



**2015 IFEA Hall of Fame  
Nick Dodds  
Festivals & Events International, London, England**

Nick Dodds, a past-Chair of both IFEA Europe and the British Arts Festivals Association, has spent over 30 years supporting the festivals and events industry, initially as a concert promoter and in event production, then as a leader in cultural festivals such as Edinburgh and Brighton, the London Olympic Games, and now, as an advisor to festivals and events worldwide. Throughout his career he has sought to bring together a network of festival and event producers to share knowledge and inspiration from each other.



Nick's love of organising events dates back to his teenage years when he set up as a DJ playing music for parties and events in village halls around his home town of Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire, England. At college in the 1970s, he became the social secretary putting on bands for student's events, he then went on to become a concert promoter in his own right in his early 20s, putting on early career bands like Chicago and Dire Straits.

In the 1980s, Nick helped set up a stage lighting and production company called Meteorlites who provided lighting and production for the long-running British music TV show, *Top of the Pops* and many touring bands, particularly the heavy metal genre popular at the time. British bands such as Iron Maiden and AC/DC touring to the states and US acts such as Bon Jovi touring to Europe. Nick also spent time touring in Canada where he discovered Country music – something his UK friends have never forgiven him for!

When the 80s gave way to the 90s, Rock'n'Roll gave way to the Arts and to his surprise, Nick was hired as General Manager of the prestigious Edinburgh Festival.

During the 1990s, Nick was one of the early European pioneers of festivals as cultural tourism destinations, helping to build the capacity and worldwide reach of the Edinburgh Festival, the world's greatest cultural event attracting over one million visitors every year. He was recruited by Impresario and Festival Director, Frank Dunlop as Administrative Director of Edinburgh International Festival, where he spent ten years latterly as Managing Director for Festival Director, Sir Brian McMaster. The Edinburgh International Festival was the heart of a group of 12 festivals that included the Edinburgh Military Tattoo and the Edinburgh Fringe, which have made it the place to be in August for the last 70 years.

It was here that he conceived, designed and then built The Hub, Edinburgh's Festival Centre, as the physical presence of its festivals in the capital of Scotland, significantly raising the profile of the Festival City, and providing a home worthy of the Edinburgh International Festival. The Hub was a major restoration of a historic assembly hall and church at the heart of the World Heritage site and yet which had lain derelict for 20 years. It was officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen in 1999, the first of two royal openings that Nick has stage managed during his career.

In 2000 Nick left Scotland and became Chief Executive of the Brighton Festival, where he re-launched the event as England's largest arts festival, boosted the independent fringe festival, and turned the organization into a significant year-round player by taking over and regenerating the Brighton Dome, a historic, 200 year-old venue. Brighton Festival is an annual multi-arts event taking place over three weeks every spring. Nick was able to take the festival to a completely new scale and build a national profile for the event, which next year celebrates 50 years.

Brighton Dome is in fact three venues: a 1,800 seat concert hall, a 1,000 capacity exhibition space and a 200 seat studio theatre. It has become the South Coast's most successful arts, entertainment and conference centre

presenting over 500 events a year. Again the restoration was officially re-opened by Her Majesty the Queen in 2002.

Nick was seconded to the London 2012 Olympics to act as chief operating officer of the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Festival, the largest ever UK-wide cultural festival, to celebrate the Olympic and Paralympic Games. He helped deliver major events like New Yorker Elizabeth Streb's 'walk' over London's landmarks and Piccadilly Circus Circus that closed all of central London for a mammoth arts event. He delivered 13,500 performances and events in 1200 venues with 25,000 artists from 205 countries to an audience of 19.5 million. The London Olympics is widely recognized as successfully integrating sports and arts and as a result, cultural programs are now considered an essential part of any successful Olympic Games.

Since founding Festivals and Events International, Ltd. in 2008, Nick has been helping festivals and events around the world as a consultant advisor and project manager. He has supported new festival producers in Vietnam, helped develop a new children's festival in Iceland, advised on festivals in China, Singapore, Indonesia and Hungary. Recently Nick consulted with the Barnum Festival in Connecticut (USA) advising them on developing the event and most recently co-authored *Thundering Hooves 2.0*, a new 10-year strategy for the future success of the twelve core Edinburgh Festivals.

Through FEI, Nick has also made significant contributions to theatres, concert halls and other entertainment venues and organisations across the UK. As well as restoring and reopening the Hub in Edinburgh and the Brighton Dome and Museum, he has advised on the development of the Cambridge Corn Exchange; Leeds Grand Theatre and Opera House; Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh; Margate's Dreamland Cinema; Northern Ballet Theatre; Perth Concert Hall and many others.

Nick has supported the European industry as Chair of the British Arts Festivals Association, where he devised and commissioned the largest survey of UK arts festivals called *Festivals Mean Business*, (now with its fourth edition in planning), and as Chair of the International Festivals and Events Association – Europe, where he promoted the development of IFEA's international network. Nick is a Board member of UK Theatre, the Association representing theatres across the UK. He has served on the UK Home Office Arts and Entertainment Task Force looking at visas for visiting artists and on the Boards of the European Festivals Association and the British Association of Concert Halls. In all these roles he has sought to bring together a network of festival and event producers to share knowledge and inspiration from each other.

In 2008 Nick was recognised by his peers with the *BABA Award for Outstanding Contribution to British Arts Festivals*, a national honour he shares with industry leaders that include Michael Eavis, founder of the Glastonbury Festival.

Please help us congratulate our 2015 IFEA Hall of Fame inductee, Nick Dodds.