

UNBOUND

12-27 AUG 2018

Late nights at the
Edinburgh International
Book Festival

Welcome to Unbound 2018

To get a flavour of this year's programme we pose ten questions to **Unbound** mastermind **Roland Gulliver**

For those who have never been to an Unbound event, could you give an overview?

For 16 nights, Unbound takes place in the Book Festival's Spiegeltent in Charlotte Square Gardens. It's free, it's informal and it's fun. It begins around 9pm, finishes around 11.30pm, and each night is different. Authors, performers, musicians and artists come together on stage to share stories, celebrate books and relax at the end of a festival day. It brings together authors who have been appearing at the Festival, some of Scotland's most interesting live literature and a selection of international friends and partners.

Unbound has become a staple of the Edinburgh International Book Festival line-up. Why do you think it's gained such an esteemed reputation? What is it about the Unbound atmosphere that's different?

I feel very honoured that Unbound has gained such a respected reputation over the years. The atmosphere is created partly by the venue – the Spiegeltent at night has such a great vibe which really appeals to both audiences and authors – in particular, musicians love to come back and perform here. And this year, we will have a new bigger and better Spiegeltent! Very exciting.

I feel like we have built a kind of community with Unbound. I hope there's a sense of ownership beyond the festival – it gives authors and artists the chance to do something different, a place to take risks if they want, to have fun. It's a night time venue where people come and relax, enjoy a drink but are respectful and attentive of who is on stage. Audiences discover new artists and authors – Billy Letford performed before he was published, Be Charlotte performed before heading to headline Scottish music festivals... It's where you get to see some legends up close

– Nile Rodgers and Neil Caiman being two classics from the past!

The work challenges, guarantees something different – it might not suit everyone every night – but always offers a quality night out inspired by books and stories.

How do you approach programming the Unbound bill?

Creating the Unbound programme is a deliciously organic process. It quietly simmers away in the background while we make the 'main' programme then comes to the boil in May and June before serving up the event listings in July, to be feasted upon in August.

Overdone cooking analogies aside, the programme responds to authors and themes in the main Festival and looks to give the themes a special Unbound twist; it comes from conversations with friends and partners both in Scotland and overseas, some new, some longstanding Unbound partnerships; it comes from people pitching ideas to me and from me pitching ideas to partners. Overall, I aim to create a programme that is engaging, unexpected, diverse and entertaining

Could you tell us about some programme highlights for 2018?

I am terrible at picking highlights – I can never have a favourite Unbound child! We will celebrate our partnership with the Edinburgh Comic Art Fair with Andrew Rae hosting a night of music, performance and live drawing inspired by his *Moonhead and the Music Machine*; this will definitely make the most of our new look Spiegeltent.

I am really excited about the international elements of this year's programme, with partners

in Rio's FLUPP Festival and Barcelona City of Literature bringing some brilliant ideas to the festival. Brazilian artists will be re-interpreting poetry through body language which simply just has to be seen; poets and musicians from Barcelona are giving voice to their changing times; and the bringing together of Irish musicians and poets with Scotland's own Aidan O'Rourke and Brighde Chaimbeul will make for a special Friday night.

Our long-standing Babble On weekend knocks it out of the park with some of Britain's best with Outspoken Press on one night then Mik Artistik's Ego Trip on the next. Again, championing the energy, poetry and politics of spoken word.

The programme features a broad range of performers, from new starts to celebrating Macmillan's 175th birthday. How core is it to Edinburgh to showcase and celebrate talent at all stages in their career?

It is so important for Unbound to present a range of voices and artists, especially those from the local scene. So it is great that INTERROBANG! are joining Unbound this year. I'm intrigued to see what their Edinburgh Bible will bring. Also, it is about challenging people's preconceptions of established authors and this year we bring in Marcus Sedgwick and Gill Arbuthnott, normally seen surrounded by teens and small people in the children's programme.

There's a mix of formats – spoken word, podcasts, gigs – is it a conscious effort for you to try new ideas and break the mould of what events at a book festival can be?

Yes, definitely. We set up Unbound to offer something different to our audiences, to challenge the distorted stereotypes of what a book festival event is. It is also a space for us to experiment with different kinds of event performances and content to see how our audience respond. It is important for us to have a space to take creative risks.

Over the years, Ross Sutherland has done some brilliant Unbound events and this year will be presenting his award-winning podcast, *Imaginary Advice*, an event that mixes storytelling, soundscapes, exploring how the spoken word and music respond in a live performance.

There's a strong musical contingent, from the Fun Lovin' Crime Writers to Anthony Joseph's night on Calypso Stars – can you tell us more about the musical programme?

The Fun Lovin' Crime Writers exemplify why music is so integral to the Unbound programme – not just because it brings a different kind of energy and entertainment but because the relationship between writers, musicians and performers is intermingled with many artists working across creative genres depending on their project.

Acclaimed musician and novelist, James Yorkston, who is hosting our closing night, brings together elements of his spoken word music night Tae Sup Wi a Fifer and his international music collaboration, Yorkston Thorne Khan.

Anthony Joseph is another great example, he is a poet and musician who has written a fictional biography of Lord Kitchener, a calypso icon; a tale that encapsulates the Windrush Scandal.

Amidst the fun of the programme, it also tackles serious issues – including freedom of

expression in Catalonia, ideas of privacy – why do you feel it's important for festivals, and literature in general, to explore issues head on? It is massively, massively important to explore these kinds of issues in the Book Festival. Books themselves offer places to explore intellectual, emotional ideas, they are where we can find understanding, where we find the complexity and nuance in these increasingly simplified, polarised times. We aren't arrogant enough to think we can provide all the answers but hope we can offer a space where we can safely ask the questions.

We set up Unbound to offer something different to our audiences, to challenge the distorted stereotypes of what a book festival event is.

The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas will bring four presenters to argue on four disparate challenging subjects and explore how we use our freedom of expression.

Although Unbound is about entertainment, enjoying a drink and the atmosphere, it is also about engaging in ideas and events happening in Scotland and beyond. But that doesn't make it an either/or thing, some of the most celebratory nights have come from the most serious of subjects.

What do you hope people take away from attending Unbound events?

I hope people leave Unbound feeling refreshed, invigorated, inspired. Maybe they discovered a new writer, found a favourite they missed earlier in the festival, maybe they laughed a lot, maybe they realised book festivals are different places than they expected, maybe they should come back tomorrow night even if it's another school night...

If you could sum up Unbound nights in three words, what would they be?

I can never do short, simple answers...
UNexpected
Books in
UNDeniably Enticing Formats

Edinburgh International Book Festival

THE SKINNY
INDEPENDENT CULTURAL JOURNALISM

Editors: Heather McDaid, Rosamund West & Peter Simpson
Designer: Fiona Hunter
Production Manager & Picture Editor: Sarah Donley
Illustrator: Jasmine Floyd



Roland Gulliver

In Pod We Trust

We look at the ever-expanding and endlessly exciting world of podcasts with two of Scotland's most celebrated podcasters, **Ross Sutherland** and **Damian Barr**

Interview: Ross McIndoe



Over the last decade, the world of podcasts has swollen from an obscurity on the cultural outskirts, to a vast and varied realm that extends across every conceivable theme and topic. Along the way, it has engulfed huge swathes of the general population, enticing many of the world's biggest celebrities, and creating hundreds of millions of pounds worth of advertising revenue. A term that once sounded techy and niche, 'podcast' is now a part of most people's everyday vocabulary.

Appearing at this year's Unbound to talk a little about this tidal shift are two of Scotland's most celebrated podcasters, Ross Sutherland and Damian Barr. Rather than pushing it as something shiny and new, both Sutherland and Barr are keen to point out how podcasting can tap into something essential and timeless. To better illustrate this, Barr points to his own route into podcasting. "My interest began as a child, long before the internet, listening to *Story Teller* – the Marshall Cavendish magazine where each fortnight you got a new tape. I've always enjoyed listening to stories and having them read to me, listening over a long form. I think people have always enjoyed that and podcasts are just a new platform to satisfy a very old urge. The urge to listen." Sutherland agrees, adding: "Making audio stories has been going on for about a century, so there's nothing new really. Podcasting is just allowing amateurs like me a chance to experiment with the medium and find an audience."

In opening it up to whoever wants to try their hand at it, podcasting has flourished into one of the most diverse artistic landscapes in existence. A cursory glance at the difference between Barr and Sutherland's demonstrates this pretty clearly: beyond their success and their Scottish accents, the two really are worlds apart.

London's Savoy Hotel has been playing host to great writers for over a century, a place where the likes of Zola, Twain, Maugham and Wilde would each spend time locked in discussion of

life and letters. With his *Literary Salon*, Damian Barr brings this tradition into the digital age, letting the world listen in to conversations with literary heavyweights like Bret Easton Ellis and David Mitchell, as well as newcomers airing their talents for the first time.

"Podcasts are just a new platform to satisfy a very old urge – the urge to listen"

Damian Barr

This is in tandem with the most popular image of a 'podcast': experts and enthusiasts holding an in-depth conversation about their shared passions. Ross Sutherland's *Imaginary Advice* is off at podcasting's other pole, opting instead for a highly experimental mixture of intimate storytelling and hypnotic soundscapes. Barr's sounds like a cosy afternoon conversation with a good friend, Sutherland's more like a chemically altered epiphany-exchange taking place at three in the morning in the smoking area of a club. The great thing is that, in the world of podcasting, there is room for both.

This multiplicity is a key part of the appeal for both hosts, as Barr explains: "There is a podcast for literally everything. I think that's great." In this conversation alone, podcasts ranging from Australian True Crime to Brighton-based *Twin Peaks* fandoms pop into the conversation. "And I think the fact that anybody can make one is also great," he continues. "I'm quite confident that if I've got a totally byzantine, niche interest I can go find a podcast about it. In

about two minutes." Talking about the ways in which podcasting has changed since he first began, Sutherland is similarly enthused, citing "about a million more podcasts!" as the biggest change the medium has undergone since he first got involved. If nothing else, he credits this explosion with the fact that "I probably don't have to explain what a podcast is as much as I did four years ago."

Just as streaming services allow us to choose what we watch and when, podcasts give us that kind of control over our listening. Steve Jobs referred to it as TiVo for radio while Barr goes with "radio on demand" and it seems likely that this flexibility is a large part of the reason so many are now working podcasts into their lives. Sutherland explains: "Often podcasts are used in vulnerable moments – lying in bed, walking to work, waiting for trains. This is what I use them for, at least. I like the idea of art slipping into these gaps in our lives." Radio was designed for a time in which working hours and leisure time were more standardised, but "people now use their time in a different way," Barr suggests.

"People's work landscapes have changed, their lives are much more fragmented, so I think that 'consume on demand' model now works much better," he adds. The "gaps" in our lives are now much more widely spread, chopped up into little pockets of time we want to fill with something valuable. Sutherland talks about them as a way "to make doing the dishes 30% less shit", while Barr mentions how many people he sees listening to them while waiting on trains. The point is the same: whatever size the gap is and whatever point in your day you can find it, there's a podcast there to fit it.

Much like streaming services, this convenience and ease of access has helped turn podcasting into a massive industry. Apple has been integral to the medium's rise, while Disney Marvel has further expanded its media empire into the podcasting peninsula with *Wolverine: The Long Night*. In spite of this, the general culture

remains predominantly punk, thanks to its democratising DIY potential. "Podcasts are, to my mind, a bit less monetised than YouTube," Barr argues. "There's not so much 'Look, I'm using this concealer' or 'I'm wearing this Nike thing'. YouTube and Instagram are a bit more paid-for, podcasts seem to me to still have a wee bit more integrity."

As the medium moves forward and becomes more mainstream, Barr hopes that it is able to maintain this lo-fi, accessible quality. "I hope it doesn't become commercialised in the way YouTube has. I'd like it remain a bit of a Wild West." However, with the sheer mass of small podcasts now in existence, there is the risk of it becoming a jungle in which the little guys cannibalise one another while those with the artificial advantage of a big ad budget are left to thrive. As a remedy for this, Sutherland suggests strength in numbers. "I'd be interested to see more podcast 'networks' spring up in the UK. Little podcasts can be stronger if they connect up."

There's a famous line which has floated around for many years, attributed to various different writers, that goes something like this: "Everyone is born with a book inside them and, in most cases, that is exactly where it should stay." As a final piece of wisdom, Barr offers an updated take on that anonymous adage: "I think we're getting to a point where lots of people feel like they should have a podcast just for the sake of it. If there isn't something you really want to talk about, if you have to really look for the idea, maybe you shouldn't. There are people who just shouldn't have a podcast."

Fortunately, neither Barr nor Sutherland are those people.

Damian Barr's *Literary Salon*, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Spiegeltent, Charlotte Square Gardens, Mon 13 Aug, 9pm, free

Imaginary Advice Live, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Spiegeltent, Charlotte Square Gardens, Tue 14 Aug, 9pm, free

The Danger Zone

The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas brings academics and the public together to discuss everything from privacy and surveillance to health and education. We talk to **Dr Sarah Anderson** about the benefits (and pitfalls) of conversation

Interview: Kirstyn Smith

Noise complaints aren't always a bad thing. If one disgruntled George Street resident hadn't been such a party pooper, The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas might not exist. When a space opened up for 'quiet' shows like acoustic music or spoken word, comedian Susan Morrison jumped on it, with a new idea for a show exploring controversial research topics performed by the academics researching them. With help from arts production company Fair Pley and the Beltane Public Engagement Network, the stage was set for danger.

"Universities are not always great in how they engage with the wider world, especially when engaging with non-specialists," says Dr Sarah Anderson from the University of Edinburgh. "There can be a real power imbalance when you have a researcher from one of Scotland's top universities who is a world-expert on something speaking to someone who feels like an average member of society. However, universities are publicly-funded institutions and everyone has a right to benefit from the knowledge they generate."

The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas levels this playing field by introducing audience interaction and a compere – Morrison – to each show, so members of the public can feel free to ask any questions that come to mind. Added to this, the researchers involved are fully aware of the fact that, on some occasions, their purely academic

knowledge can also be a limitation.

"Audience members often bring a fresh perspective and spot questions and holes in arguments that researchers haven't spotted before. So the interaction can actually make research better."

While the university staff called up to CODI are engaging and intelligent, it hardly needs to be stated that they're not entertainment professionals. This is where the compere steps in, playing an integral part in forging the link between researcher and audience member.

"They work with the researcher to make sure the shows are entertaining, since they're being sold as entertainment. They're also there to help keep the audience discussions on topic and to manage the more vocal members of the crowd who might otherwise monopolise a discussion."

It's not unusual, Anderson admits, for the audience to completely take over proceedings from time to time. A show on capitalism saw the researcher speak for just seven minutes before questions and debate began. Some of her favourite shows, though, have been where the 'danger' in The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas is not immediately obvious.

"Rachel Hosker turned what could have been quite a dry topic – archival research – into a discussion of Trump and the manipulation of collective memory. Amy Burge's show on writing romance fiction, where she got heckled by her



The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas

own dad, was also considerably livelier than I anticipated! And our shows on data, privacy and your online footprint always leave me thinking (and a bit unsettled)."

While dangerous is, literally, the show's middle name, there's also the threat of topics that get too controversial. One particular event, 'Let Extremists Speak', meant a lot of risk assessment had to be done beforehand, and the organisers were prepared to withdraw the show at any time, keeping a close eye on online discussions. Although as Anderson points out, when you're at the Edinburgh Fringe "you can guarantee that someone out there is being far more dangerous than you".

As for the Edinburgh International Book Festival, the line-up includes Edinburgh Napier's Richard Kyle, arguing that obesity has bankrupted the NHS, University of Edinburgh's Smita Kheria, making the case for copyright, and EDINA's Nicola Osborne, taking a look at online privacy in the wake of GDPR. Each researcher has 30 minutes to present their topic and speak with the audience, and, if you like what you see, consider these events a taster menu for the full shows that will be taking place during the Fringe.

The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Spiegeltent, Charlotte Square Gardens, Tue 21 Aug, 9pm, free

Babbling On

Unbound's spoken word strand returns this year with a showcase of the **Out-Spoken** imprint and poetry night. We talk to founder **Anthony Anaxagorou** and poet **Sabrina Mahfouz** about the unique night in store this August

Interview: Heather McDaid



Sabrina Mahfouz

Out-Spoken shows what poetry can be – multidisciplinary, inclusive, radical. "The goal was to curate and distil an event which encompassed both poetry and live music," begins founder Anthony Anaxagorou, "where the age-old elitism and myopia that often trails both art forms is disregarded, leaving artists free to experiment and enthrall audiences."

Anaxagorou brings Out-Spoken to the

famed Spiegeltent with Babble On, alongside a compelling line-up of those whose work he has published: Joelle Taylor, Sabrina Mahfouz, Fran Lock, Raymond Antrobus and Bridget Minamore.

"The discourse surrounding underrepresentation had reached its zenith with official statistics highlighting the lack of inclusivity and representation within the industry," he explains. "I had friends who had

written great books or pamphlets but were being rejected from major presses due to their poetry failing to meet the narrow proclivities of an editor, so Out-Spoken Press was set up to tackle the ongoing issue."

One such collection was *How You Might Know Me* by Sabrina Mahfouz, a book of character-based poems from four women working in London's sex industry, inspired by her own time working in strip clubs, and by years of writing workshops with sex workers.

With 'freedom' running as a thread throughout the Festival, where does Mahfouz feel her work fits within this? "My work is usually documenting a world and people within it who don't often have the freedom to platform their stories in a way that centres them, whether due to taboos of society, barriers of gender, race, class or all sorts of other reasons," she explains. "Artists should use what freedom they have just like anybody else – explore things truthfully and mindfully, researching well before representing outside of your own experience and always open doors (literally and metaphorically!) for others when you can."

On what to expect from the event, Mahfouz quips "accents, anger and some attempts at humour," while Anaxagorou adds, "There will be moments of high energy, anger, confusion, confession and profound reflection. Audiences can expect to gain insight into worlds that previously they may have been unaware of. These are poets who are responding to life in a way that is wholly unique and compelling."

Out-Spoken isn't the only event under the Babble On umbrella – Luke Wright, award-winning poet and Babble On co-programmer, brings Mik Artistik's Ego Trip to Charlotte Square Gardens. "Babble On is about bringing spoken word into the main festival programme," Wright says. "We are in our fifth year now and our weekend of events gets bigger and better each year. This is going to be the maddest night of the whole festival. There is no one quite like Mik Artistik – his songs are both hilarious and moving; beautiful, sad and brilliant. At least half of his sets are ad-libbed, the band play on as Mik takes us by the hand and guides us through the surreal landscape of his mind. We'll have a job getting him off, but the audience will be begging for more."

"For years I've found Mik and the band playing dark corners of music festivals with impromptu crowds of people around him shouting the lyrics to his songs. We've wanted him at the Book Festival for years, and this year it is happening. I'll be Mik's support. I'll dig out my best Saturday night poetry and warm you all up."

Rather than conforming to festival themes, Wright suggests performers at their events simply roam free. When they leave the Spiegeltent after these events, he has one simple hope: "People will sit on buses or in cars, maybe with a bottle of wine at the top of Calton Hill, lines of poetry pinging around their brains: entertained, challenged, changed."

Babble On presents: Out-Spoken Press, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Spiegeltent, Charlotte Square Gardens, Fri 17 Aug, 9pm, free

Monsters Ink

Two of the most iconic figures in all of literature – Frankenstein's monster and Dracula – go head-to-head at Unbound; we talk all things Gothic with their respective backers, **Dr Sam George** and **Marcus Sedgwick**

Interview: Heather McDaid

Frankenstein. Dracula. They're inarguably two titans of literature, cult figures who have outlived their creators Mary Shelley and Bram Stoker respectively. Published at either end of the 19th century, the duo are gothic icons, and now, in the shadows of Charlotte Square Gardens, Edinburgh International Book Festival plays host to the Gothic debate to end all debates, and you're invited.

Dracula vs. Frankenstein: The debate

Both Dr Sam George and Marcus Sedgwick had the opportunity to lay the groundwork for their debate by talking up their side or putting down the other.

Dr Sam George – Team Frankenstein

"My defence of *Frankenstein* would be very simple. I would argue it is the greater novel for the following reasons: remarkably, it is the work of a teenager, since it was begun when Mary was only 18; it is a novel written by a teenager, read by teenagers as part of the A-level syllabus. Dracula is unsympathetic since he is denied a voice in the novel, whereas the monster is eloquent and questioning, inspiring our sympathy. He is for many the first sympathetic monster – a very big claim!"

"The science has been overplayed – in my opinion it is a novel about education and parenting (or the lack of); as such it could not be more profound or poignant. It allows for the idea that monsters are made and not created. In doing so it explores the premise that we are born innocent and corrupted by society (naturally good, not innately sinful)."

"The monster can be read in many ways. One of the most interesting is to see him as an allegory for the female condition. I would argue that Shelley saw him as such – he is doubly like woman i.e. judged by his appearance and denied an education. He undergoes the kind of haphazard or self-styled education that the majority of women endured at the time."

"Frankenstein's monster speaks to teenagers and female readers in a way that Dracula doesn't."

Marcus Sedgwick – Team Dracula

"There's no question *Frankenstein* is an absolutely iconic novel, that's why we've chosen it as one of these two books, but it's less successful narratively. It's replete with clumsy coincidences. There's just so many overly convenient chance meetings and encounters of various kinds throughout the book. Narratively I find it therefore less enjoyable to a modern reader."

"I know Sam's going to argue the opposite! I think *Dracula* stands up better from a non-academic point of view, as the more enjoyable novel."

"There are other things about *Frankenstein* that worry me. I find there's dubious snobbishness in the book and I'd argue [it] verges on becoming racist. There certainly is xenophobia in it that's distasteful."

"Structurally I find it a little bizarre – it's like a Russian nested doll of a novel and you've got four stories sitting inside each other. There's a thing in writing called the rule of three – we see it in fairytales, that things work in threes. Three works very neatly psychologically, and four feels like it gets too complicated. I feel it would work if that middle story were the central core nugget



we get to, but that central story is thematically irrelevant to the rest of the book. So, there's a few things you could start with!"

The Gothic at large

Sedgwick came to work with George many years ago, following her launch of the world's first MA in Vampire Literature. Working through the classics, including *Dracula*, to the present day and *Twilight*, the course included Sedgwick's *My Swordhand is Singing*; George invited him to come and talk about the book, and they've worked together since.

As for what draws them to the Gothic, for George it was through folklore and fairytale. "I grew up in Cumbria where there is a tradition of storytelling and superstition," she explains. "One

of my earliest memories is going to the village associated with the Croglion vampire, a little known British myth which predates Stoker!"

"When I first started lecturing I was given the courses students seemed to dread – the eighteenth-century novel, early Renaissance literature, and so on. One day when they were struggling to engage with an epic poem, I asked them what they read for pleasure and two of the brightest said vampire fiction. I thought, 'Me too... I could do something with this.' The rest is legendary."

"You could say I embraced my dark side, my inner goth, and the rest is history!"

"Gothic as a genre is profoundly concerned with the past, narrative interruptions of the past into the present. It is also dependent on traces of

other stories, familiar images and narrative structures, intertextual allusions, etc. It has a great degree of self-consciousness about its nature and I like that. It is also very liminal – the concept of the threshold appeals to me, intermediate forms; what lies between the known and unknown." As for Sedgwick, he thinks it's something "that some people would have down under that dreadful phrase of the 'guilty pleasure', which is a notion I disparage anyway. What does that mean apart from some kind of snobbish hierarchy of what we find acceptable?"

"I think the Gothic really appeals to people because it's the perfect combination of the two most present matters in life – sex and death"

Marcus Sedgwick

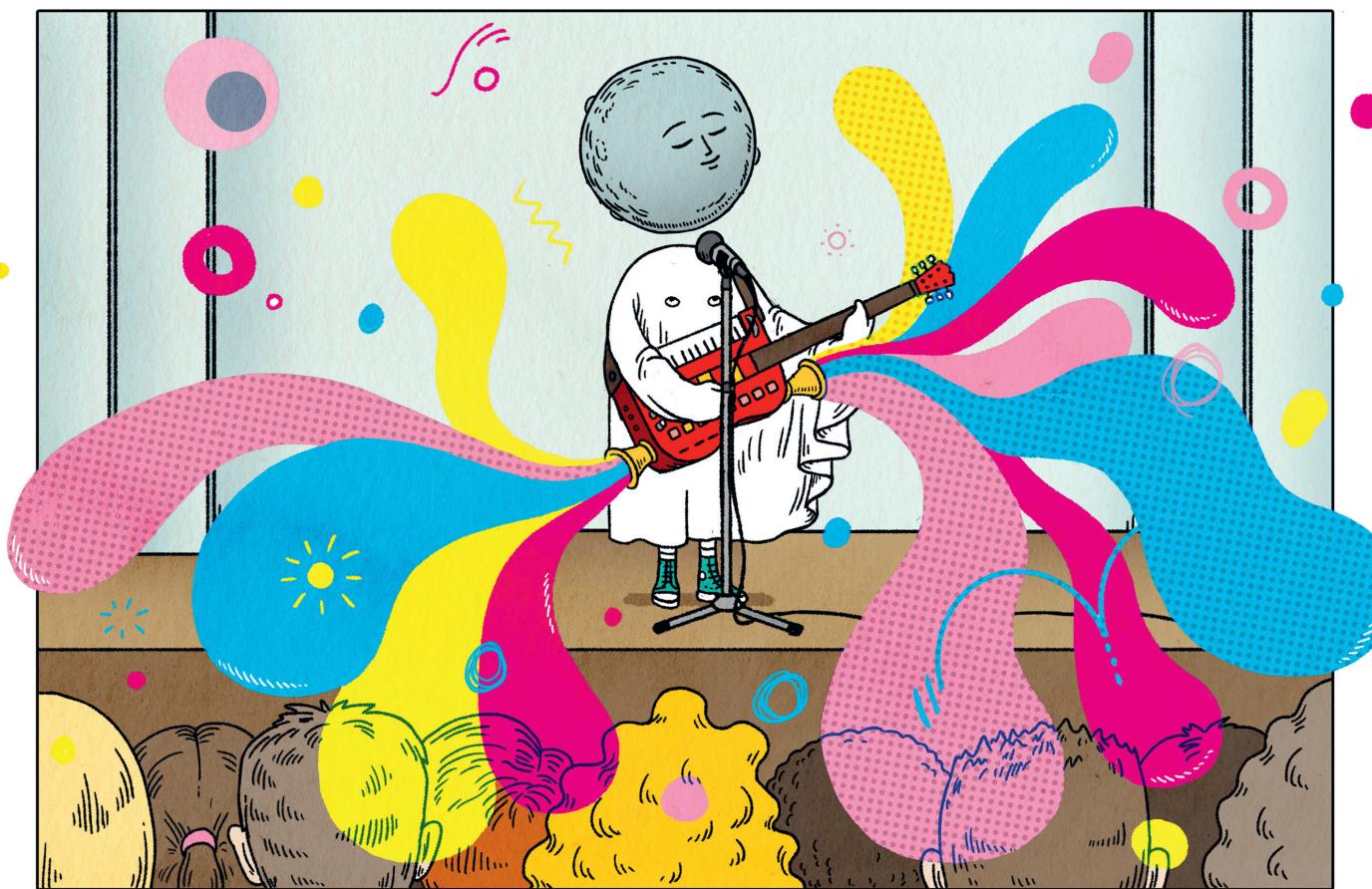
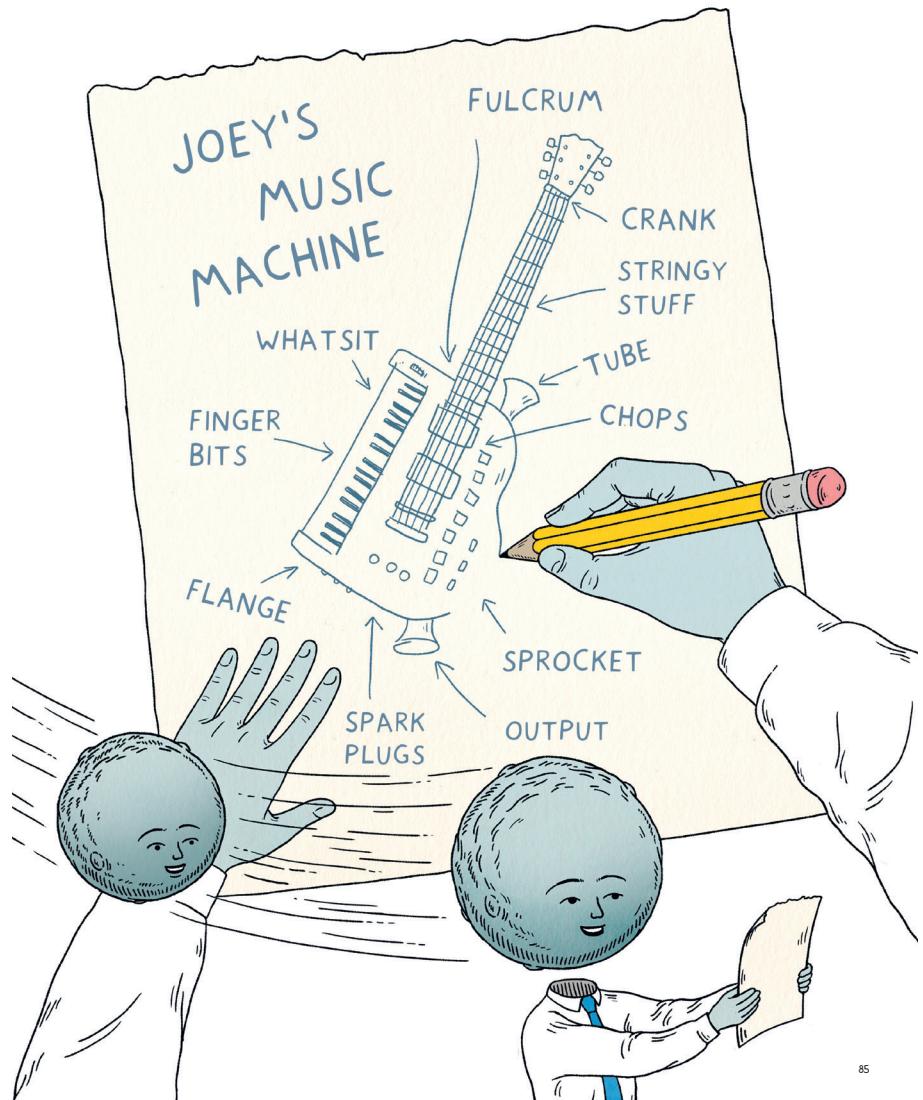
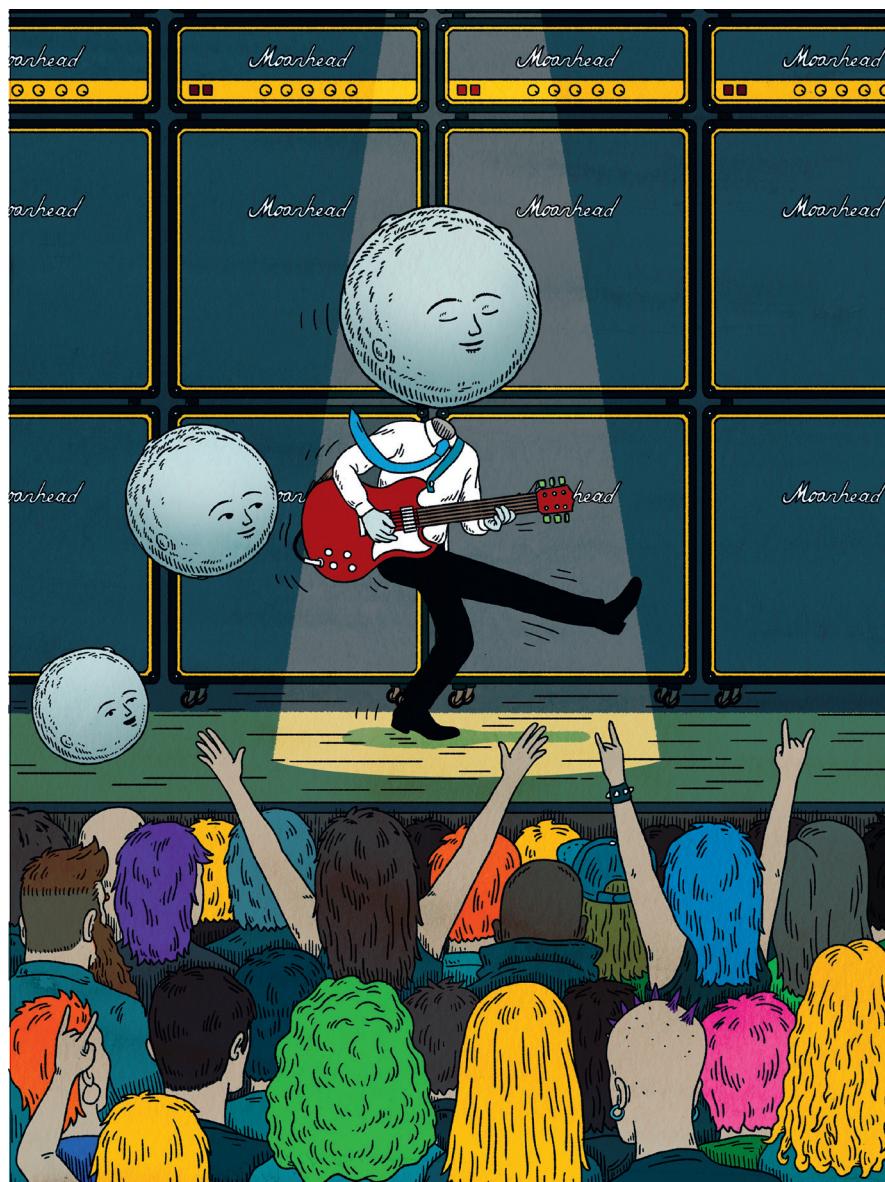
"The Gothic has always, always, always suffered from this notion that it's inferior in some way. The adjective gothic originated – whether it was architecture or literature – because it was deemed to be decadent and weak and corrupt. That stigma stuck with Gothic fiction and I'm not sure it's entirely gone away now. It was there throughout the 20th century, and certainly at the time of its birth it got called that because it seemed to be inferior in some way."

"For example, Edgar Allan Poe: he never really within his lifetime was given credit – he's studied in schools and universities now, but in his lifetime, his work was disparaged. You look at the work of later writers [like] H.P. Lovecraft, it's the same thing. It takes a very long time for the Gothic to be rehabilitated, and to be taken seriously, and yet throughout all this time, I think it really appeals to people because it's the perfect combination of the two most present matters in life, namely sex and death. Those two things are almost always neatly combined and not far beneath the surface within Gothic."

As parting words, Sedgwick has some high hopes for the event. "We're really looking for people to get involved and bring their opinions as well. I hope that people will maybe see these two books in a way they haven't seen them before. I hope they'll have some fun. We're hoping that Sam and I will kick off the first half and then we'll open up and have a fairly rambunctious debate about the merits and otherwise of these two books." The groundwork has been laid. For one night only, Frankenstein takes on Dracula and you are invited to pick a side and fight your case. Will the fight be won? Can it ever be? There's only one way to find out.

Night of the Literary Living Dead! Edinburgh International Book Festival, Spiegeltent, Charlotte Square Gardens, Sun 26 Aug, 9pm, free

Shoot for the Moon



Life's a peach when you have a moon for a head. So says Andrew Rae with his graphic novel *Moonhead and the Music Machine*. Joey's head can wander into galactic reveries, escape the dullness of earth, and then in one snap he's back to the reality of being a teenage boy – it's much crueler here. *Moonhead and the Music Machine* is a psychedelic, bizarre, but ultimately fun coming-of-age story – the school talent show comes around, and so he embarks on his mission to create the musical machine to rule them all, the best there's ever been.

Striking, fun, musical and creative – what better way to celebrate the mystique of Moonhead than a jolly gang of illustrators and musicians coming together for some tunes and live drawing? Featuring Aussies Electric Fields and more, it's a night that promises to shoot for the moon.

Andrew Rae and the Music Machines, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Spiegeltent, Charlotte Square Gardens, Sun 12 Aug, 9pm, free



Praise the Lord

Poet, musician and writer **Anthony Joseph** presents his unconventional biography of Trinidadian calypso legend Lord Kitchener at Unbound. Joshua talks us through the importance of Kitch to Trinidadians past and present

Interview: Kirstyn Smith

On a carnival Monday afternoon in Queen's Park Savannah, Port of Spain, Trinidad, Aldwin Roberts – better known by his stage name Lord Kitchener or simply Lord Kitch – was standing alone watching a steel band. This was the first and only time Anthony Joseph met his musical idol.

"The city was hot with carnival: bands passing, loud music, and suddenly in the middle of the field, there was Kitch," says Joseph. "I couldn't miss the opportunity to at least say hello. I mean, he was a legend."

Although he'd seen him perform many times and caught glimpses of him around town from a distance, he hadn't ever encountered Kitch alone and accessible. "We spoke for about 15 minutes, mainly about calypso. He was explaining the difference between major and minor modes, about lyrics, about the calypsos he liked and didn't like that year, about double entendre. It was amazing."

The importance of this serendipitous meeting cannot be understated. Like most Trinidadians, Joseph grew up listening to Kitchener: he and his music were deeply woven into Joseph's identity. He also sees parallels between Kitchener's story and his own, both having left Trinidad in their mid-20s to pursue a music career in the UK. After Kitchener's death in 2000, Joseph felt as though a family member had died.

"It also felt like the end of an era, as if the generation that included Kitch and my grandparents, who were born in the early 20th century into the height of the colonial project, were making room for the new. These were people who were still touched by colonialism, who looked to the 'mother country' while still being quite nationalistic as Trinidadians."

Another thing Joseph noticed was that after 60 years of making such important music, not much was known about Kitchener at all. There were no biographies and even fewer books to consult. So Joseph decided to write one. He took an unconventional approach to his own writing,

partly because of his belief that a mainstream bio isn't the most accurate way to represent someone's life, but also because he found so little information about Kitch that it became necessary to take on a storyteller role, to re-imagine the narratives behind the anecdotes he was collecting.

"No one lives a detached, singular existence," says Joseph. "I was interested in levelling the narrative field, to have the people that knew him also reveal themselves. In a way that's a political choice, to focus on the community rather than the individual. I was interested in testimony, in how people saw Kitchener and how we all created his mythology."

While Joseph is a musician and writer, he primarily sees himself as a poet, and any other work he produces is informed by his poetry, in a mutual meta exchange of ideas.

"Sometimes poems or prose become 'songs'; sometimes the poem remains intact, sometimes music enforces change," he says. "It's a symbiotic process. I'm a Trinidadian, and the way I grew up speaking, the particular swing of Creole we have, is pure music. I never move too far from that."

It's this experimentation, this playing with established forms and coaxing something new to the surface that audiences can expect from Joseph's Unbound show.

"I like odd juxtapositions, so the key for me is in finding a new space or as-yet undiscovered moment in the telling of a historical narrative. I'll be joined in Edinburgh by three improvising musicians who are able to move back and forth between calypso, poetry and free jazz."

Looking at Kitch through these lenses gives Joseph a chance to lay bare his wisdom and knowledge of the legend onto a brand new audience, and to dictate through poetry and music the secrets he learned on that hot Monday afternoon in Trinidad.

Calypso King of the Windrush Generation, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Spiegeltent, Charlotte Square Gardens, Sun 19 Aug, 9pm, free

Twin Cities

For one night in the Spiegeltent, Edinburgh hands the stage to a fellow UNESCO City of Literature – **Barcelona**

Interview: Laura Waddell

After our own referendum, Scotland has taken quite an interest in the constitutional debate in Spain. It is fair to wonder if poetry there reflects the political upheaval. "It has been a period which has shaken up Catalan society, and poetry, being a human expression as it is, has echoed it," says Maria Cabrera.

Cabrera – who often performs alongside the band El Pèsol Feréstec, which translates as 'the savage pea' – is part of the Barcelona line-up for this year's Unbound. As well as being an award-winning Catalan poet, she teaches linguistics and is currently translating English poet Emily Berry into Catalan. "There have been at least two poetic anthologies which have included expressions of 1 October 2017 (the day of the Catalan referendum)," she tells us.

Catalan poetry "is a minority practice in a minorised culture" says Marina Espasa, coordinator of the *Ciutat de la Literatura*, and a writer herself. She has put together this line-up of some of Barcelona's best poets. It's tempting to draw easy parallels between the constitutional debates of Catalonia and Scotland, and poets working in minority languages in both cultures, but the poetry itself, of course, cannot be generalised. It digs deeper. What kind of concerns do poets have in Barcelona? "Themes and concerns are very diverse," says Cabrera. "Each generation shares themes and stylistic approaches with contemporaneous generations in other cultures. In younger generations there are, for example, clearly identifiable signs of postmodernity: intertextuality, genre hybridisation, classical metric forms combined with social and modern themes."

And how does it go down? "In Barcelona, poetry receives attention and institutional help, and in Catalonia there is quite a big amount of poetry prizes. In Spain, except for one or two exceptions, there is a great lack of awareness of Catalan-written poetry."

One of the line-up, Enric Casasses, is a poet who has gained a cult following in Catalonia.

Around Casasses' figure, as seen in his performances on YouTube, are rapt audiences listening intently to his direct delivery. His work has been published by big publishers and underground presses alike and is described by Espasa as "questioning the position of a language-made self in the world."

If Edinburgh's event is anything to go by, Barcelona's poetry scene looks vibrant, and Espasa describes it as powerful. Why is that? "Considering the dimensions of the Catalan-speaking community, the poetry which is written in this language is, thematically, formally and generationally, very diverse. And because there is a strong poetry reading circuit, poets are more used to speaking up than other writers, and have freer spirits."

Also on the line-up is poet Mireia Calafell. She's co-director of the Barcelona Poetry Festival, and in 2015, she was awarded the Lletra d'Or for the best book published in Catalan for *Tantes Mudes*. It was subsequently published in Spanish. Like Calebra, her poetry evokes personal freedoms. It "deals with the constraints which grind us down in human relationships and our relationships with our own body," says Espasa.

It all sounds like a good fit for this year's festival theme of Freedom. Espasa agrees: "The invited poets explore, from different perspectives, the idea of freedom, individual as well as collective."

And there's another factor, she says: "The fact that poetry has such a small audience gives it more freedom, in the sense that it is not submitted to market pressure. The majority of the poets don't make a living writing and reciting their poems, which means that they only write when they feel the intimate and urgent need to do so, and then they can treat any theme they want to."

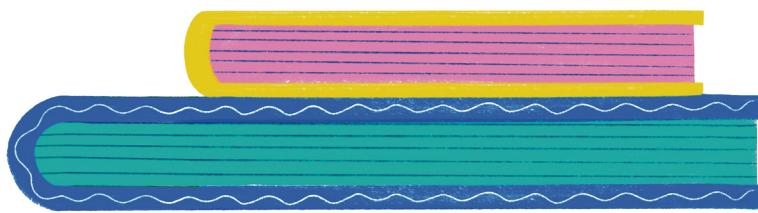
Set Thought and Voice Free, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Spiegeltent, Charlotte Square Gardens, Sat 25 Aug, 9pm, free



Photo: Naomi Waddell

What's On

A night-by-night guide to this year's Unbound programme. Events kick off at 9pm in the Book Festival Spiegeltent, Charlotte Square Gardens, although you may want to get down early to make sure you get a seat. Each and every event is, of course, free



Sun 12 Aug

Andrew Rae and the Music Machines

Horrendous hormones, awkward bodies, and homework: you might remember how bloody awful being a teenager is, and you didn't even have a moon for a head. Award-winning graphic novelist Andrew Rae's *Moonhead and the Music Machine* is a psychedelic, gorgeously illustrated coming-of-age-and-beating-the-bullies story centred on one unusual boy and his gift for making music. Andrew brings a gang of illustrators and musicians for a night of performance and live drawing, with tunes from Electric Fields from Adelaide.

Mon 13 Aug

Damian Barr's Literary Salon

Damian Barr's Literary Salon is a global sensation which has sold out everywhere from London to New York to Moscow, and finally it arrives in Edinburgh. North Lanarkshire-born Barr – author of *Maggie & Me*, a memoir of growing up and coming out in Thatcher's Britain – is one of the most connected people in the arts, and his Salon has welcomed the likes of Caitlin Moran and Bret Easton Ellis in the past. Join him for a stylish night of songs and stories with plenty of garrulous guests.

Tue 14 Aug

Imaginary Advice Live

Formally daring and hugely inventive in its approach, Ross Sutherland's award-winning podcast *Imaginary Advice* is a colourful sketchpad of new storytelling ideas. Joined tonight by *Submarine* and *The Adulterants* author Joe Dunthorne and with live music from the brilliant Jonnie Common, this is the perfect introduction to one of the medium's most startling successes, and an unmissable celebration for fans of the show. Check out the podcast in advance for a flavour of what to expect.

Wed 15 Aug

Africa Unbound

A celebration of contemporary voices from across the nations of Africa, journeying beyond stereotypes to interrogate history, politics, the imperial past, ancestors, and the future. Discover dazzling talents from

the continent in a night of readings and performances from Zimbabwe's Novuyo Tshuma, Uganda's Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi and S J Naudé from South Africa, plus Nigerian poet Donna Ogunnaike and Chanaian percussionist Cameli Tordzro.

Thu 16 Aug

MacMillan 175: Crafting Curious Minds

In 1843, two sons of Scottish crofters set up MacMillan Publishers to share learning and capture imaginations. 175 years later their company still produces the bestsellers and groundbreakers that shape our literary lives, from *The Gruffalo* to Kate Tempest. Tonight we celebrate their history and look to the future. Enjoy readings, performances and music from guests including *Cooking on a Bootstrap* founder and food poverty activist Jack Monroe, and Sharlene Teo, winner of the inaugural Deborah Rogers Writer's Award for debut novel *Ponti*.

Fri 17 Aug

Babble On presents: Out-Spoken Press

After a hugely successful national tour in 2017, acclaimed independent publishing house Out-Spoken Press presents an exclusive spoken word showcase at the Book Festival. Champions of inclusive, radical and multidisciplinary poetry, Out-Spoken can be trusted to deliver a cracking show tackling a wide array of topical themes by some of the most enthralling poet-performers around: Joelle Taylor, Sabrina Mahfouz, Fran Lock, Raymond Antrobus, Bridget Minamore and Anthony Anaxagorou.

Sat 18 Aug

Babble On's Ego Trip

Mik Artistik's Ego Trip are one of the most unpredictable and exciting acts on the circuit. Mik's lyrical dexterity and the musical range of the band combine to make people laugh, cry, and flail around. BBC 6 Music's Gideon Coe regularly plays their tunes and John Cooper Clarke called them 'sensational'. A whirl of music hall, poetry, funk and punk, Ego Trip are the ideal tonic in troubled times. Special guest Luke Wright delivers big-hearted, quick-witted new work too.

Sun 19 Aug

Calypso King of the Windrush Generation

In 1948 calypso music icon Lord Kitchener arrived in the UK on the Windrush. He was at the forefront of multicultural Britain in the 50s, popularising calypso music and representing a growing Caribbean community facing a hostile environment even then. Poet and musician Anthony Joseph has captured Kitchener's story and music in *Kitch*, a mix of fiction, biography and memoir, and tonight Joseph and his band celebrate the man and the Caribbean influences that still thrive in this sceptred isle.

Mon 20 Aug

INTERROBANG? present The Edinburgh Bible

Officially Britain's Best Spoken Word Show (according to the 2017 Saboteur Awards), Edinburgh's own INTERROBANG? lights up Unbound with a sumptuous night of performance. Join host Ricky Monahan Brown and discover *The Edinburgh Bible*, a mysterious text that reinvents biblical stories and relocates them in Scottish settings. An award-winning writing cast including Mark Bolsover, Beth Cochrane, Emily Dodd, Jen McGregor and musician Aurora Engine stage a fun and thought-provoking show designed for people of all faiths and none.

Tue 21 Aug

The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas

The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas allows some brilliant researchers to let their most challenging ideas loose on the public. Is obesity crushing the NHS? Can too much education be bad for us? Should we celebrate the death of privacy? Comedian Susan Morrison hosts this boundary-pushing, potentially world-altering evening of debate and frenzied discussion, which has become a Fringe staple over the past five years.

Wed 22 Aug

Body Slam: Kiss of Tongues

Coming all the way from Rio, Body Slam is a new kind of poetic performance: a composition of languages both spoken and signed, English and Portuguese. In the poets' performances sometimes the languages are different, each happening in its own grammar; at other times, they intersect. Grupo Corposinalizante, a Rio-based art group led by Joana Mussi and Cibele Lucena, invent forms of communication, performances and poetic interventions that give visibility to deaf culture.

Thu 23 Aug

Fun Lovin' Crime Writers

Last year this criminally good covers act rocked the Book Festival with their bone-chilling talents before setting off on a nationwide tour, and we're delighted to have them back for their hard-earned encore. A cavalcade of crime writing's best – Val McDermid, Chris Brookmyre, Mark Billingham, Stuart Neville, Luca Veste and Doug Johnstone – blow back in to town with a refined set and a growing cult following. Lucky we've got a bigger Spiegeltent, or it would be murder on the dance floor...

Fri 24 Aug

Soul Clap its Hands and Sing with Poetry Ireland

Irish and Scottish poets and musicians have always cast a particular spell on each other, as tonight's trio of creative collaborators prove. Bilingual poet Doireann Ni Chríofa presents a series of new poems, in a live performance with a sonic landscape by composer Linda Buckley. They are joined two of Scotland's finest traditional musicians, Brighde Chaimbeul and Aidan O'Rourke, weaving in and out of each others' work to spin a tapestry of Celtic music and lyric.

Sat 25 Aug

Set Thought and Voice Free

Barcelona has always been home to poets, those born there and those who have been drawn to live there. It has been sung about, praised and vilified, for its beauty and its darkness. Barcelona City of Literature offers a view of the poetry that has emerged from its historical stones and from some of today's preoccupations: freedom of expression and lust for life. Poet Mireia Calafell presents her

delicate yet sharp, combative words. While Maria Cabrera and Enric Casasses perform live alongside the band El Pèsol Feréstec who put music to some of the best poetry written in Catalan over the past centuries through to the contemporary.

Sun 26 Aug

Night of the Literary Living Dead!

Darkness descends, and with it come monsters. The creature of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* first awoke 200 years ago, and 80 years later Bram Stoker's *Dracula* emerged from the crypt – but which is better? Novelist Marcus Sedgwick and gothic expert Dr Sam George square off in a battle of the beasts. Then travel to the village of Losthope with Cill Arbuthnott and Doug MacDonald for a grizzly live game experience filled with weird experiments, serums and surprises. Could you be the bloodthirsty Count stalking the Spiegeltent?

Mon 27 Aug (7pm Til Late)

Tae Sup wi' a Fifer

In May the Book Festival travelled to Fife, and now the Kingdom comes to Charlotte Square Gardens for our final night spectacular, which kicks off at the earlier time of 7pm. Acclaimed singer-songwriter and novelist James Yorkston brings his award-winning folk club to the capital, featuring music from the legendary Sheena Wellington, a special appearance from Richard Dawson and poetry readings from Jamaica's Poet Laureate Lorna Goodison and Jeet Thayil, poet and novelist, author of *Narcopolis* and *The Book of Chocolate Saints*. Finish the Festival in style with the songs and sounds of international supergroup Yorkston Thorne Khan.

