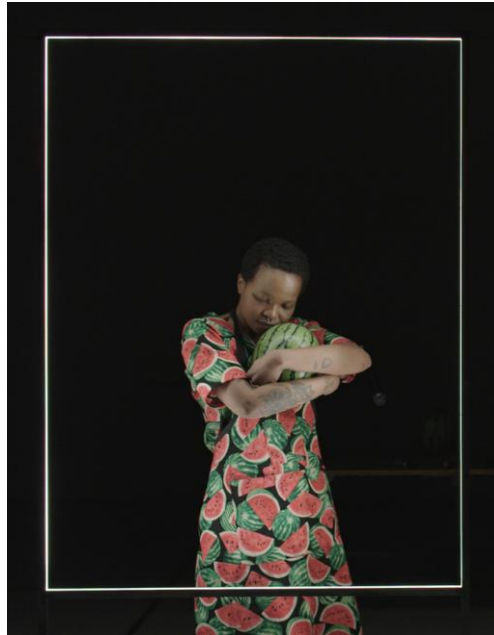


Edinburgh International Festival Releases New Podcast Series for World Refugee Day



mandla rae in *as british as a watermelon*. Photo: Benjamin Liddell

- Artists from the 2022 **Edinburgh International Festival** feature in a five-part podcast series ***I Am An Immigrant*** released to mark World Refugee Day.
- The first episode of ***I Am An Immigrant*** is available from today, it features a discussion with Zimbabwean creator **mandla rae** about the immigrant experience and mandla's work ***as british as a watermelon*** which explores migration, asylum and what it means to belong.
- The 2022 Edinburgh International Festival features **Refuge** – a season of contemporary theatre, dance, visual art, film and conversation created in collaboration with **Scottish Refugee Council** to explore themes of refugeehood, migration, identity and inclusion.
- Five online discussions on migration and internationalism featuring author **Chitra Ramaswamy**, playwright **Tariq Jordan**, and actor and author **Antonythasan Jesuthasan** will be available for free through the **At Home** festival programme.

MEDIA IMAGES - [here](#)
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20 June 2022, Edinburgh: The **Edinburgh International Festival** marks World Refugee Day with the launch of ***I Am An Immigrant***, a podcast series which examines the work of refugee and immigrant creators in Scotland and features artists from across the Festival's **Refuge** Programme. The International

Festival also announces a selection of free, online talks, featuring author **Chitra Ramaswamy**, playwright **Tariq Jordan**, and actor and author **Antonythasan Jesuthasan** (*Dheepan*), which explore aspects of internationalism and the migrant experience.

Refuge is a season of contemporary theatre, dance, visual art, film and conversation created in collaboration with **Scottish Refugee Council** to explore themes of refugeehood, migration, identity and inclusion. Seventy-five years after **Rudolf Bing**, himself a refugee, co-founded the **Edinburgh International Festival**, this season invites 85 artists from over 15 countries to reflect upon the profound impact that migration has had on arts and culture in Scotland and around the world.

I Am An Immigrant is a weekly podcast presented by **ice&fire Theatre** and hosted by **Christine Bacon**. In the first episode, released today (20 June), **mandla rae** the Zimbabwean writer, performer and curator discusses the immigrant experience and the theatre work, *as british as a watermelon*, which weaves together poetry and storytelling to explore themes of belonging, trauma, and forgiveness.

A further four episodes will be released weekly throughout June and July, including conversations with Malaysian dancer **Mavin Khoo** about the themes of climate refugeehood reflected in Akram Khan Company's *Jungle Book reimagined*; New Zealand soprano **Madison Nonoa** who performs with International Festival regulars Malcolm Martineau and Steven Osborne; dancer **Akeim Toussaint Buck**, whose show *Windows of Displacement* reflects on the politics of migration both historically and in the present day; and Palestinian-born artist **Leena Nammari**, whose visual art installation *It Will Live*, inspired by a house in Ramallah that she has photographed for 35 years, will be displayed to the public across the length of the Studio. The first episode of *I Am An Immigrant* with mandla rae is available [here](#).

The Festival's digital programme of talks, which are part of **At Home** in partnership with **abrdn**, include discussions with a variety of artists and academics. A talk titled *Rethinking Internationalism* is a two-part discussion where **Dr Idil Akinci-Perez** joins a panel of artists from across the world including performers **Ahilan Karunaharan** and **Antonythasan Jesuthasan** to discuss what internationalism means to them. A panel discussion titled *Am I Welcome?* with Scottish Refugee Council and **Farah Saleh** discusses hospitality as people seeking protection and mobility face increasing risk and criminalisation; **75 Years Later** examines the importance of the arts in times of crisis with documentary photographer **Mark Neville** and Rwandan artist and activist **Kiki Katese** while also taking an in-depth look back at the Festival's 75-year history; and *Climate Change and Displacement* is a panel discussion hosted by **Professor Liz Grant** and writer **Tariq Jordan** that explores how we can re-evaluate our relationship with the environment and better understand our place in it.

The five online talks reflect *Refuge*'s exploration of the cultural richness and diversity of the UK's artistic community in shows like *Detention Dialogues*, a series of verbatim scripts featuring the voices of refugees from around the world; *A Wee Journey*, which invites audiences to embark on a choreographed musical celebration of diversity and a reflection on the experiences of many migrants living in Scotland and around the world; a musical meditation on musical censorship and cultural expression by Iranian and Kurdish refugees **Zozan Yasar** and **Aref Ghorbani** in *Vocal*; and *Amber*, an immersive show that documents the 23-mile walk from Dungavel Detention Centre to the Home Office in Glasgow.

The Festival and Scottish Refugee Council will co-host a gathering of up to thirty artists, activists and practitioners in a bid to develop a meaningful manifesto for care taking and hospitality in the arts and social practice for and with displaced artists and communities, which will be released later this year.

Sabir Zazai, Chief Executive, Scottish Refugee Council said: "*Scottish Refugee Council is honoured to collaborate with the Edinburgh International Festival and mark this very special anniversary year. This has been a year of terrible stories. War in Ukraine, unrest in Afghanistan, families stranded and separated by*

bureaucracy, Rwandan detention centres and people left with no option but to risk their lives on dangerous journeys in a desperate bid to reach a place of safety. In this relentless fight for human rights and freedoms, we must not forget to reflect on hard won triumphs as well. Had Rudolph Bing not sought and been granted refugee protection here 75 years ago, this world class festival may not exist. The cultural fabric of Scotland would be very different. We are in awe of his legacy, and of the exceptional artists performing as part of Refuge.”

Fergus Linehan, Festival Director, Edinburgh International Festival said: “*The Edinburgh International Festival is proud to provide a platform led by refugee and migrant creators this year. Refuge welcomes almost 90 artists from over 15 countries to perform in what is a special year for the Festival. 2022 marks our 75th Anniversary since it was co-founded in 1947 by Rudolf Bing, a refugee of the Second World War and we would like to pay tribute to his legacy, as his wish to unite people from different cultures through the arts is just as relevant to today as it was 75 years ago. We hope that you will join us in welcoming these artists to Edinburgh in August and enjoy the world class performances on offer.”*

For more information about the Edinburgh International Festival and Refuge visit:

www.eif.co.uk/profile/refuge

– ENDS –

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Refuge

Refuge is a season of contemporary theatre, dance, visual art, film and conversation created in collaboration with **Scottish Refugee Council** to explore themes of refugeehood, migration, identity and inclusion. Seventy-five years after **Rudolf Bing**, himself a refugee, co-founded the Edinburgh International Festival, this season reflects upon the profound impact that migration has had on arts and culture in Scotland and around the world.

The International Festival’s Refuge programme includes the world premiere of **A Wee Journey**, a choreographed musical journey about migration created by choreographer **Farah Saleh** and composer **Oğuz Kaplangi**. **Akeim Toussaint Buck’s Windows of Displacement** is a dance theatre piece drawing on his own journey of migration from Jamaica to the UK, while **Wang Ramirez’s** dance show for young audiences **We Are Monchichi** explores cultural stereotypes and identities.

Zimbabwean writer, performer and curator **mandla rae** asks powerful questions about belonging, trauma and forgiveness in **as british as a watermelon**, while **Detention Dialogues**, from **ice&fire Actors for Human Rights** and **Scottish Detainee Visitors**, features a series of verbatim scripts featuring the voices of refugees from different countries.

Artists **Gemma Paintin** and **James Stenhouse** host **Oh Europa**, a deep listening experience featuring love songs recorded across Europe by over a thousand voices, in 49 different languages, and invite Festival visitors to contribute their own songs to the project on 23 and 24 August in St Andrew’s Square.

Amber is an interactive performance documenting artists **Paria Moazemi Goodarzi** and **Francisco Llinas Casas** and their encounters on a 23-mile walk from Dungavel Detention Centre to the Home Office in Glasgow. **Aref Ghorbani** intersperses Persian classical and folk music with conversation around music censorship in **Vocal**, while artist **Leena Nammari**'s visual art installation **It Will Live** is inspired by a house in Ramallah that she has photographed for 35 years.

The programme is complemented by a series of online conversations addressing internationalism, climate change, belonging, and a podcast series, **I Am An Immigrant**, which launches on 20 June for World Refugee Day.

About Edinburgh International Festival

Every August, the International Festival brings world-class music, opera, dance and theatre performances to Edinburgh.

Created in 1947 following WWII, the festival inspired artists and audiences to heal through international cultural collaboration. This year the International Festival celebrates 75 years of bringing world cultures together and will take place from 5-28 August 2022.

Year-round the Edinburgh International Festival connects with local communities through education projects, access programmes, and initiatives that introduce new audiences to live performance.

For more information visit www.eif.co.uk