

Embargoed until 10am on Tue 16 April

Edinburgh International Book Festival reveals first author events for 2024 with new McEwan Hall programme in partnership with Underbelly

The Edinburgh International Book Festival has today announced its first author events for 2024, with a brand-new series called *The Front List*, taking place at the city's iconic McEwan Hall throughout August, in a new partnership with Edinburgh Fringe producer, Underbelly.

The Front List will showcase an exciting programme of writers with nine events in the beloved Edinburgh venue, just a short walk from the wider Book Festival site at Edinburgh Futures Institute.

The Front List programme will open on 10 August with modern legends of stage and screen, **Alan Cumming and Forbes Masson**, sharing some hilarious tales about their classic comedy characters from *Victor and Barry's Kelvinside Compendium*. On 12 August **James O'Brien** will appear fresh from his popular LBC radio show to discuss the current state of the UK and his book *How They Broke Britian*, while cult favourite author of *Heartstopper* – now a smash-hit Netflix series – **Alice Oseman** takes the stage on 13 August.

On 14 August, every millennial's parasocial best friend, **Dolly Alderton**, will discuss her work, including her achingly funny second novel *Good Material*, and on 17 August the iconic, Booker Prize-winning **Salman Rushdie** appears live from his home in New York to offer a searing insight into his unforgettable new memoir *Knife*. YA favourite **Sarah Crossan** will appear at a special event for secondary school students as part of the Baillie Gifford Schools Programme on 21 August, while on 22 August prolific historical novelist **Philippa Gregory** explores her epic new take on feminist history in her first non-fiction title, *Normal Women*.

The programme will close with two exclusive pre-release events with authors talking about their new titles in public for the first time: **Richard Osman** – whose Thursday Murder Club series claimed a staggering 3 slots on The Sunday Times' top 10 bestselling books of 2023 – discusses *We Solve Murders*, the first in his brand-new mystery series, on 24 August; and on 25 August the conversation-changing novelist **Matt Haig**, whose most recent book *The Midnight Library* has sold 9 million copies and counting, returns to the Festival to discuss his upcoming novel *The Life Impossible*.

Chairs for these events include Jackie Kay, Ian Rankin, Val McDermid, Wren James, Mishal Husain, and Chitra Ramaswamy, with more to be confirmed.

Tickets for *The Front List* events will go on sale to the public at 10am on Thu 25 April, with tickets available to book at <https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/> and <https://underbelly.co.uk/>.

Most events in this series will be streamed live and made available on-demand for digital audiences, and all events will be BSL interpreted and captioned.

Edinburgh International Book Festival Director, Jenny Niven said:

“We are absolutely thrilled to be presenting such a stellar line-up in a venue that will enable us to welcome more people than ever before, in partnership with our friends at Underbelly. These are just the first of our 2024 events, with a further incredible 600-plus still to be announced. Our Front List line up gives a taste of what’s to come ranging from history to mystery, hope to romance, politics to comedy - and featuring some of the best interviewers in the business, including Mishal Husain and our very own Jackie Kay. This marks the first release of events as we open an exciting new chapter for the Book Festival - we can’t wait to welcome audiences this August.”

Underbelly Co-Director, Charlie Wood said:

“This is such a great partnership to be part of, bringing together two of Edinburgh’s summer festivals in a crown jewel of the city, allowing a wider audience to see these amazing writers discuss their work in a venue with a fabulous and long history of speakers. We’re delighted that the Book Festival will be part of our wider and soon to be announced McEwan Hall programme.”

The 2024 Edinburgh International Book Festival runs from 10 – 25 August, and takes place for the first time at the new Edinburgh Futures Institute on Lauriston Place. The full public programme will be announced on Tue 4 June.

For more information on Edinburgh International Book Festival visit:
<https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/>

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A selection of images of McEwan Hall [available here](#)

For further information please contact:
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The Front List - Event listings

Alan Cumming & Forbes Masson in Conversation with Jackie Kay
Victor and Barry’s Kelvinside Compendium
Saturday 10 Aug - 19:30

James O'Brien

Who Broke Britain?

Monday 12 Aug – 13:30

Alice Oseman in Conversation with Wren James

Heartstopper

Tuesday 13 Aug – 13:30

Dolly Alderton

Good Material

Wednesday 14 Aug – 15:30

Salman Rushdie in Conversation with Mishal Husain

Knife

Saturday 17 Aug – 17:30

Sarah Crossan (Schools event)

Where the Heart Should Be

Wednesday 21 Aug – 13:30

Philippa Gregory in Conversation with Val McDermid

Normal Women: 900 Years of Making History

Thursday 22 Aug – 13:30

Sponsored by The National Library of Scotland

Richard Osman in Conversation with Ian Rankin

We Solve Murders

Saturday 24 Aug – 13:30

Sponsored by The Woodland Trust Scotland

Matt Haig in Conversation with Chitra Ramaswamy

The Life Impossible

Sunday 25 Aug – 13:30

About Edinburgh International Book Festival

We are Edinburgh International Book Festival: the world-leading festival of words, literature, and ideas.

We believe in the power of words and ideas to ignite imaginations, foster human connection, and challenge the status quo. Committed to innovation, inclusivity and accessibility, we platform voices who are often overlooked, and aim to breaking down barriers to access for those who might not typically see themselves as a book festival audience.

Since 1983, we've welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to engage with the world's greatest and emerging writers, thinkers, artists, and performers. Iconic figures such as Margaret Atwood, Alain de Botton, Oliver Burkeman, Noam Chomsky, Seamus Heaney, Kazuo Ishiguro, Toni Morrison, Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie and Benjamin Zephaniah

have appeared on our stages over the years, alongside a wide range of debut and early career authors.

Each year, we programme hundreds of events that capture the hearts and minds of audiences, both in Edinburgh and online. Whether they take the form of on-stage conversations, workshops, creative masterclasses, think tanks, or more, they are all informed by a culture of open dialogue. Our programme is designed not just to spark new conversations amongst audiences, but to broaden them too: existing as a space where nuanced discussion happens, and ideas can settle.

As the world around us changes at pace, the Book Festival continues to transform too. 2024 is the beginning of an exciting new chapter under the leadership of our new director, Jenny Niven, as we also move to our new home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute.

More than just a summer festival, we work year-round with partners in the local community – with schools, libraries, prisons, hospitals, and other community hubs – to foster a lifelong love of reading and develop engaged, knowledgeable audiences of all backgrounds and ages. We also stream hundreds of events online via a Pay What You Can model, offering audiences who cannot attend in person the opportunity to take part and experience the excitement of the Festival wherever and whenever suits them best.

However you choose to enjoy our events, we hope to welcome you soon!

For more information visit: <https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/>

The Book Festival is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation, meaning we rely greatly on the support of individuals and sponsors to continue delivering world-class events. We are founding member of Festivals Edinburgh.

About Underbelly

Underbelly is a UK-based live entertainment company founded in 2000 by Ed Bartlam and Charlie Wood that specialises in producing and programming ground-breaking theatrical productions and the creation of city-centre cultural events and festivals across the UK, USA, Asia & beyond.

Underbelly, alongside ATG Productions, is the lead and originating producer of the Olivier Award winning *Cabaret* at the Kit Kat Club, now in its third year in the West End and as of April 2024 running on Broadway. Recent productions also include The McOnie Company's *Nutcracker at the Tuff Nutt Jazz Club* at Southbank Centre, *Macbeth* starring Ralph Fiennes and Indira Varma in Liverpool, Edinburgh, London and Washington DC, *La Clique* in Manchester & London, *Cabaret Royale* at the Gaillard Center in Charleston and the inaugural headline show at Underbelly Boulevard, *Club Kabarett*. Underbelly Boulevard, their first permanent venue, opened in 2023 in the heart of Soho presenting and producing an outstanding variety of cabaret, comedy, circus, music and theatre.

In 2024, Underbelly will produce The McOnie Company's *The Artist*, *Tweedy's Massive Circus* beginning a UK-wide tour at The RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon and the 20th anniversary of *La Clique* in Edinburgh and London. One of the largest producers at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Underbelly is proud to have previously presented *Fleabag* in

10 – 25 August 2024
www.edbookfest.co.uk

MEDIA
RELEASE

 Edinburgh
International
Book Festival

2013, *Six* in 2018, Rob Madge's *My Son's a Queer, (But What Can You Do?)* in 2022 and *Kathy & Stella Solve a Murder* in 2023.