



# WHY HAVE A QUEER FRINGE?



With no Edinburgh Festival Fringe for the first time in 75 years, the vast majority of events in 2020 being cancelled and the ongoing devastating impact of venue closures across Scotland, LGBTQ+ artists are experiencing an unprecedented level of financial and personal strain. This is likely to be made worse by the compounding pre-existing health inequalities and issues affecting our community.

As LGBT Health continues to explore our digital delivery, we wanted to create an opportunity to spotlight some of the talented artists in our community during August, to help connect them with an audience and initiate further support.

**“We started in 2018 with Somewhere at the Fringe, because just 5% of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is LGBTQ”**

Kathryn Pierce, Founder of Somewhere

Meanwhile, Community Interest Company **Somewhere** and their flagship project [Somewhere at The Fringe](#) are currently undertaking a full review of LGBTQ+ representation at the Edinburgh Fringe and the structural / systemic barriers to inclusion that LGBTQ+ people face. SATF reveals that just 5% of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is LGBTQ and so even before Covid-19, LGBTQ+ artists were under-supported and under-represented.



Given that Somewhere and LGBT Health both feel passionately about improving the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people and increasing visibility and representation of LGBTQ+ artists, it seemed a perfect fit to bring our organisations together to host the very first online Queer Fringe. The [full event programme is available to view here](#).

# WHY LGBTQ+ ART IS IMPORTANT



We asked the community via social media channels, to respond to an anonymous poll, ahead of the event. There were 14 respondents and this word cloud was shared at the beginning of our event, to encourage, support and inspire the artists.



## CAPTURING THE MOMENT

Nearly 100 people joined us on Zoom on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. **16 paid feature artists participated** and 14 delivered 10-15-minute sets from their homes across a 3-hour programme. 2 artists' work was shared during the comfort breaks, including a presentation of paintings and a short video. All of the artists are based in Scotland.

The **Zoom Chat function** played a crucial role in providing an open forum for social interaction, real-time feedback, technical support and sharing crowdfunding and promotional information as artists performed. Feedback was compiled and shared with artists individually after the event.

# AUDIENCE REACTION HIGHLIGHTS

Zoom Group Chat

"You are amazing, feels like you're talking to each person"

"You are incredibly talented thank you so much for your time this afternoon"

"blunt, funny, poignant, I absolutely love this"

"I love some pure dead brilliant Glasgow queerness!!"

"A global summit of queer art"

"As someone on the asexual spectrum, this is amazing."

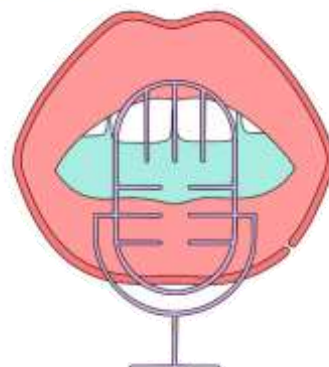
"Perfect symbolism for multifaith prayers, looking forward and back, the longing for home, messages of hope and faith."

"Thank you for sharing your story and your creativity. Beautiful. Words are not enough. Thank you so much."

"That painting with your other self really rang true with/spoke to me. Thank you so much for sharing your work"

To: Everyone

Type message here...



# ARTIST FEEDBACK

## James Stedman

“If the Fringe were on in person, I would have been delighted if that had been my line up of shows to see in a week, let alone a day and to have it in my own home was just beautiful. I only moved to Scotland a couple of months ago and to have landed right in the midst of this amazing, vibrant queer artist community is more than I could have dreamed of.”



## Elliott Simpson

“I’ve done a lot of these online zoom gigs, many being similarly LGBT themed events but yours has been the only one to actually supply BLS interpreters which I think is amazing and sets a very important example for any other night trying to do something similar. I felt that the event was very accommodating for everyone!”

## Gray Crosbie

“Congratulations to you all on putting together such a warm, positive and inclusive event. Friends and family who watched it said they really enjoyed it.”



## Carrie Marshall

“It’s very humbling to see that the songs connected with other people. That’s always been the goal of what I do, music is a huge thing in my life and live music is my equivalent of going to church – it’s where I go to confess my sins and have a big ugly cry...The programme was interesting, varied and representative of the entire rainbow family...”





## Merman Tom (Tom Harlow)

“Thank you so much to Jules, LGBT Health and Wellbeing, [Somewhere: LGBTQ culture and enterprise hub](#) for having me be part of your world this afternoon and the marvellous Kitty for interpreting my set. I had a mermazing time singing for you all.”



## Mousa AlNana

“This event and any other event like it is a great deal to any artist, especially us the queer artists. For me, I always work for other people and especially for queer people to know and feel that we are still fighting and will keep our stories going until we get all our rights in every inch of this planet. Such a platform would give me and other artists the chance to do so, otherwise, our stories will be folded in darkness.”

## Susannah Laing

“Yesterday was amazing. The artists PHENOMINAL. Really everyone so different, I loved it and thank you so, so, much!”



## Lou McLean



“For me, music is all about connection. I think we’ve done that today... I was really proud to be part of it”



**16 artists**

**3 BSL interpreters**

**96 attendees**

**30% attendees from  
Edinburgh**

**80% from Scotland**

# EVENT FEEDBACK

*"I loved it all. Every. single. moment. I won't forget this for a long while. I felt so welcome and connected. Such an honour to experience all the wonderful stories. Variety is truly the spice of life... and talk about creativity up the wazzoo, too!"*



*"I loved everything. It's my first LGBT+ event and I have enjoyed myself. I can relate to a lot of the artists."*

*"I loved the whole event, I came on to support my friend Susannah Laing and I was compelled to stay, just wonderful, all the performers were outstanding, it did not feel like 3 + hours. I would definitely attend another event like this and recommend it to others."*



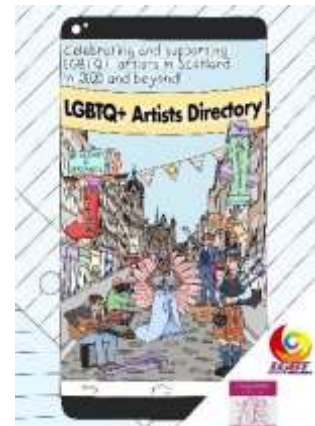
*"Of course, I greatly enjoyed all the talented individuals but I also loved the community atmosphere. We don't get that often, especially in current times. Thank you."*

*"It was fantastic. I liked everything. It is very important to feel that we are not alone in fighting for our happiness. Thank you very much. I saw everything! Can't wait the next time do be with all you all again"*



*"More music shows lives and poetry also. Maybe it would be great to see more foreigners culture. Tks!"*

*"Loved the variety of voices and the links to their bios and ways to support the artists. I find 3 hours a bit long for my brain on zoom, but I'm sure some people were okay with it. Well done on another wonderful event."*



## SUPPORT FOR ARTISTS IN FUTURE



"A huge thank you to LGBT Health and Wellbeing for the wonderful Queer Fringe event. We had a totally brilliant time and are looking forward to partnering up again soon.



All the wonderful LGBTQ+ artists who featured Queer Fringe will appear in the launch issue of our new [Somewhere For Us](#) magazine, launching in October 2020! 20% of membership fees will go straight into our new funding scheme supporting queer arts, culture and enterprise across Scotland. Visit [www.somewhereforus.org](http://www.somewhereforus.org) for more information."