



PITLOCHRY
FESTIVAL
THEATRE

WINTER WORDS

FESTIVAL 2025
21-23 FEBRUARY

WITH
ALAN CUMMING
LIZ LOCHHEAD
VAL MCDERMID
ANDREW O'HAGAN
DOUGLAS STUART
KIRSTY WARK
AND MANY MORE

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HELLO EVERYBODY

I love working in the theatre and I also love writing. But being passionate about writing also means that I hate it. As Ernest Hemingway said, "There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed"! Any writer will tell you there is no more bleak a vision than the blinding whiteness of an empty page or computer screen, yet nothing more exciting and life-affirming than when the muse descends and you're on a writing roll.



That's why I'm so excited about this year's Winter Words Festival and the chance to talk with so many great scribes about their work, their practice and how they're feeling about the world we find ourselves in today.

As Artistic Director of Pitlochry Festival Theatre, my mission is to invite great artistes to come and collaborate with the very best of Scotland's rich theatrical legacy. And in this Winter Words Festival I've invited an array of Scottish literary titans you know and love to stand alongside some new and diverse writers who I hope you will take the time to discover and champion.

Most of all, I hope you have fun. We've all been through a lot recently, and this Festival is a chance for us to gather together in this beautiful theatre and share our passion for words and our zest for life.

ALAN CUMMING
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PHOTO: FREDERIC ARANDA

MEMBERS EVENT



BREAKFAST WITH
ALAN CUMMING

Join us for a breakfast buffet in the River Room. This Members event gives you exclusive access to our incoming Artistic Director, and celebrates the difference that your support makes to our charity.

PHOTO: FREDERIC ARANDA

RIVER ROOM 9.30-10.30AM

Q&A

Pitlochry Festival Theatre's Executive Director, Kris Bryce, chairs questions for our new Artistic Director, Alan Cumming.



STUDIO 10.30-11.30AM

FIERCE SALVAGE:
CONTEMPORARY SCOTTISH PUBLISHING

WITH 404 INK AND TITILAYO FARUKUOYE,
CHAIRIED BY HEATHER PARRY

Join the co-founders of the award-winning independent publisher 404 Ink, Heather McDaid and Laura Jones-Rivera, as they discuss running the British Book Awards' reigning Small Press of the Year in Scotland. They will be joined by Edwin Morgan Prize-winning author Titilayo Farukuoye and chaired by Polari Prize-listed author Heather Parry, both contributors to 404 Ink's new Queer Words Anthology *Fierce Salvage* and 404 'inking' authors, to discuss the contemporary book world, from both the writer and publisher perspectives.



STUDIO 12-1PM

LITERARY LUNCH WITH

CARINA CONTINI

THE CONTINI COOKBOOK

Italian - Scot restaurateur **Carina Contini**, shares her love of good food and some of her recipes.


Carina Contini has a passion for fresh, artisan ingredients and authentic Italian cooking. She is a mainstay of the Scottish hospitality industry running three restaurants in Edinburgh while also acting as food ambassador, food broadcaster and cookbook writer.

Join Carina as she talks about 'Love happy food', her life, cooking and career highlights whilst enjoying two dishes from her cookbook, *The Contini Cookbook*.



RIVER ROOM 1.15-2.45PM

FRI 21 FEBRUARY



A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

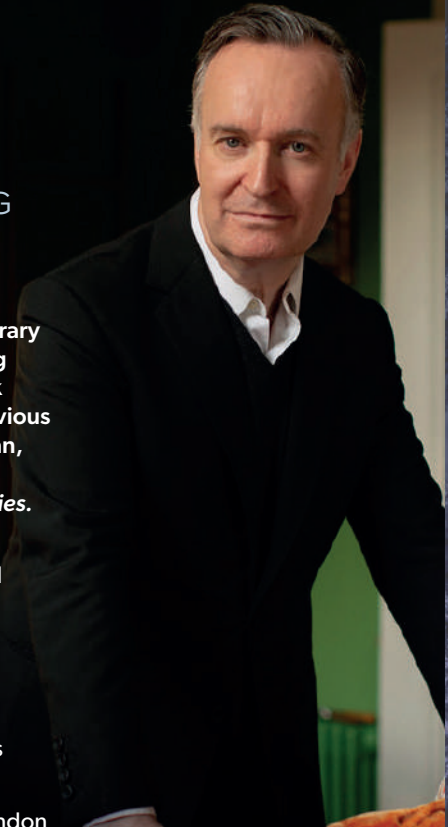
A PLAY ADAPTED FROM THE WRITINGS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF BY FIREBRAND THEATRE

Following the recent sold-out success of its play about the 'Scottish Virginia Woolf' Nan Shepherd, award-winning Firebrand Theatre Company's engaging and inventive new one-woman show, *A Room of One's Own*, is performed in the round by Ellie Zeegen and directed by Richard Baron.

Employing a host of historical characters from Jane Austen to Shakespeare's sister, the play showcases why the real Virginia Woolf's brilliant, funny and richly entertaining essay about freedom and identity, written almost a hundred years ago, has become one of the most powerful and significant feminist manifestos of this time, and any time.

STUDIO 3-4PM

FRI 21 FEBRUARY



ANDREW O'HAGAN

IN CONVERSATION WITH ALAN CUMMING

The multi-award-winning literary legend discusses his gripping new state-of-the-nation book *Caledonian Road* and his previous novels including *The Guardian*, *Sunday Times* and *Financial Times* Book of the Year *Mayflies*.

Born in Glasgow, Andrew O'Hagan has been nominated for the Booker Prize three times, was voted one of Granta's Best of Young British Novelists in 2003, and won the E. M. Forster Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

He is Editor-at-Large of the London Review of Books and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. His second novel, *Caledonian Road* was nominated for the Orwell Prize, a Saltire Award, and the Blackwell's Book of the Year 2024.

PHOTO: JON TONKS

STUDIO 7-8.30PM

MICHAEL PEDERSEN

EDINBURGH MAKAR

IN CONVERSATION WITH ALAN CUMMING

Edinburgh's new Poet Laureate with a world-exclusive reading from his new novel, *Muckle Flugga*.

Prize-winning Scottish poet and author, Michael Pedersen is the Writer in Residence at The University of Edinburgh. His prose debut, *Boy Friends*, was published by Faber & Faber in 2022 to rave reviews and was a Sunday Times Critics Choice.



PHOTO: SHAUN MURAWSKI

STUDIO 4.30-5.30PM



SAT 22 FEBRUARY



FINLAY WILSON

YOGA SESSION WITH THE KILTED YOGI

Join Finlay Wilson, bestselling author of *Kilted Yoga* and *Wild Kilted Yoga* for a morning yoga session.

Renowned for his iconic Kilted Yoga sessions in the Scottish wilderness and tailoring yoga practices for real people. With personal triumphs over injury, back problems, and mobility constraints, he leverages his expertise in anatomy and sports therapy to create transformative class experiences.

Finlay passionately bridges the gap connecting individuals to this ancient practice and reaching those who may never have considered yoga for themselves.

For mixed abilities. Bring your mat and join the clan.

RIVER ROOM 10-11AM

SAT 22 FEBRUARY

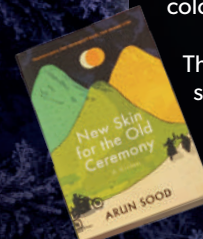
ARUN SOOD

WINNER OF THE KAVYA PRIZE FOR SCOTTISH WRITERS OF COLOUR

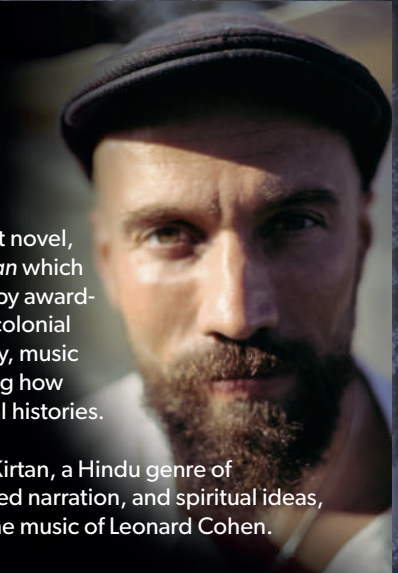
CHAired BY AMINA SHAH

Arun Sood joins us to discuss his debut novel, *New Skin for the Old Ceremony: A Kirtan* which won the 2024 Kavva Prize. Published by award-winning publisher 404 Ink, it is a postcolonial road novel touching on youth, memory, music and the ghosts of friendship, illustrating how colonial legacies can pervade personal histories.

The form of the novel alludes to the Kirtan, a Hindu genre of storytelling focusing on music, shared narration, and spiritual ideas, but here structured in relation to the music of Leonard Cohen.



STUDIO 10.30-11.30AM



CHRIS CARSE WILSON

A RUNNING AND READING EVENT

Join us for a gentle morning 5K run and reading with Chris Carse Wilson, author of *Fray*, a debut novel set in the Scottish Highlands about a father trying to rescue his lost wife and a dark, looming voice who threatens to destroy everything...

Runners of all ages and abilities welcome.

PHOTO: ROSS FRASER MCLEAN



MEET IN FOYER 11AM -12PM FREE

JAMES JAUNCEY

IN CONVERSATION WITH FIRST MINISTER JOHN SWINNEY

Best known as the co-founder of the Scottish Labour Party and founding the Scottish National Party, Don Roberto (RB Cunninghame Graham, 1852-1936), led an extraordinary life.

In his first biography, *Don Roberto*, Perthshire-based author James Jauncey explores the life of his great-great-uncle, the prolific writer, visionary, horseman, adventurer and humanitarian.



STUDIO 12-1PM

SAT 22 FEBRUARY

LITERARY LUNCH WITH

SARAH RANKIN

KITH: SCOTTISH SEASONAL FOOD FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

MasterChef finalist and self-confessed all-around glutton, Sarah Rankin, cooks you a Scottish seasonal lunch whilst speaking about her career.

Sarah is a former MasterChef finalist and food writer who has just produced her first cookbook. *Kith* celebrates Scottish flavours, seasonality, local producers and the joy of cooking for those you love.

A native Highlander, Sarah is the host at the Golden Spurtle World Porridge Championships, held every October in the village of Carrbridge in the Cairngorms National Park, which attracts competitors from across the globe doing incredible things with our national grain.

You'll find her food stories in various print and digital publications. You can also hear her regular contributions on BBC Radio Scotland and book festivals around the country. Her monthly Supper Clubs and Cookery Classes are sellout events which focus on wonderful ingredients, cooked simply and enjoyed in good company.



RIVER ROOM 1.15-2.45PM

SAT 22 FEBRUARY

LIZ LOCHHEAD

IN CONVERSATION WITH ANDREW O'HAGAN

Poet and playwright Liz Lochhead's 50-year writing career began with her poetry collection *Memo for Spring*, and includes her time as Scotland's first female Makar and her latest collection, *A Handset*. Her original plays and adaptations dramatically reflect the shifting times including *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off*, *Good Things*, *Perfect Days*, *Educating Agnes* and critically acclaimed Euripides' *Medea*.

Joining her on stage is her old friend, Andrew O'Hagan. Spend an afternoon with one of Scotland's greatest poets, in conversation with one of Scotland's most accomplished novelists.



STUDIO 3-4PM

THE RACE TO 1984

A REHEARSED PLAY READING
BY RICHARD BARON

A 'script in hand' reading about George Orwell, the women in his life, and the battle to complete his masterpiece in a Scottish hospital.

With 2025 marking the 75th anniversary of author George Orwell's death, this is a timely reading of a moving and highly-entertaining new play by writer and director Richard Baron, whose previous Pitlochry Festival Theatre productions include *Nan Shepherd: Naked and Unashamed* and *Chicago*.

There will be a post-performance Q&A with the writer and cast.



PHOTO: FRASER BAND

STUDIO 4.30-5.30PM

SAT 22 FEBRUARY

SUN 23 FEBRUARY

KIRSTY WARK

IN CONVERSATION WITH
ALAN CUMMING

The Queen of Newsnight and Scottish novelist is now the one who answers the questions put to her by old friend Alan Cumming.

Kirsty Wark has built a reputation as one of the UK's most formidable and versatile television journalists. She is best known as an anchor on the BBC's flagship News and Current Affairs show *Newsnight*.

In addition to political reporting, Kirsty presents many arts and cultural programmes; career highlights have included interviews with Madonna, Nobel Prize-winning playwright Harold Pinter, Damien Hirst and George Clooney, to name just a few.

She has fronted many documentaries for BBC Television including the critically acclaimed *Blurred Lines: The New Battle of the Sexes* and more recently *The Insiders' Guide to the Menopause* which was nominated for a BAFTA.

Away from the studio lights, food is her passion. She reached the final in *Celebrity MasterChef* in 2011 and was crowned top celebrity baker on *The Great British Bake Off* for Comic Relief.

Kirsty has written two novels – *The Legacy of Elizabeth Pringle* and *The House by the Loch* – both published by Two Roads. She is currently writing her third novel.

PHOTO: ROBERT PERRY © JOHNSON PRESS

STUDIO 7-8.30PM

FINLAY WILSON

YOGA SESSION WITH
THE KILTED YOGI

SEE P8 FOR INFORMATION



10-11AM



CHRIS CARSE WILSON

A RUNNING AND READING EVENT

SEE P8 FOR INFORMATION

PHOTO: FRAME FOCUS CAPTURE PHOTOGRAPHY

11AM-12PM



PETER MACQUEEN

THE HIGHLAND HUTTER

Peter MacQueen talks about sustainable living off the grid and his book, *The Art of Hutting*.

Also known as 'The Highland Hutter', join Peter MacQueen as he enlightens us about all things hutting. From foraging, fire making and solar panels, to building a cabin, slowing down and enjoying the little things in life.

Born and raised in Oban, Peter MacQueen has always had a passion for living off-grid, resulting in presenting his BBC Alba TV show, *Garradh Phadruig*, from his own hut on the beautiful Argyllshire coast.



STUDIO 10.30-11.30AM

JO SHARP

GEOGRAPHER ROYAL

What is the Geographer Royal and what does she do? Jo Sharp reveals all and takes us on a worldwide tour of her adventures.

Only the sixth person to hold the title of Geographer Royal for Scotland, Jo Sharp has led a distinguished career as a geographer and professor authoring and editing over 120 works.

Professor Sharp will talk about the fascinating history of the role of promoting geography in Scotland, championing Scottish geography internationally and better establishing 'geographical thinking' within public life as well as the work she has been doing and how she sees a modern Geographer Royal evolving in the future.



STUDIO 12-1PM

LITERARY LUNCH WITH

GARETH COLE

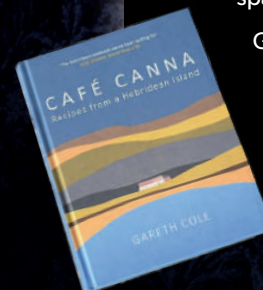
CAFÉ CANNA: RECIPES
FROM A HEBRIDEAN ISLAND

Listen to Gareth Cole as you enjoy one of his recipes originating from his café on the Hebridean island of Canna.

Gareth Cole runs Café Canna - one of the UK's most remote restaurants, sitting on the bay of the beautiful Isle of Canna, an island in the Hebrides that is only two miles across and home to just 18 residents. Despite this, it's one of Condé Nast Traveller's top beach shack restaurants and one of The Herald's best places to eat al fresco.

By necessity, and also out of love, Cole and his team make the most of local ingredients from the island and its shores. The café is justly famous for its seafood, landed from the sparkling Hebridean waters. Foraged seaweed is also a mainstay of the menu. Meat comes from the fields next door, vegetables from the garden plot, fruit from the orchard, fresh bread is baked daily and beer brewed on the premises. The range of starters, main courses, puddings, accompaniments and baking is rich and varied, from dulse seaweed croquettes, crab bisque, full crust Canna beef, Skye black ale and blue murder pie to wild gorse crème brûlée, nettle and spinach spanakopita and Singapore chilli Canna crab.

Gareth's book is a magnificent celebration of Café Canna and the close-knit island which is its lifeblood. Over 70 recipes showcase the enormous range of dishes produced locally, all of which can be replicated by enthusiasts at home.



RIVER ROOM 1.15-2.45PM

SUN 23 FEBRUARY



GHILLIE BAŞAN

FOOD, WHISKY, LIFE

Award-winning writer, broadcaster and Scotland's Food Tourism Ambassador, Ghillie Başan ventures out from her existence as a 'hospitable hermit' to delight us with tales of her life in the Cairngorms creating nature, well-being and food experiences that money cannot buy.

Note: Bring your nose along for a wee dram tasting guided by Ghillie.



STUDIO 3-4PM

VAL MCDERMID

IN CONVERSATION WITH ALAN CUMMING

From her groundbreaking Lindsay Gordon series to the beloved Tony Hill and Carol Jordan books, McDermid has consistently pushed the boundaries of crime fiction.

The Quine of Crime and Tartan Noir doyenne talks to Alan Cumming about her incredible and prolific career along with her most recent books, *Past Lying* and *Queen Macbeth*.

PHOTO: CHARLOTTE GRAHAM



STUDIO 4.30-5.30PM

SUN 23 FEBRUARY

DOUGLAS STUART

IN CONVERSATION WITH ALAN CUMMING

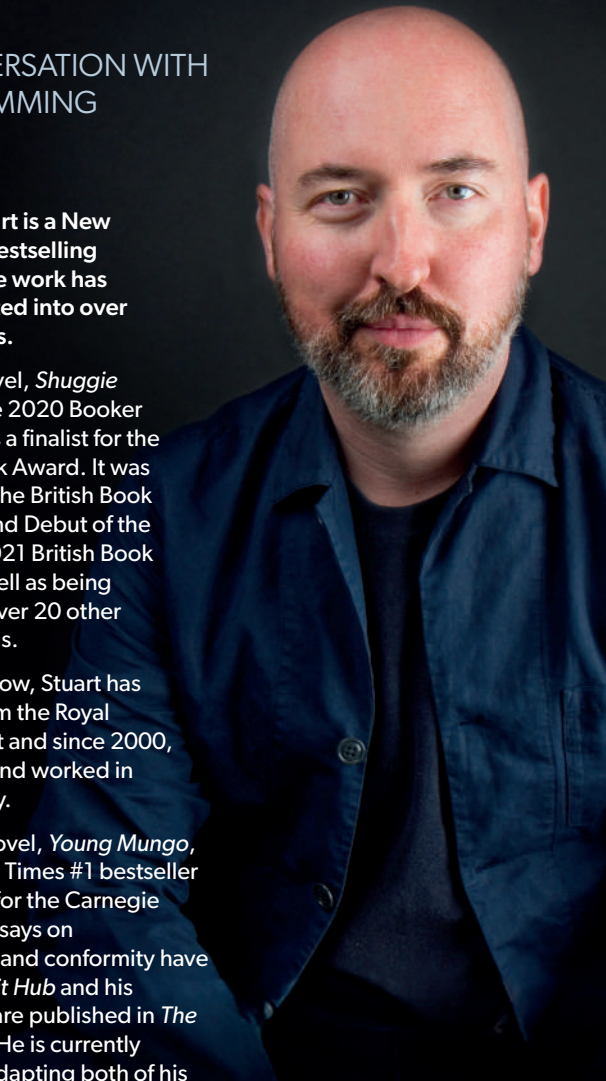
Douglas Stuart is a New York Times bestselling author whose work has been translated into over 40 languages.

His debut novel, *Shuggie Bain*, won the 2020 Booker Prize and was a finalist for the National Book Award. It was named both the British Book of the Year, and Debut of the Year at the 2021 British Book Awards, as well as being a finalist for over 20 other literary awards.

Born in Glasgow, Stuart has a Masters from the Royal College of Art and since 2000, he has lived and worked in New York City.

His second novel, *Young Mungo*, was a Sunday Times #1 bestseller and a finalist for the Carnegie Medal. His essays on gender, class and conformity have featured on *Lit Hub* and his short stories are published in *The New Yorker*. He is currently working on adapting both of his novels for A24 pictures.

PHOTO: MARTIN PICKERSGILL



STUDIO 7-8.30PM

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WINTER WORDS FESTIVAL 2025

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