

Spotlight on Theatre and Dance from Northern Ireland Information Pack 2025

Spotlight on Theatre and Dance from Northern Ireland champions Northern Irish artists at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, providing mentoring, platforming and networking opportunities (both individually and as a group), to enable artists to pursue potential collaborations and onward touring and collaborations nationally and internationally.

The programme is led by Theatre and Dance NI (TDNI) with support from Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI), British Council Northern Ireland, and Belfast International Arts Festival.

Background

- Since 2019, the Spotlight programme has provided a platform for Northern Irish artists independently producing and performing at the Edinburgh Fringe. The programme has supported artists to develop their international exposure and has provided opportunities for further artistic growth and professional development.
- The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is one of the largest and arguably most important global arts marketplaces with industry members/programmers attending from around the world through well-established networks. These networks have consistently expressed interest to engage more with Northern Irish artists and their work. With our extensive international partnerships and networks, we facilitate the development of deep and meaningful connections for NI artists. These have resulted in new opportunities including onward touring nationally and internationally.
- The Spotlight programme is designed to maximise these opportunities.

Support under the programme includes:

- Includes the opportunity to pitch your work at *Spotlight on Theatre and Dance from Northern Ireland* on Tuesday 19th August 2025 at Dance Base, Edinburgh—a curated showcase featuring short artist pitches and face-to-face networking with international industry delegates. Please note that for the first time, the 2025 event will be curated, with artists selected by an independent panel.
- Mentoring and guidance from industry professionals, including personalised meetings before the Fringe to identify and understand individual needs and goals. This guidance will help with navigation and making the most out of the Fringe festival before, during and beyond.
- Tailored industry event schedules and networking opportunities with national and international delegates.
- Recommendations for attending EFFE (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society) industry sessions aimed at artists navigating the Fringe; skills building/development workshops; and industry-artist (networking) sessions including free access to workspaces, resources, and mental health support.

- Networking facilitation with EFFS teams, national and international groups, Arts Council of NI, British Council UK/NI, Culture Ireland, and Dance Base to connect NI Spotlight artists with other UK nations and international showcases. We will help introduce you to relevant personnel who can support future touring, foster national and transnational exchange and connections.
- Marketing and communications, including a digital brochure with QR code integration, media coverage across various channels and promotional video in collaboration with Arts Council of NI. [See our 2023 edition here.](#)
- Invitation to a special British Council Event on Monday 18th August 2025 in Edinburgh.
- Post-Edinburgh evaluation session for reporting and advocacy purposes.
- A small financial contribution towards your Fringe expenses.

What is the Spotlight Event?

- The Spotlight event supports the future international presentation of work by Northern Irish artists and companies focused on forging deep, sustainable relationships between artists in NI, national and international partners.
- Following your presentation about you/your company and your work featured at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, you will have the chance to discuss your tour-ready work directly to accredited industry delegates, national/international touring networks, producers, programmers, and funders in attendance over lunch.
- The event is listed on the EFFS's Fringe Connect platform attracting the attention of accredited industry professionals. In 2024, it attracted over 100 delegates from across the globe.

Successes of past Spotlight artists include:

- "In The Name of the Son" (GBL Productions) toured to Auckland National Arts Festival 2024 following their Spotlight profile in 2022.
- "Two Fingers Up" (Skelpie Limmer) won the Melbourne Fringe Tour Ready award, and toured to Melbourne and Sydney Fringe Festivals (2023) and Irish Cultural Centre (2023).
- "Scaredy Fat" (Skelpie Limmer) toured to the London Pleasance, Grand Opera House, The MAC, Outburst Arts Festival and Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival.
- "Lie Low" (Prime Cut) toured to the Royal Court Theatre, London.
- "Whisk(e)y Wars" had sold-out runs at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast, Féile an Phobail, Eastside Arts Festival and Bozar Brussels.
- C21 Theatre company's "Expecting", toured internationally to The Keegan Theatre, Washington and to Teatro Mayor in Bogotá, Colombia. (Included delivery of community engagement programmes, workshops and partnerships with local D/deaf organisations.)

- Fellowship Artist (2023) Orla Graham took their work with Kirby Thompson “Float” to the Fringe in 2024 which then went on to make its international debut at the Flagey Arts Centre, Brussels.

Eligibility Criteria

Applications must meet the following criteria:

- Be presenting the proposed work at the **Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2025**, with the work being tour-ready (nationally and/or internationally).
- Provide **evidence of positive independent critical recognition**.
- Submit **high-quality video documentation and photography** of the work.
- Be a current member of Theatre and Dance NI. **[Sign up here](#)**
- Currently based and working in Northern Ireland.
- Be present to deliver an 8-minute presentation and engage directly with delegates at the Spotlight event on **Tuesday 19th August 2025** at Dance Base, Edinburgh.
- Attend the photocall and artist information session in Belfast (venue TBC) on **Wednesday 2nd July 2025**.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed based on the following:

- Fulfilment of the above eligibility criteria.
- Touring potential of the production (in terms of performance, production values, and content).
- The artist’s or company’s capacity to engage with touring opportunities that may arise from participation.
- Demonstrated awareness of current programming trends across national and international festivals and venues.

Successful applicants must be available for preparatory activities and be present to engage directly with international presenters at the **Spotlight event on Tuesday 19th August**. The application process will be managed by Theatre and Dance NI, with selections made by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in collaboration with independent panellists.

To apply, please visit www.theatreanddancenir.org.