

Monday 23 June 2008

## RECORD SALES FOR BOOK FESTIVAL

The first weekend of ticket sales for the Edinburgh International Book Festival has resulted in a 24% increase on 2007, with over 16% of the programme already sold out. Sales of high profile events such as Sean Connery, Margaret Atwood, Alex Salmond and Jonathan Dimbleby were not unexpected, but Book Festival staff are delighted that some of the lesser known authors such as Bernardo Atxaga from the Basque region of Spain, and home grown talent such as Andrew Crumey and Andrew Greig are also proving popular.

Sean Connery & Murray Grigor's launch of *Being A Scot* on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August was the first – and fastest ever – event to sell out, with all tickets snapped up within an hour of going on sale. The previous fastest selling event was Muriel Spark's appearance in 2004 which sold out in two hours.

Catherine Lockerbie, Director of the Book Festival said "The Book Festival offers something for everyone, whether you are an aspiring novelist, interested in literature, poetry or politics. We are delighted by the phenomenal response particularly as interest appears to be right across the programme. It is my passion to make this the most international, illuminating, engaging, argumentative and inspiring celebration of words and ideas anywhere in the world. Our audience is embracing this diversity."

The Book Festival website received 300,000 hits in the first hour of ticket sales, and internet sales over the first weekend have increased by 63% on last year. While a number of events are sold out, with over 750 events in the programme, there is still plenty to see and do. In the adult programme, tickets for Catherine O'Flynn, winner of the Costa First Novel award, Andrew O'Hagan, Rick Wakeman, The Ukraine's Andrey Kurkov and Irvine Welsh are all still available while the RBS Children's Programme has a wide range of events and workshops suitable for all ages from toddler to teenager.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival will run from 9 to 25 August 2008 in the beautiful setting of Charlotte Square Gardens in the historic heart of the world's first UNESCO City of Literature. Tickets can be booked on-line on [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk), on the phone on 0845 373 5888 or via the Box Office in Waterstones, George Street (Monday to Saturday, 10.00am to 5.00pm).

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