

An estimated 15,000 people enjoyed Light Night - the spectacular free community event which launched Edinburgh's Christmas 2018

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On Sunday 18 November an estimated 15,000 people flocked to the city centre to join the Light Night celebrations which mark the official start of Edinburgh's Christmas 2018! This free community event hosted by Forth One Breakfast Show's Arlene Stuart saw **hundreds of local performers** dancing and singing across four stages with Edinburgher **Saskia Eng of The Voice** fame performing before switching the city's Christmas lights on.

Brimming full of community spirit, the afternoon starred 24 Edinburgh and Scottish dance and music groups, including the energetic Edinburgh's Got Soul, Pulse of the Place, Elite Dance, Edinburgh Ballet, Bhangra Crew who recently came second in TBC-U, the fantastic National Youth Choir of Scotland East Dunbartonshire Boys Choir and Perth Boys Choir and Edinburgh's-own The Phoenix Community Choir.

It culminated with a **fizzing fireworks display launched from Charlotte Square Gardens** and **Saskia Eng switching on the city's Christmas lights and Silent Light** creating a wow moment for the thousands of spectators.

The special afternoon also included performances from gentleman-juggler Florian Brookes from **La Clique Noël – Part Deux**, the **spectacular and sassy new show** which opened for Christmas this weekend at the Festival Square Spiegeltent, and a cheeky preview of **Kinky Boots** ahead of its opening at the Edinburgh Playhouse in December.

The family-friendly afternoon event took place against the backdrop of the magical **Silent Light** on George Street. Brand-new for 2018, **Silent Light is a world first**: fusing together the spectacular hit Street of Light from Edinburgh's Christmas 2015 and 2016, with a silent disco to give you the ultimate street party! A festive blast like no other which will have people trying out their dance moves underneath the magnificent architectural installation of archways festooned with thousands of lightbulbs synchronised to music on your headphones! **50p from every ticket sold goes to One City Trust**, a charity fighting inequality and exclusion in the city. **26,000 free tickets have also been made available to over 50 charities working in Edinburgh.**

Edinburgh's Christmas charity partner, **NSPCC** was bucket-shaking at Light Night to help children who've been abused to rebuild their lives, protect children at risk, and find the best ways of preventing child abuse from ever happening. Voluntary donations make up around 90 per cent of their funding to help this great cause.

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Notes to editors:

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About Underbelly

Underbelly is a UK based live entertainment company the beginnings of which are rooted in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2000. Its events and festivals division now operates one of the largest operations at the Fringe, selling over 460,000 tickets for over 200 shows in 22 venues over 25 days in 2018.

2018 is the sixth Edinburgh's Christmas that Underbelly has produced for City of Edinburgh Council (2017/18 saw a record breaking 781,520 tickets issued to visitors from 47 different countries), and the second Edinburgh's Hogmanay also on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council, which in 2018 welcomed 160,000 over 3 days.

Elsewhere Underbelly also produces Underbelly Festival on the Southbank in London, this year in its 10th year and one of the biggest multi-arts offerings in London, Christmas in Leicester Square, Underbelly Festival in Hong Kong, West End Live in Trafalgar Square for Westminster City Council and the Society of London Theatre.

Through its Underbelly Productions arm it produces and promotes live shows in London's West End at the Edinburgh Fringe, and throughout the UK and on tour internationally.

In 2017 Underbelly sold over 1.4 million tickets to its various events.

www.underbelly.co.uk

About the NSPCC

The NSPCC is the leading children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK and Channel Islands. Using voluntary donations, which make up around 90 per cent of our funding, we help children who've been abused to rebuild their

lives, we protect children at risk, and we find the best ways of preventing child abuse from ever happening. So when a

child needs a helping hand, we'll be there. When parents are finding it tough, we'll help. When laws need to change, or governments need to do more, we won't give up until things improve.

Our Childline service provides a safe, confidential place for children with no one else to turn to, whatever their worry, whenever they need help. Children can contact Childline 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Our free NSPCC helpline provides adults with a place they can get advice and support, share their concerns about a child or get general information about child protection. Adults can contact the helpline 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

NSPCC helpline

Phone: 0808 800 5000
Visit nspcc.org.uk

Childline

Phone: 0800 1111
Visit: childline.org.uk



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