



BATH FRINGE REPORT 2026

We sometimes fret about *What is the Fringe for?* - self-assessment is part of the job - and 2026 was good for finding answers. Two strong purposes stand out this year, and there have been memorable examples of both.

One, the Fringe is a platform to celebrate and showcase the best of what our city and its surrounding region have to offer at the emergent, grassroots and (frankly) bargain end of the arts scene. We were pleased to host shows from both the city's professional *Theatre-outside-the-Theatre* companies, **Kilter Theatre** and the perennial **Natural Theatre Company**.

**120 PERFORMANCES*
- PLUS 42 VISUAL ARTS
SHOWS & EVENTS,
TO MORE THAN 11,200
PEOPLE
OVER 17 DAYS**

* not including events planned but cancelled

- Our 'Studio Presents' series in The Bell Back Bar spotlighted 13 (lucky) bands from the region. We also supported independent promoters Gopherit Events & Onda de Amor. The brand-new Bristol Boogaloo Allstars were a musical highlight indoors at The Bell too.
- Sam Grief dancing with all-comers and passers-by in Brunel Square, a memorable experience for everyone who was there.
- We were especially pleased by two events at the lovely Kelston Roundhill Barn (and produced by them) which has become quite the special place for special music: the album launch gig for Ross Hughes' Fairfield Ethio-Jazz Project, which they have been actively encouraging, and the striking encounter between Bristol guitar & atmosphere controller Adrian Utley and free jazz legend Evan Parker.

"The open meeting for newbies was great and really encouraged me to give it a go. Ditto the practical advice and social media support once I'd decided to do an event."

- All quotes are taken from our annual Contributors' Survey.



2026 poster by Emily Hatherall

Bath Fringe Report 2026

Two other homegrown events and the people driving them deserve to be highlighted on their own. **Debbie Beale** embarked on the difficult task of coordinating some events for children and young people in three different venues, something the Fringe has always been keen on - to serve our future audiences - but has had trouble keeping in the black at an accessible enough ticket price. Not everything worked out, but we feel that these were strong foundations to build on. Bath Folk Festival's **Marick Baxter** fired up a number of community performers to join in a new Outdoor Event, **Beats Beyond Borders**, on the meadows at Batheaston, which also went off well and looks to have founded a tradition.

SOCIAL MEDIA

bathfringe.co.uk

April - May - June:

Unique visitors:

16K - 33K - 12.5K

Visits:

21K - 46K - 16.5K

Substantial Increase

FACEBOOK:

Followers: 5,463

Views: 100500

63% of these from non-followers

INSTAGRAM:

Views: 229.200

17.6x increase!

Reach: 16500

Followers: 5680

FULL REPORT AVAILABLE

"Very helpful as always and open to odd questions and requests!"



Sam Grief & friends in Brunel Square. Pic: Lucy Angulo



Brian Madigan at The Rondo. Pic: Luke Emmett

A parallel purpose of the Fringe is to bring national-level emerging and cult artists to Bath at Festival time.

- We did this in music with strong audiences for **Fionn Regan, Tim Bowness, Scott Matthews**, and more [thanks to Reuben at **Fair Endeavours**].
- We also made a good showing with national level Comedy & Spoken Word from **Ed Byrne, John Hegley, Frank Sanazi, Nigel Planer**.
- Among the younger performers, emerging Fringe Theatre groups played venues like Burdall's Yard & The Mission. **Uncaged Theatre, Dramatic Moose**, and **Blank Slate Ensemble** all shone, though none of the audiences reached the numbers we were getting before the Lockdowns; there have been changes in audience demographics, and - we think - in the willingness to trust an unknown company.
- We are very much looking forward to the arrival of **BLOC** [new independent energy at Burdall's Yard] and **The Billings** [Theatre Royal's Venue 4] as new venues, new marketing collaborations, and so - we hope - new audiences.



Evan Parker meets Adrian Utley. Pic: Lucy Angulo

Another strong indication of continuing relevance comes from artists successfully returning year on year. In the local showcasing department we have to mention [A Band Named] **Brian Madigan**'s ninth year (is it really?) of new shows, new surprises, and consistent audiences. From the wider world, Harp Guitar maestro **Jon Pickard** was back for a third year, South Korean classical pianist **Nurry Lee** for a second. Local writer / performer **Clare Reddaway** is also racking up her Fringe numbers in a variety of rôles. Local studio owner & producer **Vonj** not only pitched into 'Studio Presents' but also headlined two Fringe music events with his own band, one being the student-oriented **AppleFest**, now in their Year 3, whom we are pleased to welcome into the Fringe family to help them connect better with the city.

Finally, we also consider ourselves a reference point, custodian even, for the city's significant history of alternative underground & community arts. We were pleased to have been significantly involved in the multi-venue '**Medium is the Message**' exhibition of posters from Bath Community Printshop [1977-83] in collaboration with BathSpa University, Bath Record Office Archive, galleries Palette, 44AD & Slowly Downward, and George Bayntun.

We and The Bell also hosted the first showing in decades of the legendary Nasher's 2nd-most-notorious feature film '**The Edge**' [1983].

FRINGE ARTS BATH [FaB]

It was a difficult year for FaB as they had a core venue cancelled far into their annual process, and only got a viable alternative - next door to The Bell - very late. Still they report 3,500 visitors to 25 shows & 17 events in 15 venues



Fringe Arts Bath show. Pic: Wendy Matthews

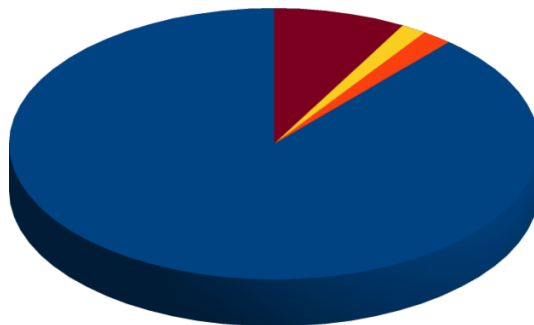
"My key aim was to make dance for older adults more visible and we definitely did that. The older people who sat at the front to lead the session loved it and we so happy to have been involved, despite saying they didn't think they would want to do it when I initially suggested it!"

"Incidentally, I had a group... from Midsomer Norton who said the Fringe brochures were everywhere and it was great because there's never anything to do in Midsomer Norton."

FINANCE

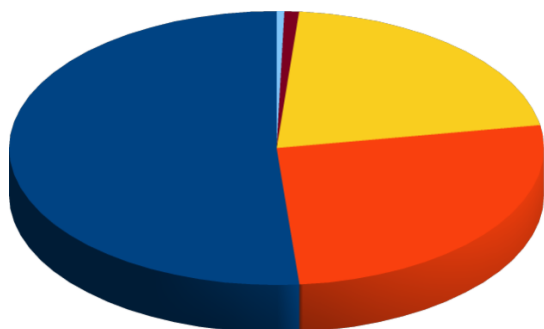
INCOME

■ Trusts	£34500
■ Donations	£725
■ Sponsorship	£600
■ Grants	£0
■ Listings & Adverts	£3150
	£38427



Not included in this summary:

- Services in Kind [Staff & Office] £14,000
- Volunteers [70+]
- Fringe Arts Bath



EXPENDITURE

■ Staff	£16500
■ Print & Marketing	£8455
■ Office	£6739
■ Artists' Fees	0
■ Event Expenses	£280
■ Other costs	£150
	£32,124

A surplus in 2026 will enable us to invest in new events in 2027, and replace our ailing office computers.

Key Bath venues, without whom...

Bath Comedy, The Bell, Burdall's Yard, The Fez, The Grapes, Jesters Comedy, Komedia, Bath Library, The Mission Theatre, The Old Barn (Kelston Roundhill), The Rondo
The Fringe would also like to commend our two star Bath Spa students, poster designer **Emily Hatherall** and Marketing Intern **Lucy Angulo** (who got a First!)

Bath Fringe is supported by:

The Roper Family Trust
The Cobalt Trust
The Joyce Fletcher Trust
The Bell Inn
Wessex Water
Bath Fringe is in partnership with
Bath Spa University

Bath Fringe Ltd.

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Poster Exhibition at Palette Gallery. Pic - Lucy Angulo

