

Edinburgh  
Jazz  
& Blues  
Festival

2023  
Impacts





## About Us

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### Vision

To be one of the world's leading jazz and blues festivals, celebrated for pushing creative boundaries and breaking down barriers to the discovery and celebration of music.

### Purpose

To create and present a festival and year-round work that champions jazz and blues music and enriches the lives of all who engage with us.

### Edinburgh Festival Carnival Vision

To present a landmark event on the global carnival arts calendar that has an impact at every level on the communities it serves from grassroots to international.

## What We Do

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### Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival

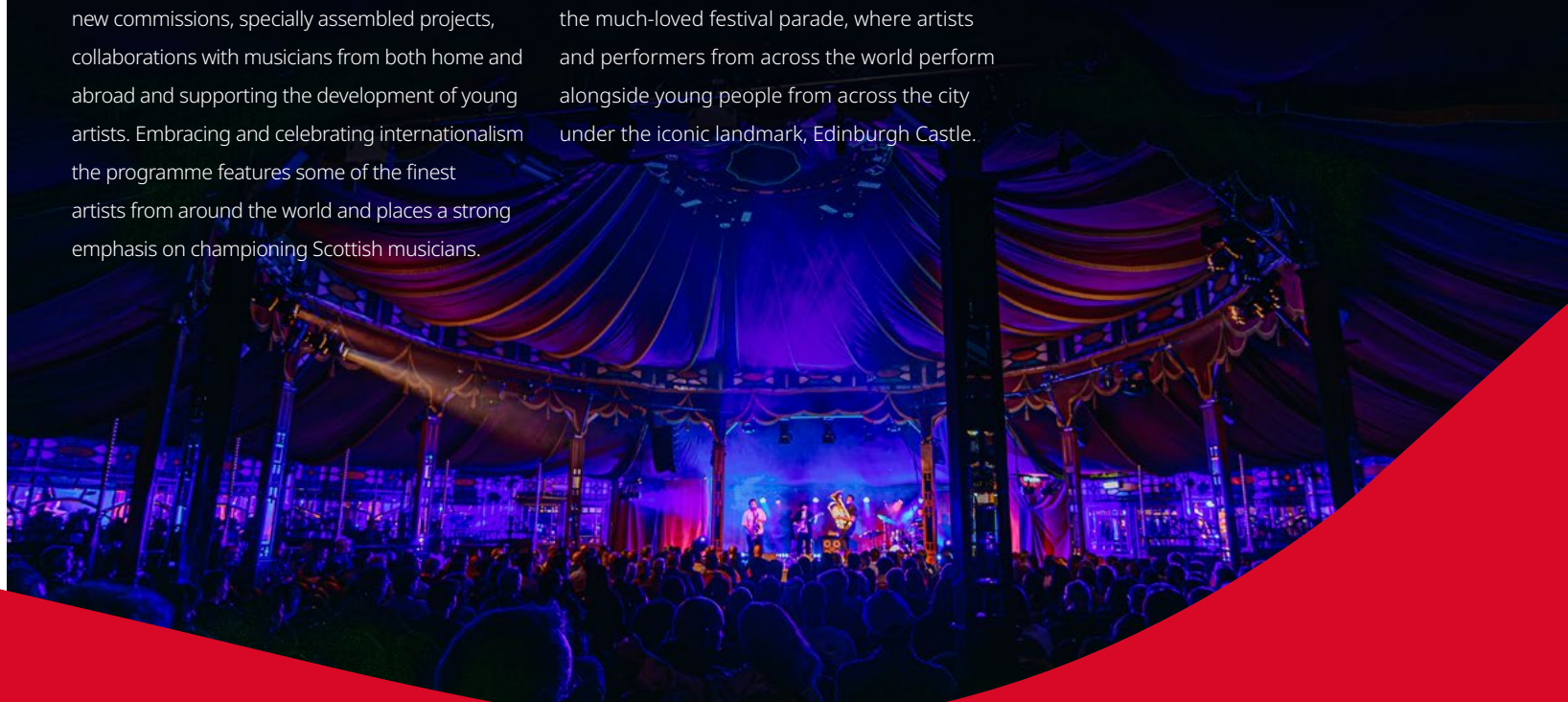
Established in 1978, we are one of Europe's largest and most esteemed jazz and blues festivals. Contributing significantly to Edinburgh's reputation as a world leading festival city, the standalone event in July features over 120 concerts across venues citywide. The diverse programme spans the entire history of jazz and blues, from ragtime to modern jazz and Chicago blues. The festival is known for its bespoke programming, showcasing new commissions, specially assembled projects, collaborations with musicians from both home and abroad and supporting the development of young artists. Embracing and celebrating internationalism the programme features some of the finest artists from around the world and places a strong emphasis on championing Scottish musicians.

### Edinburgh Festival Carnival

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival are responsible for delivering the Edinburgh Festival Carnival. EFC is Edinburgh's largest multi-cultural event which is underpinned by a year-round series of community engagement projects. Co-created with community partners, our engagement programme is delivered across the city reaching communities who have little access to cultural provision. The centrepiece of EFC is the much-loved festival parade, where artists and performers from across the world perform alongside young people from across the city under the iconic landmark, Edinburgh Castle.

### Beyond the Festival

Beyond the stage we also take responsibility towards enhancing people's lives. Our Learning and Participation programmes help break down barriers to access the arts and expose people of all ages and abilities to the transformational power of music and carnival arts. Our mini-festival weekends enable us to further support the careers of Scottish musicians and to continue to develop our audience reach.





## The Year in Review

The Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival 2023 marked a triumphant celebration of music, culture, and community, drawing an enthusiastic audience of over **40,700**. The festival unfolded across **21 venues**, hosting **122 events** that encompassed the entire spectrum of jazz and blues. Two significant family friendly and free events, **Mardi Gras** and **Edinburgh Festival Carnival**, brought vibrant celebrations to the city for visitors and residents alike. The programming of the festival reflected a global perspective, featuring world-class artists like **London Afrobeat Collective**, **Theon Cross**, **Arild Andersen**, **Zoe Rahman**, **Lakecia Benjamin**, **Nikki Hill**, and **True Strays**, among others.

A key feature of EJB23 was the promotion of Scottish musicians, who continued to be at the core of the festival's identity. With **527 Scottish musician concert engagements**, the

festival celebrated the depth of talent within the Scottish jazz and blues scene. EJB23 featured leading Scottish artists such as **Laura MacDonald**, **Colin Steele**, and **Fergus McCreadie** with younger Scottish artists such as **Ben Shankland**, **Ali Watson** and **Chun-Wei Kang** making their festival debut.

International collaborations were a notable aspect of EJB23, co-presenting two artists with partners in Belgium and Italy respectively and elevating our partnership with **Oslo Jazz Festival**. The festival presented Norway as its feature country through a compelling mini-series titled **Spark**, showcasing six Norwegian bands/artists in collaboration with **Øyvind Larsen**, Director of Oslo Jazz Festival.

As a testament to the festival's mission of inclusivity and accessibility, high-profile international artists were presented in many non-city centre venues and concerts took place in







## 2023 Impacts

every single city ward ensuring that the cultural richness of the festival reached all communities across Edinburgh. Concerts were held in various locations, from **St Bride's Centre** to **Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre** to **Leith Dockers Club** and **Bellfield Church**. This marked the third occasion where EJBf promoted in every ward in the city, emphasising the festival's ongoing exploration of new venues and community partners.

To make high-quality performances accessible to everyone, the festival incorporated initiatives including affordable ticket pricing, free carer tickets, complimentary tickets for those under 16 and student discounts. EJBf23 also featured a digital festival accessible to those unable to attend in person, reflecting a commitment to ensuring that the joy of jazz and blues could be experienced by a broad audience.

The large-scale free events, Mardi Gras and Edinburgh Festival Carnival, stood out as family favourites, drawing a combined audience of

**17,200** and the programme further engaged children and young people through initiatives like the **Edinburgh Napier Jazz Summer School** and **Jazz 4 Kids** programme.

**Edinburgh Festival Carnival** was a popular highlight, prioritising diversity and inclusion by providing a platform for global majority communities in Edinburgh and Scotland. Over **800 performers** participated, representing various cultural groups, including **Edinburgh's Chinese and Latin American communities** and featured projects with key carnival partners such as **Pulse of the Place**, **Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre** as well as collaborative work between Scottish practitioners and Brazilian and South African artists.

Beyond the festival and carnival, EJBf's impact resonated year-round through various initiatives. The EFC workshop programme featured over **250 workshops** delivered by both Scottish and international carnival artists in communities

across Edinburgh. In collaboration with **Edinburgh College**, students took part in artistic residencies with carnival partners in South Africa, Cuba, Brazil and Costa Rica. EJBf continued to deepen the relationship with **St Bride's Centre** and delivered GD Jam, a community music participatory project for people of all ages and abilities. St Bride's also hosted mini-weekend festivals, including **Shades of Blue**, **Scottish Jazz Weekend**, **Scottish Blues Weekend**, and a special mini-festival delivered in partnership with **Kultur lx** from **Luxembourg**.

2023 was a celebratory year for EJBf and the communities it serves, weaving together elements of music, culture, inclusivity, and community engagement. The festival's reach across Edinburgh, its commitment to accessibility and diversity, and to showcasing local and international talent underscored its significance in both the cultural and social fabric of the city.





## The Year in Numbers

47,616

Total Attendees



Events in all

17

Edinburgh  
City Wards



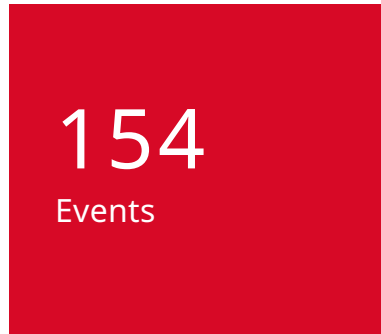
1,088

Musician  
Engagements



154

Events



307

Carnival and  
Community  
Music Workshops



17,200

Attendees at  
our Free Events



4,096

Individual Learning  
and Participation  
Programme  
Participants

## Audience and Participant Feedback

*I love the variety of music the festival brings to the audiences and the trust and support they put into the musicians to deliver new and exciting performances year after year. It always feels very special to be part of such an important festival, something that I will never take for granted.*

**EJBF23 Artist**



*The festival is wonderful - Bringing incredible music and original talent like this is such a great opportunity. Well done you guys for curating this. We will be coming back next year. Thank you!!!*

**EJBF23 Audience Member**



*A good selection of artists and some interesting collaborations between them. Also liked being able to go to a gig on our doorstep in Oxfangs.*

**EJBF23 Audience Member**

*There are so many events across the city, it's easy to find something for the whole family.*

**EJBF23 Audience Member**

*Our son attended the Jazz School. What an amazing experience. The tutors were outstanding, encouraging and enthusiastic. The resulting concert was fantastic. What a brilliantly organised, inspiring course and event.*

**Learning & Participation Participant**



*The venue within George Square gardens was great. Also just the range of artists within the genre is amazing, the costs of tickets is totally affordable.*

**EJBF23 Audience Member**

*A festival filled with many memorable and remarkable moments.*

**The New York City Jazz Record**



*Fantastic event, friendly and welcoming, something for all ages, epitome of culture is ordinary, embedding opportunities through the city for everyone.*

**Edinburgh Festival Carnival Audience Member**

*It's great to be able to have the first-class quality artists you bring in to the centre. Your packed audiences bring a great vitality and buzz around the place.*

**St Bride's Centre Management Committee Member**



EJBF would like to extend sincere thanks to all funders, artists, audiences, volunteers and programme and community partners who helped to make 2023 a success.



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