

Stars of comedy preparing for Edinburgh Comedy Festival



Paul Merton, Bill Bailey, Rhona Cameron, Jerry Sadowitz, Ed Byrne, Jim Jeffries, Tim Vine and many more gear up for launch

The cream of comedy is set to descend on Edinburgh from 30 July for the inaugural **Edinburgh Comedy Festival** - a 'festival-within-a-festival' - by the Fringe venues - Assembly, Gilded Balloon, Pleasance and Underbelly.

Featuring **253 shows** across **55 different stages** over **27 days** (30th July – 25th August), the first year's programme brings together some of the world's biggest acts alongside some of the most promising emerging and unknown talent from across the spectrum of sketch, improv, stand up, poetry, musical and comic theatre.

Established international stars and seasoned professionals such as **Paul Merton, Bill Bailey, Rhona Cameron, Clive James, Ed Byrne, Rich Hall, Omid Djalili, Michael McIntyre, Jim Jeffries and Jerry Sadowitz** share stages with new comedy talent including **Sarah Millican, Tom Allen, Matt Green, Sammy J, Dan Nightingale and Tom Wrigglesworth**. Edinburgh Comedy Festival is also the place to see the best new and experimental shows, such as *Why We Ate Cliff Richard*, *Eco-Friendly Jihad*, *Learn To Play The Ukulele in Under An Hour (How George Formby Saved My Life)*, and *Creation Nation!*

Edinburgh Comedy Festival Highlights

Assembly	Gilded Balloon	Pleasance	Underbelly				
Clive James	Pam Ann	Bill Bailey	Greg Fleet	Mark Watson	Tim Vine	Jerry Sadowitz	Jim Rose Circus
Brendon Burns	Jason Byrne	Rhona Cameron	Craig Hill	Omid Djalili	Andrew Maxwell	Richard Herring	John Pinette
Ruby Wax	Frank Woodley	Tim Minchin	Miles Jupp	Michael McIntyre	Stephen K Amos	Jim Jeffries	Tina C
Count Arthur Strong	Ed Byrne	Karen Dunbar	Gamarjabat	Tim Minchin	Rhod Gilbert	Jim Bowen	Glenn Wool
Russell Howard	Rich Hall	Jimeoin	Fiona O'Loughlin	Reginald D Hunter	Louis CK	Scott Capurro	Dan Antopolski

"Comedy on the Fringe has always been about celebrating the best of today's talent, while giving the opportunity to tomorrow's stars." comments **Karen Koren, Founder, Gilded Balloon**. *"By creating the Edinburgh Comedy Festival on the Fringe, we aim to continue to be able to develop what we care about so much."*

"Attracting established names such as Paul Merton, Bill Bailey, Rich Hall and Clive James helps establish the festival as the destination for comedy in the UK," adds **Charlie Wood, Co-Founder, Underbelly**. *"The emerging talent that makes up a large percentage of shows across the month are equally as important though, and help cement Edinburgh's position as the place to see new, experimental and exciting comedy talent"*.

Visitors to the festival can see the full festival line up at www.edcomfest.com, where it is possible find the latest festival news, plan your Edinburgh comedy experience and book tickets – all with the click of a mouse.

With over 875,000 visitors expected in the first year – an audience five times the size of Glastonbury - Edinburgh Comedy Festival's central aim is to bring more people to the festival city than ever before and raise funds for both artists & venues. With future plans that include open invitations for more venues and producers to join; the targeting of a larger national & international audience; and greater financial support for the comedians, the intention is to grow this figure to a million in three years.

“The decision to create the festival-within-a-festival concept of Edinburgh Comedy Festival was born of a collective desire to protect and nurture all the things that we feel makes the Edinburgh in August the best cultural destination in the world – in the face of ever-increasing competition from other festivals and ever-rising costs”, comments **William Burdett-Coutts, Founder of Assembly**. *“In doing so, we’re attempting to take all the things that make the Fringe great – and make it better. Make it better for comedy; make it better for our visitors; make it better for the Fringe; and make it better for the Edinburgh festivals and city as a whole.”*

MD of Pleasance, Anthony Alderson, added: *“It is no secret that the success of comedy at these venues has enabled the support of other work. Over fifty percent of our programme features theatre, music, musical theatre, dance and children’s shows - all equally prominent and vital. If Edinburgh Comedy Festival can generate more audiences and even more interest in the Fringe as a whole, then everyone will benefit.”*

Contacts

For further information / Images / Interviews

Idea Generation: +44(0)20 7749 6850

Paul Drury: pauld@ideageneration.co.uk

Paul Woodmansey: paul@ideageneration.co.uk

Editor’s Notes

Box Office

Online: www.edcomfest.com

Tel: Assembly - 0131 623 3030
Gilded Balloon - 0131 668 1633
Pleasance - 0131 556 6550
Underbelly - 0844 545 8252

Edinburgh Comedy Festival

Over four weeks in August the best of the world's comedy, theatre and music talent visit Edinburgh. More than a million tourists descend on Edinburgh each year to take part in numerous live events in addition the local and regional visitors. Edinburgh Comedy Festival venues will sell nearly a million tickets to this audience and will define the comedy element in Edinburgh in August 2008 and for the first time pull hundreds of comedy shows and performances together creating one exciting new festival. Edinburgh Comedy Festival is a joint initiative by the four largest venues at Edinburgh Festival Fringe that have been running for many years - Assembly, Gilded Balloon, Pleasance, and Underbelly.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Audience

Where visitors come from:

- Edinburgh 35%
- Lothians 7%
- Rest of Scotland 18%
- Rest of UK 30%
- Overseas 10%

Age groups:

- Under 16 1%
- 16-20- 15%
- 21-35 – 55%
- 36-50 – 19%
- 51-65 7%
- Over 65 2%

Who they are:

- Female 51%
- Male 49%

Edinburgh Comedy Festival: Headline Facts & Figures

Edinburgh Comedy Festival Facts & Figures (Relates to comedy shows in 2007 Edinburgh Fringe)	#
Total number of shows	553
Total number of people attached to performing companies	4,660
Total directly employed	1,024
No tickets sold	824,804

Key Objectives of Edinburgh Comedy Festival

Marketing

- Raise the festival and Edinburgh's profile internationally
- Generate more media coverage

Programme

- Produce more headline shows
- Generate national and international opportunities for all artists

Improved services

- Maintain and develop the festival infrastructure
- Improve the audience experience

Websites



www.ideaegeneration.co.uk

For:
Online Press Office
Client list
Company contact detail



www.edcomfest.com

For:
Booking
Show information
Venue links
and much, much more



www.edfringe.com

For:
Further information about Edinburgh Fringe Festival
Artists, programme, booking and Edinburgh guides

Ends