

For immediate use



### **Curtain rises on Edinburgh International Festival 2009**

- 14,000 people to enjoy Edinburgh International Festival performances on opening weekend
- 4,500 approximately already seen work in Festival's visual art exhibition
- Jim Murphy, Secretary of State for Scotland chairs opening weekend debate on how the Scots exported the Enlightenment
- Opening Concert of Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus* first of 180 performances and events over three amazing weeks

**Edinburgh International Festival 2009** opens in style today (**Friday 14 August**) with the Opening Concert at the Usher Hall – the first of 180 events over the next three weeks and the prelude to a vibrant, fascinating first weekend of performances.

The programme for the 2009 Edinburgh International Festival is inspired by the **Enlightenment**, an incredible period in the 18<sup>th</sup> century which saw an outpouring of intellectual, philosophical and scientific accomplishments.

Before the traditional opening around 4,500 people have already enjoyed work at Edinburgh International Festival 2009, visiting the Festival's visual art exhibition, ***The Enlightenment*** - a series of new commissions and work new to Scotland.

Curated by **Juliana Engberg** *The Enlightenments* is presented in partnership with the Dean Gallery – National Galleries of Scotland, Talbot Rice Gallery – The University of Edinburgh and Collective Gallery which are hosting the project, in addition to a Bluetooth delivered work. *The Enlightenments* is sponsored by **Bank of Scotland** and supported by **Homecoming Scotland** and the **Government of Victoria, Australia through Arts Victoria**.

The first note of the **Opening Concert** sounds at **7.00pm** tonight (**Friday 14 August**) in the world famous Usher Hall. **William Christie** conducts the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** and a star line up of soloists including **Rosemary Joshua** and **Sarah Connolly**, together with the **Edinburgh Festival Chorus** led by **Christopher Bell**, in a concert performance of one of Handel's most enduring oratorios ***Judas Maccabaeus***, sponsored by **Heineken/Scottish & Newcastle plc**.

On Sunday 16 August, **Secretary of State for Scotland Jim Murphy** chairs one of the Festival's fascinating *The Enlightenment* series of debates between leading cultural commentators in the arts, politics and academia. *Scotland Exports the Enlightenment*, at The Hub, 2.30pm, features Tom Devine, Professor of Scottish History, University of Edinburgh, author Arthur L Herman and Ong Keng Sen, Director of *Diaspora*.

***Diaspora***, a visionary production by director **Ong Keng Sen**, **TheatreWorks** and the **Singapore Chinese Orchestra**, makes its European premiere at the Edinburgh Playhouse on Saturday.

A sweeping, panoramic performance ***Diaspora*** layers music, video and live story telling to explore memory, migration, assimilation and the triumph of the human spirit. A timeline of Chinese music spanning 2000 years underscores the production, from mountain songs to contemporary compositions.

The production, on Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 August 8.00pm, is supported by **Homecoming Scotland, Visiting Arts, National Arts Council (Singapore)** and **Singapore Arts Festival**.

The theatre programme for the opening weekend also features Faith Healer at The King's Theatre. The play forms part of a residency by Dublin's **Gate Theatre** at

Festival 09 - supported by **Culture Ireland** - celebrating the work of Ireland's greatest living playwright, **Brian Friel**.

Saturday sees the beginning of the intimate and always hugely popular morning **Queen's Hall** series with a concert at 11.00am of rarely performed part and solo songs by Haydn performed by the exquisite voices of **Collegium Vocale Gent** accompanied by rising young star **Kristian Bezuidenhout**.

At The Edinburgh Festival Theatre, traditional Gaelic song and contemporary music are performed against a backdrop of vintage and modern film as a cast of actors, singers and acrobats tell the story of the 'Birdmen' of St Kilda who harvested a living from seabirds and their eggs by scaling the sheer cliffs off their rocky home for more than 3,000 years. ***St Kilda, Island of the Birdmen*** opens on **Saturday** at **8.00pm** and is sponsored by **Lloyds TSB Scotland**.

The Usher Hall weekend also features the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** led by **Paul Daniel** in a fascinating concert, ***Made in Scotland***. They perform two of the Master of the Queen's Music **Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's** most famous works *An Orkney Wedding with Sunrise* and *Symphony No 5* alongside two works by **James MacMillan** *Britannia* and *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie*.

Featuring world class new and classic drama, opera, music, dance and visual arts, **Edinburgh International Festival 2009** runs from **Friday 14 August to Sunday 6 September** across the city in theatres, concert halls and opera houses attracting audiences from around the world to Scotland's picturesque capital.

ENDS

**For further media information please contact the Edinburgh International Festival press office, +44 (0)131 473 2020 or [press@eif.co.uk](mailto:press@eif.co.uk)**

**Editor's Notes**

**Online booking and information at [www.eif.co.uk](http://www.eif.co.uk) or Hub Tickets +44 (0)131 473 2000**

**We would like to make a request for your support:**

Corporate sponsorship of the Edinburgh International Festival is crucial to its future. As arts supporters yourselves we hope you will help us in maintaining this important portion of our income and healthy relationships with sponsors by mentioning them in

your coverage. This makes a real difference to the Edinburgh International Festival. Mentions are counted and used as an evaluation of projects. Please credit our sponsors where you can.

The Edinburgh International Festival is supported by The City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Arts Council.

With additional support from the Scottish Arts Council Lottery Fund, the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund, Homecoming Scotland and Visiting Arts.

Major international support from the Government of Victoria, Australia through Arts Victoria, the Government of Romania, The Ministry of Culture, Cults and National Heritage of Romania, The Romanian Cultural Institute, the National Arts Council (Singapore), the Singapore Arts Council, and Culture Ireland.

And with significant funding from Dunard Fund, Edinburgh International Festival Endowment Fund, Léan Scully EIF Fund, Bank of Scotland, Heineken/Scottish & Newcastle UK, Lloyds TSB Scotland, Lumison and Standard Life.

Scottish Charity (SC004694)

Homecoming Scotland 2009 is a Scottish Government initiative managed by EventScotland in partnership with VisitScotland.

Homecoming Scotland 2009 seeks to motivate people of Scottish descent, as well as those who simply love Scotland, to come home and join us in a national celebration of our culture, heritage and the many great contributions Scotland has given the world: [www.homecomingscotland2009.com](http://www.homecomingscotland2009.com) If you would like more information on Homecoming Scotland please contact Leon Thompson, EventScotland Communications Manager, 0131 472 2312 / [leon.thompson@eventscotland.org](mailto:leon.thompson@eventscotland.org)

Presenting partnerships include The Royal Society of Edinburgh; Dean Gallery, National Galleries of Scotland; Collective Gallery; and Talbot Rice Gallery.

BBC Radio 3: Radio 3 presents extensive coverage of the Festival with many concerts broadcast live or recorded for broadcast at a later date.

Timorous Beasties: We have commissioned Scottish design company Timorous Beasties to create an Edinburgh Toile in celebration of our exploration of the Scottish Enlightenment.

## **Event sponsors and supporters are:**

### **Project Grants:**

#### **The Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund**

*Scottish Ballet*

Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conductor Nicholas Kok

Friday 4 September & Saturday 5 September

#### **Homecoming Scotland**

*Diaspora*, director & writer Ong Keng Sen

TheatreWorks, Singapore Chinese Orchestra

Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 August

*The Enlightenments*

presented in partnership with the Dean Gallery - National Galleries of Scotland, Collective Gallery, and Talbot Rice Gallery.  
Curator Juliana Engberg  
Friday 7 August - Sunday 27 September (some finish on Saturday 26 September)

**Visiting Arts**

*Diaspora*, director & writer Ong Keng Sen  
TheatreWorks, Singapore Chinese Orchestra  
Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 August

**Sponsors:**

**Bank of Scotland**

*Bank of Scotland Fireworks Concert*  
Sunday 6 September

*Bank of Scotland Connecting to Culture*  
Working with Scottish school children throughout the year.  
[www.eif.co.uk/bankofscotlandc2c](http://www.eif.co.uk/bankofscotlandc2c)

*The Enlightenments*

presented in partnership with the Dean Gallery - National Galleries of Scotland, Collective Gallery and Talbot Rice Gallery.  
Curator Juliana Engberg  
Friday 7 August - Sunday 27 September (some finish on Saturday 26 September)

**Classic FM**

*Sir Willard White*  
*Eugene Asti, Piano*  
Saturday 15 August

**Heineken/Scottish & Newcastle UK**

*Judas Maccabaeus*  
Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conductor William Christie  
Friday 14 August

**The List**

*Sense Fi & Conquassabit*  
Gelabert Azzopardi Companyia de Dansa, choreographer and director Cesc Gelabert  
Friday 21 - Sunday 23 August

**Lloyds TSB Scotland**

*Macbeth*  
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, conductor David Robertson  
Friday 21 August

*St Kilda, Island of the Birdmen*

Chœur et acrobates des Hainauts, Ensemble Musiques Nouvelles  
Saturday 15, Sunday 16 & Monday 17 August

**Lumison**

*The Dream of Gerontius*  
Hallé, conductor Sir Mark Elder  
Saturday 5 September

**Nature**, the international weekly journal of science  
*The Enlightenment*  
Discussions and talks exploring the 18<sup>th</sup> century revolution of thought.  
Dates throughout the Festival.

**Renault UK**  
Official Edinburgh International Festival 09 car provider

**Standard Life**  
*The Return of Ulysses*  
Royal Ballet of Flanders, choreographer Christian Spuck  
Friday 21 – Monday 24 August

*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*  
Handspring Puppet Company  
Ricerca Consort  
Director William Kentridge  
Sunday 23, Tuesday 25, Wednesday 26 August

Sponsor of the Return of Ulysses productions.

**Principal Supporters:**

**Dunard Fund**  
*Actus tragicus*  
Staatsoper Stuttgart, conductor Michael Hofstetter  
Friday 4 & Saturday 5 September

*Bach at Greyfriars:*  
Huelgas Ensemble, Thursday 20 August  
Dunedin Consort, Friday 21 August  
Bach Collegium Japan, Tuesday 25 August  
European Union Baroque Orchestra, Wednesday 26 August  
Ricerca Consort, Thursday 27 & Friday 28 August  
Cantus Cölln, Tuesday 1 September  
Retrospect Ensemble, Wednesday 2 September  
The Sixteen, Thursday 3 September

*The Monteverdi Choir, The English Baroque Soloists*  
Conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner  
Thursday 3 September

**Principal Donors:**

**Edinburgh International Festival Benefactors, Patrons and Friends with additional support from the Director's Circle**  
*Admeto, re di Tessaglia*

International Handel Festival, Göttingen, conductor Nicholas McGegan  
Friday 28, Saturday 29, Monday 31 August

Donors:

**Edinburgh International Festival Science Consortium**

*The Last Witch* by Rona Munro, director Dominic Hill

Traverse Theatre Company

Sunday 23 - Saturday 29 August (excluding Tuesday 25 August)

**Foreign Government Support:**

**The Government of Victoria, Australia through Arts Victoria**

*Optimism* - Malthouse Melbourne

Director Michael Kantor

Saturday 15 - Monday 17 August

*The Enlightenments*

presented in partnership with the Dean Gallery - National Galleries of Scotland,  
Collective Gallery and Talbot Rice Gallery.

Curator Juliana Engberg

Friday 7 August- Sunday 27 September (some finish on Saturday 26 September)

**Australia Council**

*Optimism* – Malthouse Melbourne

Director Michael Kantor

Saturday 15 - Monday 17 August

**Australian Government**

*Optimism* – Malthouse Melbourne

Director Michael Kantor

Saturday 15 - Monday 17 August

**Culture Ireland**

Gate | Friel

*Faith Healer*, director Robin Lefèvre

*The Yalta Game*, director Patrick Mason, *Afterplay*, director Garry Hynes

Saturday 15 – Tuesday 18 August

Saturday 29 August – Saturday 5 September

**The Government of Romania**

*Faust*, National Theatre 'Radu Stanca' Sibiu

Director Silviu Purcărete

Tuesday 18 – Saturday 22 August

**The Italian Cultural Institute, Edinburgh**

*Experimentum Mundi*, conductor Giorgio Battistelli

Wednesday 2 – Saturday 5 September

**The Ministry of Culture, Cults and National Heritage of Romania**

*Faust*, National Theatre 'Radu Stanca' Sibiu

Director Silviu Purcărete

Tuesday 18 – Saturday 22 August

**National Arts Council (Singapore)**

*Diaspora*, director & writer Ong Keng Sen  
TheatreWorks, Singapore Chinese Orchestra  
Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 August

**The Romanian Cultural Institute**

*Faust*, National Theatre 'Radu Stanca' Sibiu  
Director Silviu Purcărete  
Tuesday 18 – Saturday 22 August

**Singapore Arts Festival**

*Diaspora*, director & writer Ong Keng Sen  
TheatreWorks, Singapore Chinese Orchestra  
Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 August

**Trusts and Foundations:**

**The Stevenston Charitable Trust**

*Acis and Galatea*  
FestspielOrchester Göttingen, conductor Nicholas McGegan  
Sunday 30 August

**Wellcome Trust**

*The Enlightenment*  
Discussions and talks exploring the 18<sup>th</sup> century revolution of thought.  
Dates throughout the Festival.

**Benefactors:**

**Donald and Louise MacDonald**

Festival commission Giorgio Battistelli *Fair is foul, foul is fair*  
*Scottish Chamber Orchestra*  
Conductors Sir Charles Mackerras and Garry Walker  
Wednesday 26 August

**David McLellan**

*Roméo et Juliette* Royal Scottish National Orchestra  
Conductor Stéphane Denève  
Friday 28 August

**Legacies:**

**Léan Scully EIF Fund**

Alexei Ogrintchouk *Oboe*, Boris Brovtsyn *Violin*, Maxim Rysanov *Viola*, Boris  
Andrianov *Cello*  
Tuesday 18 August

*European Union Baroque Orchestra*

Director/Violin Chiara Banchini  
Tuesday 25 August