

BIG BURNS SUPPER

Press release for immediate use – 17th January 2019

Images available [here](#)

World's largest contemporary Burns celebration proudly champions LGBTQ artists



Queer Haggis as part of Big Burns Supper 2019

- **Big Burns Supper festival champions LGBTQ artists and performance marking the Bard's 260th birthday**
- **Top international and UK based queer artists perform alongside local Dumfries talent welcoming audiences from near and far**
- **Programme highlights include; homegrown raucous cabaret *Queer Haggis*, *Jock Tamson's Bairns* an immersive theatrical experience exploring themes around growing up gay in Scotland and LGBTQ activist and folk singer Grace Petrie**



2019 is the 260th birthday of Scotland's National Bard, Robert Burns and to mark the occasion Big Burns Supper festival is throwing out a warm invitation to audiences old and new from near and far to join them alongside a host of top Scottish and international artists for the biggest contemporary celebration of Scotland's national poet in the town he called home, Dumfries.

Based in Dumfries the idyllic rural town in the Scottish Borders, Big Burns Supper festival is not only bringing Burns to a new audience through creative, eclectic arts led programming, it is championing LGBTQ artists and striving to provide a safe and inclusive space for artists and audiences.

Big Burns Supper (24th Jan-3rd Feb) festival is a bit of a gem in Scotland's festival scene but one which is very much earning its cultural cred. The festival is heading into its 8th year, and is very much a modern reflection of Burns, focusing not on his work or the man himself but instead programmed around the collective community spirit, friendship and the importance of coming together integral to a Burn's Supper. The festival is a cultural celebration, which over 11 days champions the value of coming together in the dark winter nights to celebrate music, theatre, comedy and cabaret hosting top talent such as **KT Tunstall** and **Frank Turner**, who will be performing a very special solo gig with support from protest singer, LGBTQ+ activist, folk singer, socialist and social commentator, **Grace Petrie** who is making her Scottish debut.

The 2019 festival features a **significant LGBTQ focus** which runs throughout the programme and indeed, is embedded in the ethos of the festival itself – bringing people together and providing a warm, creative and inclusive welcome to everyone through arts and culture. Since the festival began nearly eight years ago it has been programmed to be as open and inclusive as possible, providing a safe space for everyone and welcoming queer artists and audiences from across the UK.

The programme showcases a blistering range of LGBTQ talent and shows relevant to a queer audience. The best example perhaps being the homegrown hit that is, **Queer Haggis (26th Jan)** the one-off cabaret show that features some of the top queer acts in the UK including **Dave the Bear**, **Lilly Snatchdragon** and host **Felix Le Freak** who perform alongside local talent for a good, clean (ish) night of queer cabaret! A smash hit with audiences and heading into its fourth and most outrageous edition in 2019 having headlined the Dumfries & Galloway Pride last year, the first to have taken part in the region for ten years. Queer Haggis is now a much-loved tradition, the most raucous party of the year which celebrates the individuals and audiences who help to make our communities shine a little brighter.

Other programme highlights include; **The Decriminalisation Monologues (25th Jan)**, three monologues exploring the recent decriminalisation of homosexuality in Ireland, **Jock Tamson's Bairns (31st Jan)** Part drag, part cabaret, and part theatre. Jock Tamson's Bairns is an immersive theatrical experience exploring themes around growing up gay in Scotland and the bystander effect with an immersive show where the audience is transported to an afterhours gay bar and invited to speak their mind. **Smut Slam! (31st Jan)** - Sexy Storytelling with Cameryn Moore: The community dirty-storytelling show—packed with stories of real life, real lust, real sex, **Hans Like a German (27th Jan)** international superstar Hans, the boy wonder of Berlin, serves up an all-singing, all-tap dancing,



accordion-pumping, glittering blitzkrieg of cabaret backed by his three-piece band and ***Laura Monmoth: LGBTQZX (25th Jan)***, a full hour-long comedy show from Birmingham Comedy Festival Breaking Talent Award winner and ***The Adventures of a Bearded Lady (2nd Feb)***, the peculiar tale of the bearded lady who ran away from the circus!

With Queer Haggis and with many additional aspects of the festival, the producers work closely with LGBTQ organisations and communities on both sides of the border to ensure the events programmed best represent, engage and inspire an LGBTQ audience and are as accessible possible.

Executive Producer, Graham Main said: “Burns Night is a perfect opportunity to encourage all members of our community to come together. We make a bigger deal about this at Big Burns Supper because we live in a much more rural and isolated part of Scotland, so our open invitation is even more important to encourage those that might not have the same confidence as others in our community to join us. Big Burns Supper continues to strive to create a safe and welcoming space for everyone and we as a festival and community are hugely proud of that.”

Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development Ben

Macpherson said: “Burns Night is one of Scotland’s most well-known and best loved national days, celebrated by millions around the world. This is a chance for us to come together every year, celebrate Burns’ poetry and affirm some of our country’s most important values – fairness, equality and internationalism.

“I am pleased to see the Big Burns Supper festival mark the Bard’s 260th birthday by championing LGBTQ artists and rights. This year’s theme focuses not solely on the Bard’s legacy, but also on a collective spirit of inclusion, equality and community, all so important to a modern Burns supper.”

2019 marks the eighth edition of the festival which was created by festival organisers in 2012 as a coming together of people and culture, centred around the core meaning of a Burns Night celebration, togetherness. The festival has enjoyed steady growth in audiences year on year through passionate local support and innovative programming, bringing top UK and international talent to Dumfries, performing alongside the finest local artists and providing a vital platform for emerging Scottish artists. Big Burns Supper is the local festival that opens its heart to the world.

The 2019 Big Burns Festival runs from 24th January – 3rd February. Tickets are available to book via www.bigburnssupper.com or by calling 01381 271 820.

Big Burns Supper Festival is a non-profit event, produced by local charity Elektronika and has received support through **Scotland’s Winter Festivals**.



Burns Night

www.bigburnssupper.com

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Ends

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Listing Highlights can be accessed [here](#)

Images can be accessed [here](#)

Notes to Editors

About Big Burns Supper

Big Burns Supper is Scotland's landmark Burns Night event which takes place in Dumfries and features a heady mixture of cabaret, comedy, music and entertainment in over 30 different venues as the town goes bonkers for nine days of winter magic. If you are going to check out Dumfries – this is definitely the time to do it, with events including Burns Night Live – which is streamed live to the world. The festival is also the home of Le Haggis, Scotland's finest five-star cabaret experience.

www.bigburnssupper.com

Elektronika

Elektronika (formally Electric Theatre Workshop) is a cultural producer which creates platforms for audience engagement through a diverse range of community arts based programmes, including Big Burns Supper Festival, Carlisle Fringe Festival, Creative Schools, Dumfries Community Choir, Dumfries Youth Theatre and our award winning participatory programmes that have helped to transform the communities we serve. We believe everyone has the right to experience culture.

www.elektronika.org.uk

Scottish Winter Festivals



SWF aims to mobilise the people of Scotland and those with an affinity to Scotland to join in the St Andrew's Day, Hogmanay and Burns celebrations, boosting our key tourism and events sectors and the wider economy, enhancing community engagement and raising Scotland's international profile.

Scotland's Winter Festivals is a Scottish Government initiative, delivered in collaboration with VisitScotland, BEMIS Scotland, the Fair Saturday Foundation, the English-Speaking Union Scotland and a range of other partners.

Scotland's Winter Festivals will welcome hundreds of thousands of people to funded events celebrating St Andrew's Day, Hogmanay and Burns right across Scotland; significantly boosting the economy and engaging our diverse communities during the winter months whilst showcasing our unique world class tourism assets to a global audience.

Burns Night

1. Robert Burns is Scotland's national poet and his birthday is marked every year on January 25th with celebrations of his life and his cultural legacy at home and around the world.
2. After his death at the age of just 37, Burns' works became internationally renowned and the sentiments of many of his poems and songs continue to resonate to this day with people from all corners of the world singing 'Auld Lang Syne' to bring in the New Year.
3. There are many ways to get involved and celebrate the life and works of Robert Burns. For example, host a Burns Supper. A Burns Supper is an inspiring event to be part of. The haggis is traditionally piped in to dinner and then specifically addressed in poetry. Further poems including 'A Toast to the Lassies' are exchanged by dinner guests with accompanying drams of whisky, however there are many modern variations and twists on these traditions that befits Scotland, a country that champions fairness, equality and inclusivity.
4. In addition, the national and community events programme celebrating Burns Night offers something for everyone with events taking place right across the country. Further information is available at scotland.org/burns.
5. Learn more about Robert Burns himself and how to hold your own modern Burns Supper as well as the meaning behind some of his most famous words and phrases by visiting scotland.org/burns.