

The Definitive Guide To the

Edinburgh Festivals

By Sam Friedman and Julian Hall



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Overview

Every August 1.5 million people descend on Scotland's capital to enjoy 10 summer festivals that together constitute the largest arts festival in the world. Not only the UK's most high-profile showcase for artistic talent, The Edinburgh Festivals are also a lucrative tourist destination, generating £200 million pounds for the British Economy. Indeed, the Festivals were recently voted 2009 'Tourist Destination Of The Year' by readers of the Rough Guides series.

However, until now, no guide book has existed to help visitors navigate the anarchic festival city. Currently, festivalgoers must make do with festival brochures, newspapers and magazines, all of which provide important information on festival shows, but give no guidance on how to really get underneath the skin of The Edinburgh Festivals.

The Definitive Guide to the Edinburgh Festivals promises to bridge this gap, for the first time bringing together all the key information on each of the 10 summer festivals. Covering each festival in order of importance, the pocket-sized book will provide all the essential information visitors really need to know, including how to buy tickets, what to see, where to stay and special events.

Profiles of festival venues will also be provided as well as interviews with famous artists who made their name at the Festivals and behind-the-scenes movers and shakers. Along with handy maps to help get around there will be chapters describing the rich and extraordinary history of the Festivals, a comprehensive guide to finding the best places to eat and drink and ideas for day trips to escape the Festival melee.

The beauty of The Definitive Guide to the Edinburgh Festivals is that it will act as a functional guide for first-time visitors, as well as an essential souvenir for the hardened festivalgoer seeking out every inch of the Edinburgh Festivals.

About the authors, Sam Friedman and Julian Hall

Julian Hall

After university Julian worked as a research assistant in Westminster for a number of MPs and as a regional media co-ordinator during the 1997 general election. A career in journalism followed with two years writing for, and eventually editing, The Independent's 'Pandora' gossip column. After a stint as a theatre PR he returned to journalism.

Since 2003 Julian has been the comedy critic for The Independent and has reviewed most of the major figures in comedy (including Eddie Izzard, Ricky Gervais and Chris Rock) either at the Edinburgh Festival or on national tours. Julian has been on the judging panel for the Chortle Comedy Awards four times and for the Leicester Mercury Comedian of the Year Award three times. He was also a member of the judging panel for the if.comedy awards (formerly The Perrier Awards) in Edinburgh in 2007 and in 2008.

Other publications that Julian has written for (on comedy and non-comedy subjects such as business, fashion, lifestyle, politics and sport) include: The Guardian, The Independent on Sunday and The Bristol Evening Post, Total Politics, What's On in London, ShortList, Chortle, Comedy Demon, The British Comedy Awards brochure, Total TV Guide, The List, Insight, Matchbox, London & More, ZEE, Pride Life, It's Mal Life (Malmaison hotel magazine), Time & Leisure, SW, Rise and the on-board train publications Livewire and Connect. In 2008 started to edit the comedy section for Virgin Hotline.

Julian's 'Rough Guide to British Cult Comedy' was published in October 2006 and received a series of good reviews. The book chronicles both US and UK comedy greats.

Meanwhile, off the page, Julian has contributed to programmes on BBC Scotland (Will The Real A L Kennedy Please Stand Up?), BBC Midlands, Channel 4 (Is Benny Hill Still Funny?), Paramount Comedy (The Top Ten Sex and the City Episodes), BBC London (radio and TV for The Rough Guide to British Cult Comedy) Nuts TV and BBC Radio 7. In summer 2007 Julian wrote the links for the BBC Radio 2 series 'Alexei Sayle's Alternative Take' that aired the following autumn.

Sam Friedman

Sam Friedman is publisher of Fest Magazine, a twice-weekly festival publication established in 2001. After editing the comedy section of Fest in 2003, Sam took over the publication and its 12 editorial staff in 2004. Over the years, Fest has built up a considerable reputation, doubling its turnover from 2006 to 2008 and establishing key media partnerships with the BBC and Amnesty International. The magazine recently beat off competition from The Guardian, The Scotsman and The Scotland on Sunday, to take a clean sweep at the 2008 Allen Wright Awards for Fringe Journalism.

Since 2004 Sam has worked as a freelance journalist, writing for The Guardian, The Sunday Herald, The List, The Big Issue and of course Fest. At the Festival he has been lucky enough to interview many high profile figures, including Mark Thomas, Chris Moyles and Brendon Burns. He was personally nominated for the Allen Wright Award in 2006 for his article "Reading Between The Lines", which examined the turbulent relationship between comedians and drug abuse.

Recently Sam's interest in the Edinburgh Festivals has stretched into the academic realm. After receiving a First Class MA from the University of Edinburgh and a Distinction in his research Msc from LSE, he was awarded an ESRC PhD Quota Award in 2008 to undertake the first ever sociological examination of the Edinburgh Festivals. In particular, he aims to look at the relationship between social class and taste among audiences at the Festivals. From summer 2009, he will also be teaching a course at the University of Edinburgh entitled "Uncovering The Edinburgh Festivals".

Publicity and Promotion

The press 'offensive' has two prongs; the London-based press and the main media outlets in Scotland.

As a freelance journalist based in England, Julian has a number of contacts in the national arts press. He would pitch a number of general stories on the Fringe in the run-up to the book launch and the book would be mentioned during and at the end of each feature. Sam would use a similar approach in Scotland.

The authors would also send out a press release to all relevant media, including to a selected list of personal journalistic contacts. These individuals often compile lists and info about the Festivals for readers in the run-up to the Festivals and we would push for the book to be included.

Round-the-year marketing will be provided by The Skinny Magazine, Scotland's largest Arts Magazine, which has a stake in Fest Magazine. The Skinny will provide extensive and prominent free advertising for the book.

Fest magazine will provide the main marketing tool for the book during the Festival. The magazine will promote the book at its launch party, run a number of prominent free advertisements and use competitions to raise the book's profile.

The Format

Around 40,000 words long, The Definitive Guide to the Edinburgh Festivals will be an A5 pocket guide aimed at Festivalgoers using it on-the-move.

Photos will be provided by Fest Magazine, which holds a large database of seven years worth of Festival photos.

We also have design help courtesy of Matthew MacLeod, creative director of both Fest and The Skinny magazines. Matthew has been involved in the production of Fest for over six years, and has produced over 100 newspapers and magazines covering arts and entertainment in Scotland.

The Market

According to the Scottish Tourist Board, there over 1.5 million visitors to the Edinburgh Festivals every year, of which the vast majority are tourists. These people require in-depth information about the Festivals, yet at present there are no guidebooks on the market that provide specific information on the Festivals.

The only information that is available comes in the form of general Edinburgh guide books or festival media. However, most of this concentrates on specific shows, not the overall festival experience.

The Definitive Guide to the Edinburgh Festivals will thus provide the perfect travelling companion for tourists visiting the Festivals, as well as a souvenir to keep after they have returned home.

We anticipate that the guide will sell particularly well at airports, train and coach stations. It will also sell well at British tourist information centres and cultural venues such as theatres, museums and galleries. In addition, book sellers in Edinburgh such as Blackwells have already expressed an interest in stocking the book.

Finally, all the main Festival 'superveneue' owners are eager to stock the book at their box offices and information centres during August.

Previous success stories related to this field include a small independent book called The Locals Guide To Edinburgh by Claudia Monteiro and Owen O'Leary (both of whom are known to us through the Fringe). The book was stocked citywide and has achieved sales (upwards of 12,000) that have outstripped a number of Rough Guide titles.

Finally the Fringe continues to offer new and unexpected ways to market anything, from books to shows to quirky stalls, and the authors will be happy to enter into this spirit. Even if it means wearing a funny hat.

Proposed Contents List with samples

1. 10 Things Not To Miss At The Edinburgh Festivals (sample enclosed)

2. A (Brief) History of Edinburgh Festivals (sample enclosed)

3. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe (sample enclosed)

- Introduction
- Venue Profiles
- How to Decide What To See
- How to Buy Tickets
- Special Events
- My Festival by Rob Newman (comedian)
- Festival Caricatures

4. The Edinburgh International Festival

- Introduction
- Venue Profiles
- How to Decide What To See
- How to Buy Tickets
- Special Events
- My Festival by.....
- Festival Caricatures

5. The Edinburgh International Book Festival (sample enclosed)

- Introduction
- Venue Profiles
- How to Decide What To See
- How to Buy Tickets
- Special Events
- My Festival by Frances Sutton (press manager)
- Festival Caricatures

6. The Edinburgh International Film Festival

- Introduction
- Venue Profiles
- How to Decide What To See
- How to Buy Tickets
- Special Events
- My Festival by Hannah McGill
- Festival Caricatures

7. The Other Edinburgh Festivals

- Edinburgh Art Festival
- Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival
- Edinburgh Military Tattoo
- Edinburgh Television Festival
- Edinburgh Mela
- Edinburgh Politics Festival
- Edinburgh Festival of Spirituality and Peace

8. Festival Eating and Drinking Guide

- Quick Meals
- Late-Night Bars
- Quirky Cafes
- Treating Yourself
- Top Scottish Nosh

9. Festival Accommodation

- Hotels
- B&B
- Youth Hostels
- Renting A Flat
- Winging It

10. Getting Around

- Getting To and Away From Edinburgh
- Edinburgh Public Transport
- Walking between venues
- Festival Walking Guides
- Festival Essentials
- Festival Map

11. Escaping The Festival

- Finding Sanctuary In The City
- Other Things to do in Edinburgh
- Day Trips Around Edinburgh

12. Getting Involved

- Performing
- Reviewing
- Backstage
- Flyering
- Behind The Bar