at one point we got them to sing ‘I guess I chose All the wrong Idols’. It was like the sound of a hurricane, so, so exciting to hear your songs being sung by thousands of people who have never heard of you before now. It was a true success and there have been many opportunities opened up for us through this.”

While The Asps can bask in the success that they had on Saturday they are certainly not cooling their heels they are due to play two gigs in Princes Street Gardens Ross Bandstand very soon on 16th and 23rd August and are writing more material in anticipation of recording their debut album in San Francisco with world-renowned producer Ron Nevison.

To find out more about The Asps:

[www.bigsurstudios.com](http://www.bigsurstudios.com)

<http://www.reverbnation.com/#!/theaspsband>

<https://twitter.com/TheAsps>

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