

## FESTIVALS 2024 – ACTIVITY SUMMARY

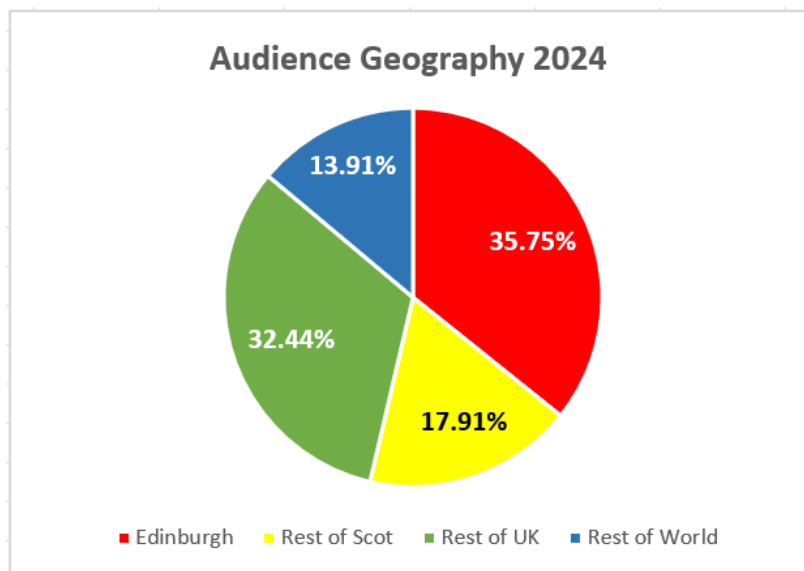
Edinburgh’s eleven major festivals (described in Table 1) take place throughout the year, bringing cultural, social, employment and economic benefit to the citizens of the city and region. This brief overview highlights their 2024 activity in individual summaries presented in date order. The data contained in this report was provided by the City of Edinburgh Council from submissions made to them by the individual festivals listed below. **Please note:** *Online figures have not been collected from 2024 because most festivals have returned primarily to in-person live events following the online performance period 2021 to 2023 during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**Table 1: Edinburgh’s Eleven Festivals, by date:**

<b>Festival</b>	<b>2024 Dates</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
<b>Spring Festivals</b>		
Edinburgh Science Festival	30 March - 14 April	The world’s first science festival and one of Europe’s largest
Edinburgh International Children’s Festival	25 May - 2 June	World renowned children’s festival presenting exceptional theatre and dance for young audiences
<b>Summer Festivals</b>		
Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival	12 - 21 July	The UK’s largest independently run jazz and blues festival
Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo	2 – 24 August	An iconic Edinburgh institution and one of Scotland’s leading cultural brands
Edinburgh International Festival	2 – 25 August	Founded in 1947, the world’s leading performing arts festival, featuring the finest performers in dance, opera, music and theatre
Edinburgh Festival Fringe	2 – 26 August	One of the world’s great celebrations of performing arts, with a purpose to give anyone a stage and everyone a seat, inspiring a global movement of 300 Fringe Festivals
Edinburgh Art Festival	9 – 25 August	The UK’s largest annual festival of visual arts, including a programme of public realm commissions
Edinburgh International Book Festival	10 - 25 August	A world leading celebration of books and ideas
Edinburgh International Film Festival	15 - 21 August	The world’s longest continually running film festival, emphasising new talent, discovery and innovation
<b>Autumn/Winter Festivals</b>		
Scottish International Storytelling Festival	18 - 31 October	Inspired by Scottish tradition and centred around the world’s first purpose-built centre for storytelling
Edinburgh’s Hogmanay	29 December – 1 January	Edinburgh’s iconic New Year party, highlighted as one of the ‘top 100 things to do before you die’

## OVERVIEW

The Edinburgh Festivals in 2024 were a major success, with attendances of c3.9m from c70 countries – and Edinburgh residents representing nearly 40% of audiences, demonstrating once again how our citizens are the very lifeblood of the festivals.



The table above shows the total attendance and the number of unique attendees for the 2023 and 2024 periods. The data for attendances has been provided by the individual Festivals. The number of attendees is derived from the survey data on the number of events attended/per visitor type, noting that this figure was originally calculated for the 2022 calendar year as part of the latest festivals economic impact study and has been deemed a useful proxy for the 2023 and 2024 calendar years [Source: BOP Consulting 2023].

**Table 2: Attendances and Attendees at Edinburgh’s Festivals**

Year	Attendance	Attendees	Attendances per Attendee
2023	3,447,973	749,559	4.6
2024	3,914,838	851,052	4.6

Despite the positive atmosphere, there was an underlying message about the fragility of the arts community and the need to support artists. 2024 also confirmed the anecdotal evidence that the days of most festival goers buying their tickets months in advance are behind us. The trend of later booking patterns has remained in place post-pandemic, with people unwilling to commit well in advance, not just for fear of cancellation but because of the thought that something better might arise.

Our festivals seek to counter such trends by emphasising the unique nature of their cultural programmes and the fact – borne out by our audience research – that the Edinburgh Festivals are a place of extraordinary experiences and cultural discovery.

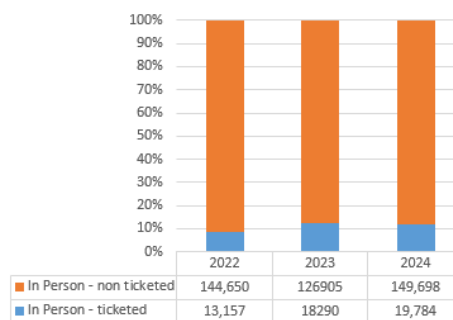
# INDIVIDUAL FESTIVAL REPORTS

## Edinburgh Science Festival [30 March - 14 April 2024]

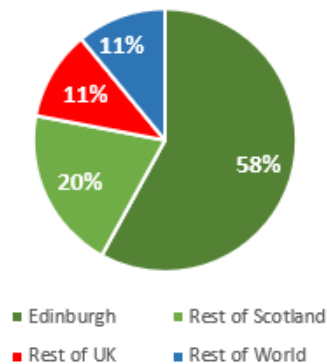
- Taking over the city between Saturday 30 March – Sunday 14 April, the 2024 Edinburgh Science Festival included 155 events from hands-on workshops and interactive shows for families, to exhibitions, talks and science nights out for adults.
- With the theme “Shaping the Future”, 2024’s Festival explored the cutting-edge science and technology that can help us create a future that is sustainable and accessible for all.
- The pop-up science centre returned to the City Art Centre, supported by Cirrus Logic, where mini scientists could get hands-on performing keyhole surgery on a ‘patient’ in ER Surgery and take on the role of a forensic scientist to solve a crime in CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.
- The Edinburgh Science Festival showcased how biomaterials may be the sustainable solution to combat over consumption in the Growing Home exhibition, located in the National Museum of Scotland’s Grand Gallery.
- Popular discussion events included The Secret of Psychology of Magic with Prof Richard Wiseman, Disposing of the Body chaired by BBC Health and Science presenter Laura Foster and the prestigious Edinburgh Medal, presented to pioneering non-profit medical research institute Mario Negri Institute for their dedication to science for social good.



Audience Numbers 2022-2024



Audience Geography 2024

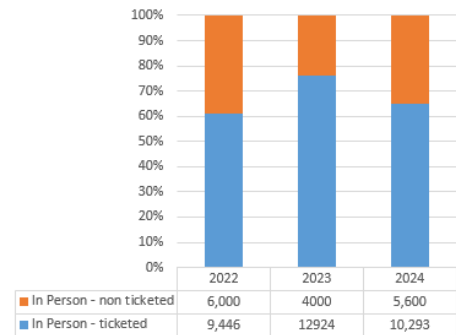


## Edinburgh International Children's Festival [25 May - 2 June 2024]

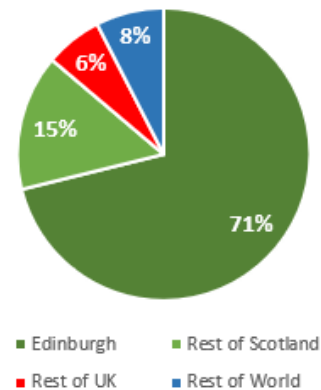
- The Edinburgh International Children's Festival is a nine-day long festival which offers shows from all over the world and showcases a programme of dance, circus, theatre, and storytelling.
- The 2024 Edinburgh International Children's Festival featured 14 productions from nine countries. The festival celebrates high-quality Scottish and international performances to an audience of around 10,000 children, their teachers, and families each year.
- The Edinburgh International Children's Festival opened with a day of free pop-up performances at the National Museum of Scotland. Productions also took place in theatres and community centres across Edinburgh.
- For many children, attending these performances may be the first time they set foot in a theatre, for others it's a chance to be inspired and take part.



Audience Numbers 2022-24

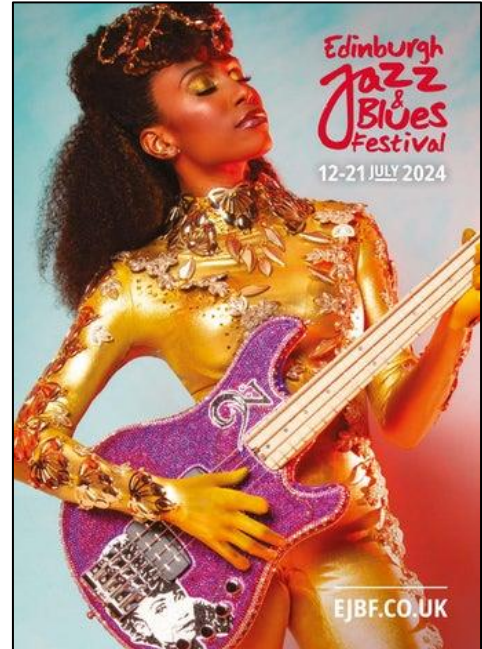


Audience Geography 2024

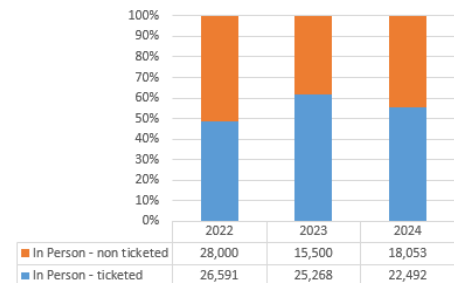


## Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival [12 - 21 July 2024]

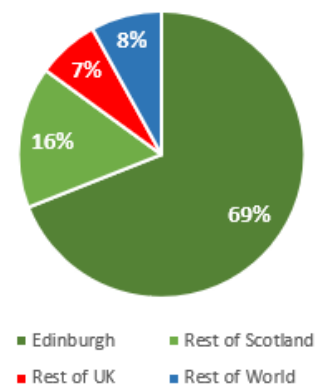
- For 46 years, the Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival has provided a platform to showcase the very best jazz and blues artists that the world has to offer. Held over 10 days and with over 130 performances a year the festival is one of the largest jazz festivals in Europe, creating moving and memorable experiences for both residents of the city and visitors from around the globe.
- In 2024, the Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival took place from 12 to 21 July. The festival welcomed some of Scotland's, the UK's and the world's finest jazz and blues artists to the city for unique, head-bopping, toe-tapping performances. From blues-rock to samba and swing, there's something to suit everyone.
- The Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival takes place in venues across the city of Edinburgh, from concert halls and nightclubs to the city's Festival Theatre. The festival's Mardi Gras took place in Edinburgh's historic Old Town where audiences enjoyed a mix of soul and brass band music.



Audience Numbers 2022-2024

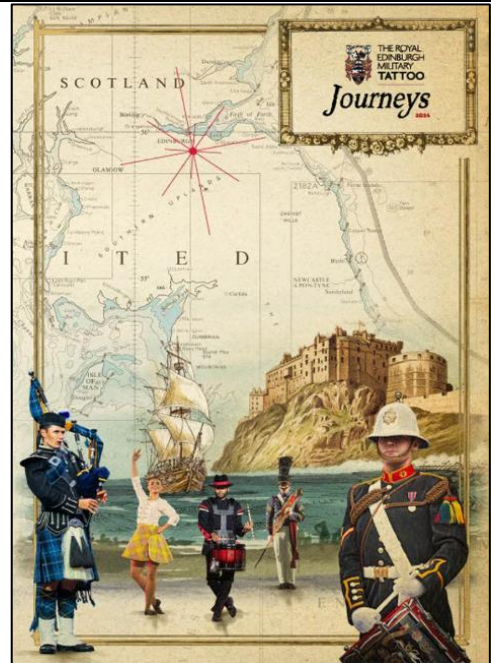


Audience Geography 2024

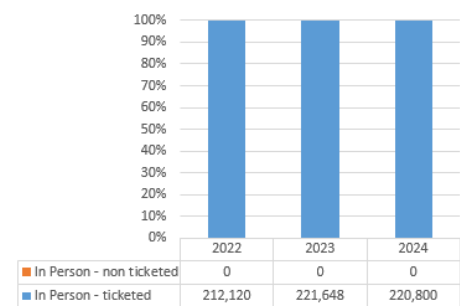


## Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo [2 – 24 August 2024]

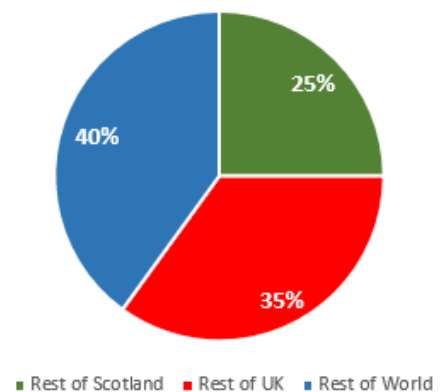
- Running from 2 – 24 August, the 2024 show Journeys was the final show from the Tattoo's first dedicated Creative Director, Michael Braithwaite. Following on from Voices (2022) and Stories (2023), Journeys took crowds on an epic journey of connection through music, dance, culture, and military traditions.
- With the Royal Navy as the 2024 Lead Service, Journeys featured performances by the Massed Pipes and Drums, The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo Performers, The Massed Bands of His Majesty's Royal Marines, Majesticks Drum Corps, Teamwork Arts India, The Citadel Regimental Band and Pipes, United States Navy Ceremonial Guard, United States Sea Service Band, and the Lone Piper.



Audience Numbers 2022-2024

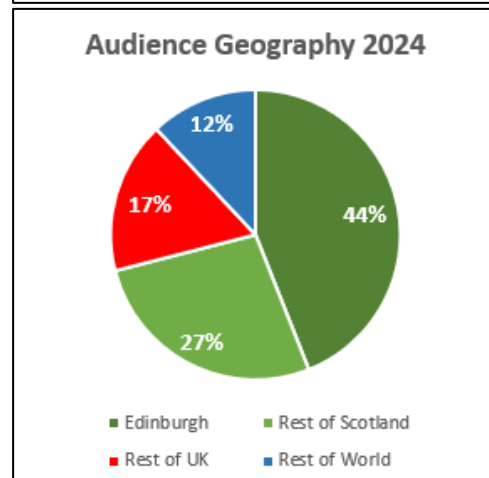
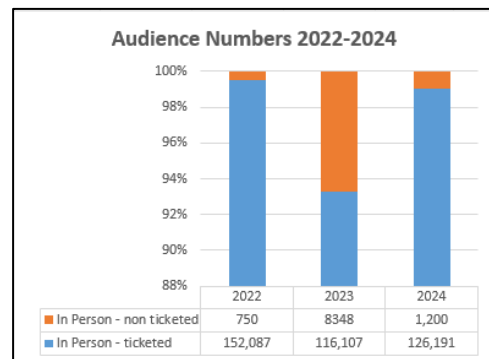


Audience Geography 2024



## Edinburgh International Festival [2 – 25 August 2024]

- The Festival theme “Rituals That Unite Us” explored the power of live performance to bind us closer together.
- Over 7,000 people attended the highly anticipated opening event: “Where to Begin”, presented in partnership with The Macallan. This ambitious and immersive experience, brought to life by the creative team at Pinwheel, launched Edinburgh's festival season.
- The Festival reimagined ways in which live performance could bring audiences and artists closer together. Seats were swapped for beanbags for six informal concerts at the Usher Hall. Residencies from Ilumina, Bamberger Symphoniker and Philharmonia allowed audiences a deeper exploration of their repertoire and the ensembles to engage more with the Festival and the city. The beloved Edinburgh Festival Chorus performed with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Bamberger Symphoniker and The Hallé as well as in a concert of their own.
- The Hub series once again welcomed audiences into the home of the International Festival for unforgettable performances from around the world and a thrilling new 'Up Late' strand later broadcast on Sky Arts. It was here where Rising Stars, who had been mentored and inspired by world-leading musicians, were showcased. The Queen's Hall concert series proved unmissable in 2024 with stars such as Jakub Józef Orliński and Sheku Kanneh-Mason captivating audiences. The contemporary music programme ranged from Declan Mckenna's indie-pop sound filling the Playhouse to Bat for Lashes intimate magical show in the Queen's Hall.
- As an international festival deeply rooted in Scotland, an impressive 50% of the artists were from Scotland in 2024. This included representation from all five Scottish national companies - National Theatre of Scotland, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet and Scottish Chamber Orchestra.



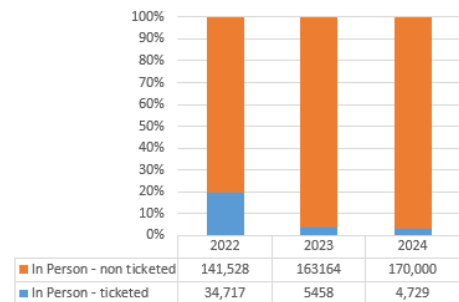


## Edinburgh Art Festival [9 – 25 August 2024]

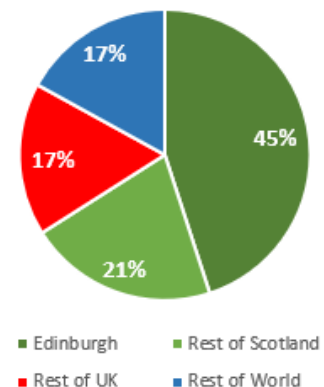
- In 2024, Edinburgh Arts Festival (EAF) marked its 20th Birthday as the UK’s largest annual visual arts festival. To commemorate this, EAF24 invited audiences to come together to pause and reflect on the conditions under which we live, work, gather and resist.
- Finding a new central hub in the City Art Centre, the EAF24 programme traced lines through personal histories, the natural world, post-colonial landscapes, and the global political stage. EAF24 connected to our context and the city — to the people and movements who inspire change, who resist inequity, isolation, destruction, and despair.



Audience Numbers 2022-24

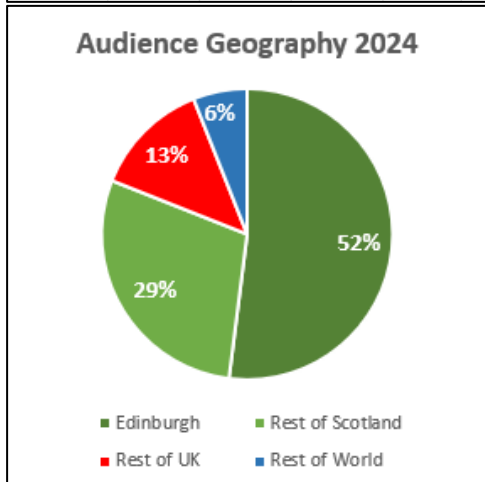
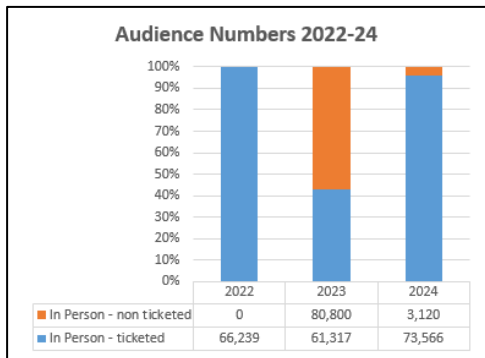


Audience Geography 2024



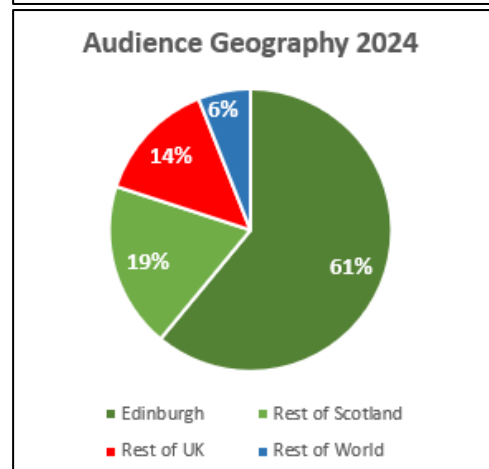
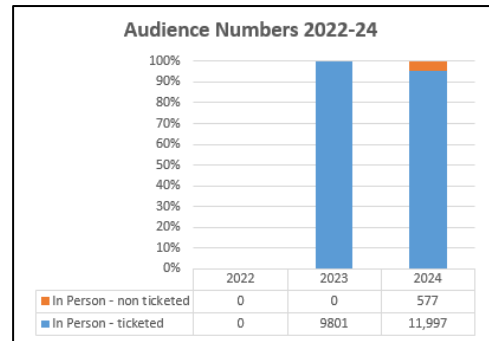
## Edinburgh International Book Festival [10 – 25 August 2024]

- Over 100k visits were made to Edinburgh International Book Festival's new home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute from 10-25 August 2024, with ticket and book sales significantly up on previous years, and thousands of curious passers-by exploring and enjoying the new site, amongst the heart of Edinburgh's festival action.
- Future Tense, the first Book Festival programme to unfold under new Director Jenny Niven, tackled topics of global importance ranging from AI to the climate crisis, capitalism to the war in the Middle East, migration to inheritance, and more besides. Legendary authors, writers, poets, thinkers and entertainers including Margaret Atwood and Salman Rushdie (who joined down the line), Richard Osman, Dolly Alderton, Alan Cumming & Forbes Masson, Phillipa Gregory, Jackie Kay, James O'Brien, Lemn Sissay, Elif Shafak, Louise Welsh, Raja Shehadeh, Marian Keyes, Roger McGough appeared on stage, alongside RF Kuang, Blindboy, Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson, Evie Wyld, Julius Roberts, and Samantha Shannon. As well as greats from the literary sector, stars of music and film (Stuart Brathwaite of Mogwai, Esther Swift, Evelyann Glennie, Stuart Murdoch, Steven Moffat, Anjoa Andoh), theatre makers (including Grid Iron's Ben Harrison), producers, publishers (many appearing as part of the Business of Books strand aimed at those in the industry, and artists (Ruth Millington, Kate Leiper) and actors also featured, bringing the multi-disciplinary magic of the Edinburgh Festivals to life, right at the heart of the city.
- This year saw a number of brand new types of events unfold, many celebrating cross discipline collaboration, including the ambitious digital experience, Perambulations of a Justified Sinner and the intimate Have Lunch With... series at Elliott's Studio, featuring chef-writers (Asma Khan, Sami Tamimi and Rachel Roddy). Clean Money: Can Fundraising Ever Be Ethical brought in audience members with a variety of views to discuss the detail and nuance of modern arts funding in a safe and supported space, and events including ThinkTanks offered audiences unparalleled access to world-class minds including Harold Hongju Koh, Ingrid Robeyns, Joseph Stiglitz and Ken Costa. Voices from across the political spectrum also joined the conversation, with appearances from John Culture and Communities Committee – 5 June 2025 Page 16 of 25 Swinney, Jess Phillips, Caroline Lucas, Andy Burnham and Sadiq Khan.



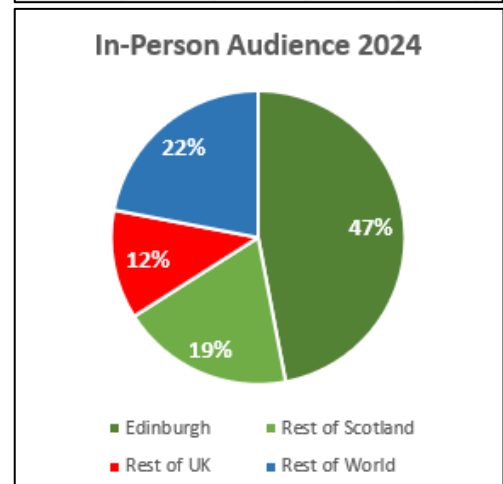
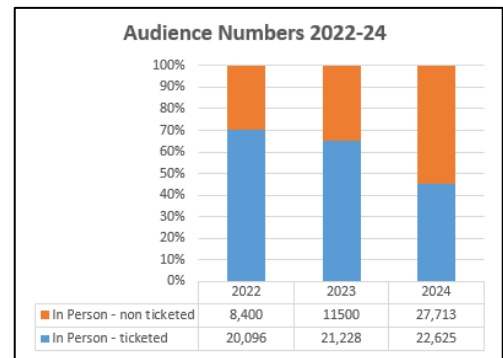
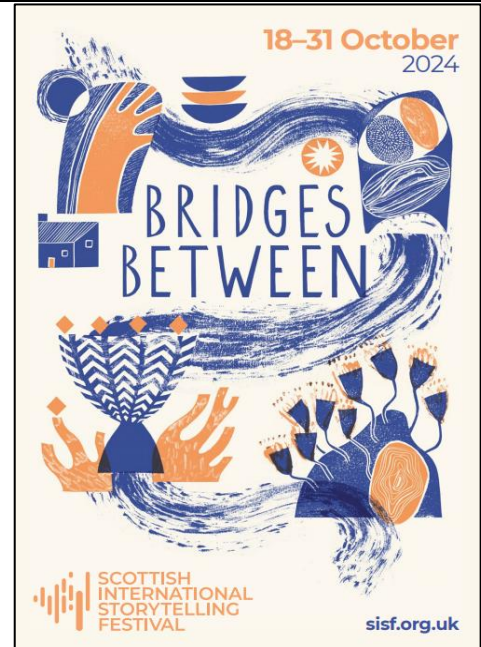
## Edinburgh International Film Festival [15 – 21 August 2024]

- 2024 was a unique year in the history of Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF). A brand new organisation was established, led by a Board of industry experts and a new management team. The team delivered a completely new iteration of this vital film festival, honouring its legacy while looking firmly to the future.
- Fundamentally, the Festival is all about getting films to audiences and the core strategy is to embed the Festival within the dynamic arts scene taking place throughout August in Edinburgh. In August 2024 EIFF did just that, with a programme of screenings, special events and talks, delivered in partnership with Fringe organisations and hosted in a range of cinema and pop-up venues across the city.
- The Festival worked closely with collaborators in the film world as well as other arts festivals, venues and the Fringe to deliver a festival that would feel inclusive, open and future-facing.
- It was ‘Year Zero’ for the new EIFF, and they embraced its opportunities with gusto.
- With the invaluable support of The Sean Connery Foundation, the Festival launched its inaugural World Premiere features competition, a programme of ten excellent, brand new films from all over the world competing for the £50K prize, decided by audience vote. The winner, the striking UK debut *The Ceremony* directed by Jack King, recouped much of the film’s budget with the prize, which is testament to the power of the opportunity.



## Scottish International Storytelling Festival [18 – 31 October 2024]

- The Scottish International Storytelling Festival brings together Scottish and international storytellers and musicians. The first Scottish International Storytelling Festival took place in 1989 and welcomed 700 attendees.
- The festival takes place in October each year and celebrates the traditions of oral storytelling and cultural diversity. They could be stories of mystery and magic, folklore and fairies, travel or adventure or just a rip-roaring romp with a few laughs along the way.
- 2024 marked the 35th anniversary of the festival – taking place from 18 - 31 October – coinciding with the 35th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The theme of the 2024 Festival was “Bridges Between” where storytellers looked beyond the literal, figurative and societal walls that continue to be built.
- The main venue was the Netherbow Theatre on the Royal Mile, in the heart of Edinburgh’s Old Town, and the programme always offers something for adults and children and is inspired by Scotland’s ceilidh traditions, its sense of camaraderie, and a wider community held together by shared tales, music, songs and ballads.



## Edinburgh's Hogmanay [29 December 2024 – 1 January 2025]

- For over 30 years, Edinburgh's Hogmanay has welcomed revellers from around the world to celebrate the New Year in the heart of the historic city. The festival is filled with a spectacular programme of events honouring Hogmanay traditions, old and new, featuring the traditional Torchlight Procession, headline "Concert in the Gardens" beneath Edinburgh Castle which was set to welcome Texas to play the last gig of the year and first of the New Year; the worldfamous Street Party with live bands, DJ's, street theatre and unforgettable Midnight Fireworks from Edinburgh Castle; and a packed New Year's Day of free events with live music and family events throughout the city.
- Due to extreme weather conditions, Torchlight Procession, Night Afore Concert, Concert In the Gardens and Street Party were cancelled in 2024/25.

