

Beat: Arts

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2016

Defying the norm since 1947

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USPA NEWS - The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the largest arts festival in the world and takes place every August for three weeks in Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city. Every year thousands of performers take to hundreds of stages all over Edinburgh to present shows for every taste.

From big names in the world of entertainment to unknown artists looking to build their careers, the festival caters for everyone and includes theatre, comedy, dance, physical theatre, circus, cabaret, children's shows, musicals, opera, music, spoken word, Exhibitions and events. In 2015 there were 50,459 performances of 3,314 shows in 313 venues, making it the largest ever arts festival in the world.

The Fringe story dates back to 1947, when eight theatre groups turned up uninvited to perform at the (then newly formed) Edinburgh International Festival, an initiative created to celebrate and enrich European cultural life in the wake of the Second World War. Not being part of the official programme of the International Festival didn't stop these performers "“ they just went ahead and staged their shows on the "“Fringe of the Festival" anyway "“ coining the phrase and the name "“(Edinburgh) Festival Fringe". Year on year more and more performers followed their example and in 1958 the Festival Fringe Society was created in response to the success of this growing trend.

Today, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, a registered charity, has three core objectives:

Providing support, advice and encouragement to all the amazing artists, producers and venues who create the Fringe each year, from help with choosing a venue or writing a press release, to advice on touring, free access to rehearsal space, and professional development activities and events. Assisting the audiences who come to Edinburgh by helping you navigate what's on offer with comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date information and ticketing. Promoting this wonderful and unique festival to the rest of the world

The Society formalised the existence of this collective of performances, provided information to artists, published the Fringe programme and created a central box office. Its constitution was written in line with the ethos that brought these theatre companies to Edinburgh back in 1947: that the Society was to take no part in vetting the festival's programme. To this day that policy remains at the core of the festival and they are proud to include their programme to anyone with a story to tell and a venue willing to host them.

Source: Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society

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