

**2019 was the year that Santa flew up the Royal Mile in his sleigh!!**

**Light Night this year was a Santa spectacular, wowing all the elves and Edinburghers on the Royal Mile as he sprinkled festive spirit and switched on the city's Christmas lights.**

**The beautiful Christmas Market enjoyed the busiest ever opening day with 30% more visitors.**



L-R: Santa in his sleigh above the Light Night crowd, Star Flyer, couple enjoying the Christmas Market, Christmas Market visitors on the opening weekend; credit all Ian Georgeson

More images available [here](#).

Video available [here](#) [from 8pm on the day]

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**On Sunday 17 November an estimated 12,000 people gathered in the Royal Mile, the heart of the Scottish capital, to take part in the traditional Light Night celebrations which mark the official start of Edinburgh's Christmas 2019!**

**The weekend also saw the opening of the beautiful Christmas Market in East Princes Street Gardens with a footfall of over 88,000 people on Saturday coming to enjoy the market, rides and attractions, up 30% on last year.**

**Light night, the free community event hosted by Forth One Breakfast Show's Arlene Stuart saw five local community groups showcasing their talents on stage from 3.30pm.**

**Santa himself turned up at 5pm to switch on the city's Christmas lights and amaze the crowds as he flew up the Royal Mile in his magnificent sleigh while pyrotechnics filled the skies, launched from the roofs of buildings on either side of the Mile. The magical moment was caught on the face of kids from 1 to 99 as Santa took our breaths away and sprinkled Christmas spirit over the cheering spectators.**

Brimming full of community spirit, the afternoon featured special performances from OneCity Trust-supported singing group Ama-zing Harmonies, Rock Choir Live getting the audience going with top-notch festive tunes, The Community Choir of An Edinburgh Christmas Carol at The Lyceum giving the audiences a flavour of what to expect at the Lyceum from 28 November, and youth-led Intercultural Youth Scotland presenting their dancing and singing talents as well as Light Night regulars, the beloved Little Voices, Big Stars.

The afternoon also featured a special preview of two songs featured in one of the world's best-known musicals, Lion King, which takes over Edinburgh Playhouse from 5 December.

Accompanied by the Norwegian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Ambassador Strommen and the Lord Provost, at 5pm Santa switched on the lights decorating the Christmas Tree gifted by Norway and standing proudly on the Mound.

The family-friendly afternoon event took place, for the first time ever, in the heart of the Scottish capital, the Royal Mile. Edinburgh's Christmas official charity partner, OneCity Trust, Edinburgh's social inclusion charity whose Patron is the city's Lord Provost, Frank Ross, was bucket-shaking at the event in support the Trust's invaluable work.

Keith from Glasgow said, *"Intercultural Youth Scotland got the crowd moving! Great to see local Edinburgh talent on the main stage."*

*"Santa was amazing! My kids loved him, it definitely made the event special"*, said Jenna from Edinburgh

Another member of the audience at Light Night shared, *"My daughter is in Amazing Harmonies, she was super excited to be performing on stage on the Royal Mile in front of so many people. What a great event to put up in Edinburgh."*

**Edinburgh's Christmas celebrations take place across the capital until 4 January 2020.**

Some of the highlights include Community Christmas, a new free event which sees a local group performing some of the best-loved festive tunes alongside a very festive projection at 12 different locations in December, Silent Adventures spreading the festive disco spirit with Welcome to the Jingle!, Winter Windows back showcasing Edinburgh's schoolchildren painting talents, this year to 'A Festive Welcome' theme, Santa's Grotto once again taking residence on Castle Street and one-on-one video experience, Night Walk, offering a unique, multisensory tour of Edinburgh past and present. Last but not least, the famous, award-winning Christmas Market in East Princes Street Gardens offers dozens of scrumptious food and drink stalls, handmade European and Scottish gifts as well as a wide range of rides and attractions for people of all ages to enjoy!

**/ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

Edinburgh's Christmas, 16 November 2019 – 4 January 2020  
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**Full listings [here](#).**

**For further information on Edinburgh's Christmas, please contact:**

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**About Underbelly**

Underbelly is a UK based live entertainment company. Their events and festivals division operates one of the largest operations at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, selling over 460,000 tickets for over 200 shows, in 22 venues over 25 days in 2018.

2018 was the sixth year Underbelly produced Edinburgh's Christmas for City of Edinburgh Council which saw 771,074 tickets sold to visitors from more than 40 countries, and the second year of producing Edinburgh's Hogmanay also on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council, which welcomed 160,000 over 3 days.

2019 marks the eleventh year of Underbelly Festival on the Southbank - one of the biggest multi-arts offerings in London and London's original pop-up festival, with over 140 shows programmed over 6 months on the South Bank.

Underbelly also produces Christmas in Leicester Square, Udderbelly Festival in Hong Kong, West End Live in Trafalgar Square for Westminster City Council and the Society of London Theatre.

In 2018 Underbelly sold over 1.5 million tickets to their various events.