

# Edinburgh International Book Festival celebrates 200 years of seminal Scottish novel with *Justified Sinner* 200

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www.edbookfest.co.uk



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Download new images from *Perambulations of Justified Sinner* [here](#)

- **Justified Sinner 200** celebrates 200 years since the publication of *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* by influential Scottish novelist James Hogg.
- A series of six innovative, multidisciplinary events will unfold throughout the festival; **Perambulations of a Justified Sinner**; **New Myths**; **Extraordinary Trash: A Theatre Essay**; **Justified Sinner Book Club**; **Cut Up the Justified Sinner**; and a special **Close Read**.
- The series features an original score by **Stuart Braithwaite** of Mogwai, a bespoke tour of the city narrated by **Louise Welsh**, a state-of-the-art app, and much more.
- **Justified Sinner 200** is supported by the Scottish Government's Festivals EXPO Fund, and by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown.

From an original score composed by Mogwai's **Stuart Braithwaite** and narration by iconic author Louise Welsh, to a pop-up choir and state of the art app that transforms the streets of Edinburgh into an interactive story, **Justified Sinner 200** is a groundbreaking series of multidisciplinary events taking place as part of the Edinburgh International Book Festival 2024.

More than a little meta, the series is the brainchild of new Festival Director Jenny Niven and celebrates 200 years since the publication of James Hogg's seminal work *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Comprising six events it explores this established and influential text through new lenses thanks to the very best from the worlds of AI, theatre, technology, music, philosophy and literature.

**Jenny Niven, Director at Edinburgh International Book Festival, said:**

*"The Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner is a Scottish classic, a brilliant and deeply unsettling gothic novel that reads as vividly as if it was just written. There are so many things to reinvestigate from a 21st century perspective. It's about moral absolutism, and the dangers of a fundamentalist ideology; it also describes these incredible tensions between a supposedly rational Enlightenment Scotland and one steeped in a supernatural past, and it's full of outrage and paranoia. As a piece of fiction it is hugely progressive, playful and experimental and so of course I wanted to work with writers and theatre makers whose own approach reflects exactly those things. I think we've really done this book justice on its 200th anniversary and it's a great example of one of the many ways I'd like to take the Book Festival forward, creating a new story of Scottish creativity while celebrating our incredible heritage."*

Part of the Festival's 2024 Future Tense themed programme, and made possible thanks to Scottish Government EXPO funding, and support from Sir Ewan and Lady Brown, **Justified Sinner 200** puts the theme of acting with impunity centre stage, and into sharp relief in relation to current global events and discourse. Comprising **Perambulations of a Justified Sinner** (from 12 August); **Extraordinary Trash: A Theatre Essay** (18 August); **Justified Sinner Book Club** (19 August); **New Myths** (20 August); **Cut Up the Justified Sinner** (21 August); and a special **Close Read** event (23 August) it is not to be missed this summer.

**Perambulations of a Justified Sinner** is an innovative digital piece that unfolds through the streets and closes of the capital's Old Town and into the palms of audiences' hands via their smartphone (for those who need it, these can be provided by the Festival). Featuring eight filmed scenes with a screenplay and directed by renowned playwright and director **Ben Harrison**, this immersive audio video journey is narrated by award winning author **Louise Welsh**. Bringing pivotal moments from the original novel alive in her very own words, Louise's dulcet tones will be accompanied by an original score composed by none other than **Stuart Braithwaite** of Mogwai. The walking app will be launched by a special event on 12 August during which audiences can witness the reenactment of the novel's famous tennis scene at the EFI, as well as contributions from Ben Harrison and narrator Louise Welsh.

**New Myths: The Public Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner** uses leading lights in the folk music and storytelling scene to reimagine the novel in contemporary times. When Gillian Tod leaves the cult she's grown up in, she finds that it's not so easy – because they own her digital image, and can use AI to make it say and do anything they want. Drawing on everything from Scottish folk history, modern feminist identity and Naomi Klein's *Doppelgänger*, this event features storyteller **Kirsty Logan**, folksinger **Kirsty Law** and harpist **Esther Swift** in an unexpected and bewitching performance.

Produced in association with the National Theatre of Scotland, **Extraordinary Trash: A Theatre Essay** is a funny and provocative meditation on adaptation, authenticity, and Scottishness. Playwright **Pamela Carter** and director **Stewart Laing** have returned to archival material from their 2013 theatre production of Hogg's novel, *Paul Bright's Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, in the hope of making history. Featuring actor and film director **Adura Onashile** as 'The Archivist', audiences can expect a suitably meta-interpretation that is part-lecture, part-documentary, part-theatre. Warning: May contain truths.

**Justified Sinner Book Club** does what it says on the tin, courtesy of a panel luminaries including Ian Rankin, Ever Dundas, and David Greig, chaired by Jenny Niven, who will unpack this historic text and explore why it still has relevance today. And **Cut Up the Justified Sinner**, hosted by queer disabled author Ever Dundas, will see this 200-year-old text rearranged to create something entirely new via interactive, experimental workshops. Audiences can also enjoy a specially-commissioned piece on the novel from writer Helen McClory in the August edition of *Gutter*, Scotland's leading literary journal.

And finally, an Edinburgh International Book Festival tradition, **Close Read** events delve deep into individual texts. For **Justified Sinner 200**, poet and novelist James Robertson will take this intriguing and unforgettable book apart live for audiences.

Future Tense is the first Edinburgh International Book Festival programme from Director Jenny Niven and will unfold for the first time at the Festival's new home at Edinburgh Futures Institute. The full programme can be found [here](#)