



Manchester Literature Festival

Media Release

August 2018

Strictly Literary: Manchester Literature Festival 2018 announces a programme of major authors, rising stars and original writing for the autumn

Saturday 6 – Sunday 21 October 2018

Manchester venues, citywide

In the centenary year of women's suffrage in the UK, Manchester Literature Festival will honour ground breaking and pioneering women from past to present, internationally and closer to home. From exploring the Suffragette city on a walking tour to encountering some of the most influential women authors and broadcasters, the Festival celebrates a wealth of women's words, experiences and stories.

Booker Prize winning author **Pat Barker** reimagines the most famous conflict in literature, the legendary Trojan War, in her new novel *The Silence of the Girls*. She will be in conversation with Women's Fiction Prize 2018 winner **Kamila Shamsie**.

Kate Atkinson talks about her bravura new novel *Transcription*, about a young woman recruited by an obscure wartime department of the Secret Service.

International bestselling author **Kate Mosse** discusses *The Burning Chamber*, her latest gripping story of love and betrayal, mysteries and secrets, over afternoon tea at the elegant Midland hotel.

Carol Ann Duffy shares work from her final collection as Poet Laureate with support from North-West poets **Suzanne Batty** and **Clare Shaw**. See these three acclaimed poets come together for a stimulating and provocative evening.

As the presenter of Woman's Hour for the last 3 decades, **Dame Jenni Murray** has interviewed thousands of fascinating and powerful women. Join us to see her share her *History of the World in 21 Women*.

Strictly Come Dancing star, comedian, broadcaster and writer **Susan Calman** talked candidly about depression and mental health when she first appeared at the Festival in 2016. She returns to talk about her new book, *Dancing for Joy*, and persuade everyone to embrace kindness, joy and community.

Actor **Kathy Burke** comes to Manchester to host a special **24 Stories** event. An anthology of short stories published to mark the first anniversary of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, *24 Stories* features 24 of the UK's established and previously unpublished authors. Kathy and fellow guests including author **Nina Stibbe**, will read from the book then discuss hope, community and activism with Unbound editor John Mitchinson.

BAFTA-winning writer and comedian **Jo Brand** discusses her thoughts on feminism, women and power, mental health, the 70th anniversary of the NHS and her new book, *Born Lippy: How to Do Female*.

Broadcaster **Afua Hirsch** will be in conversation with author and The Good Immigrant editor **Nikesh Shukla** about her brilliant book BRIT(ish). Published earlier this year, BRIT(ish) is an engaging and unflinching examination of race, identity, culture and racism in the UK from the experience of Afua and many other black and multi-heritage Brits.

Authors **Yomi Adegoke** and **Elizabeth Uviebinené** aim to empower and inspire other black women with their book *Slay in Your Lane: The Black Girl Bible*, bringing together the voices and experiences of Black British women in a wide range of fields from broadcasting, music and fashion to business and law.

Editor **Una Mullally**, broadcaster and writer **Sinead Gleeson** and other contributors to the **Repeal the 8th** anthology will discuss the historic referendum in Ireland earlier this year; the grass-roots and social media campaigns to change the amendment; the battle over women's bodies; the next steps for women's rights and the rise of the #MeToo movement.

After 3 excellent books of non-fiction, **Olivia Laing** has ventured into auto-fiction with her debut novel, *Crudo*. Praised by Eileen Myles, Chris Krauss and Suzanne Moore, *Crudo* is an exhilarating read that may or may not be about the writer Kathy Acker! Olivia will be joined by American author **Andre Aciman** (*Call Me by Your Name*) who will read and discuss his forthcoming novel, *Enigma Variations*.

Acclaimed British writers **Sarah Moss** and **Carys Davies** examine the ways in which men shape the world and women fight to survive in it in their blistering new novels, *Ghost Wall* and *West*.

More about Manchester Literature Festival's 2018 programme:

Labour MP **Alan Johnson** returns to Manchester to discuss *In My Life: A Music Memoir*, which follows his trilogy of highly-acclaimed and hugely entertaining memoirs with a new one devoted to the world of Dansettes and jukeboxes, smoky coffee shops and dingy dance halls to Bob Dylan, David Bowie and The Beatles.

Actor **Julie Hesmondhalgh** discusses life writing, masculinity, class and identity with **Graham Caveney** and **Howard Cunnell**, authors of the arresting and deeply moving memoirs, *The Boy With the Perpetual Nervousness* and *Fathers & Sons*.

Graham Norton, winner of eight BAFTA awards and the forthcoming novel *A Keeper*, will be in conversation with critic Alex Clark about his diverse career and enduring love of stories.

Alexander McCall Smith marks the 20th anniversary of the first publication of his much-loved *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* with a special in conversation with critic Alex Clark.

Award-winning writer **Sarah Perry**, *The Essex Serpent* and *After Me Comes the Flood*, will visit MLF for the first time to talk about her much anticipated new novel, *Melmoth*, with fellow author Beth Underdown.

Unapologetically outspoken, **Amani Saeed**, **Shagufta Iqbal** and **Afshan D'Souza-Lodhi** are *The Yoni-Verse*. A poetry collective by South Asian women for South Asian women, they bring their *Golden Tongue* night to the city for one night only.

Manchester Literature Festival expands again with a series of "Bookend" events outside the main festival dates, taking place in August and November:

Multi-award winning American writer **Barbara Kingsolver** (*The Poisonwood Bible*, *The Lacuna*) will be making a rare visit to the UK to discuss her long-awaited new novel, *Unsheltered*.

The Festival is partnering with Penguin for their first **Penguin Pride Manchester** on 23 August. A unique event celebrating LGBTQI+ writers, Penguin Pride will be hosted by poet **Toby Champion** and feature live performances from poets **Andrew McMillan** and **Ella Otomewo**, novelist **Kirsty Logan**, author **Paul Flynn** and TransCreative founder and performer **Kate O'Donnell**.

Mark Doty, one of the USA's most accomplished poets, joins South Yorkshire's **Andrew McMillan**, whose debut collection *physical* was the first poetry collection to win The Guardian First Book Award. These two LGBTQI+ poets will come together for an intimate night of readings and conversation.

There will be a special gig in Central Library from pioneering folk trio **Faustus**, who have put the poetry of the **Lancashire Cotton Famine** to song.

Manchester Literature Festival continues its support of original writing with its series of new commissions with established and emerging talent:

The annual **Castlefield Manchester Sermon**, will be delivered by **Michael Morpurgo** in the auspicious surroundings of Manchester Cathedral.

This year's **Midland Hotel Writer in Residence** is **Linda Grant**, who will share her newly commissioned story over afternoon tea. Her most recent book *The Dark Circle* was shortlisted for the 2017 Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction.

In a co-commission with Manchester Art Gallery, novelist and non-fiction writer **Benjamin Myers** (winner of the Walter Scott Award 2018 for *The Gallows Pole*) and poet and novelist **Adelle Stripe** take inspiration from Magnum Photographer **Martin Parr**'s early and recent work in the city exhibited in *Return to Manchester*.

Poet **Rommi Smith** and pianist **Dave Evans** respond to *Bodies of Colour*, the groundbreaking wallpaper exhibition that explores representations of race and body, in a co-commission with the Whitworth.

Jamaican poet **Kei Miller** has created a new sequence of poems inspired by the great American author, playwright, poet and civil rights activist James Baldwin. He will perform the new poems at **Cabaret for Freedom**, a tribute to Baldwin featuring fellow poets Jackie Kay, SuAndi, Isiah Hull and Young Identity. Kei's commission is sponsored by the Royal Literary Fund and Cabaret for Freedom is presented in partnership with St John's Church, Old Trafford.

As a newly designated UNESCO City of Literature, MLF continues its commitment to showcasing new writing in translation from some of the most inspiring writers from across the globe:

One of Iran's leading poets, **Azita Ghahreman** addresses themes of loss, exile and female desire, as well as the changing face of her country in her collection *Negative of a Group Photograph*, featuring English translations by the poet Maura Dooley.

Contributors to the *Bogota 39: New Voices from Latin America* anthology, **Carlos Fonseca, Mauro Libertella** and **Mariana Torres** share and discuss their surprising and varied work with Mariana Casale.

Icelandic writer **Sjón** will read from his acclaimed new novel in English translation *Codex 1962* and discuss the Nordic aesthetics in literature with Ted Hodgkinson, co-editor of *The Dark Blue Winter Overcoat & Other Stories from the North*

Literary Reputations:

A Celebration of Muriel Spark: Jackie Kay, Alan Taylor and **Louise Welsh** eulogise the iconic Scottish novelist, short story writer, poet and essayist on the centenary of her birth.

Science fiction writer **Adam Roberts** grew up reading Anthony Burgess, considering him one of the few actual geniuses of the 20th century novel. At this event in partnership with the International Anthony Burgess Centre, he will read and discuss how he used an uncompleted Burgess manuscript as the starting point for the novel, *The Black Prince*.

Walks and Talks:

Literary Manchester is explored through a series of walking tours, sponsored by Weightmans. In two new walks for 2018: **Suffragette City** will explore historical landmarks in this important 100 year anniversary and **CSI Manchester** will show you where the bodies are really buried in the city that has become such a popular location for crime dramas. Other walks include; **The Original Punk Poet Pub Tour**, celebrating the bard of Salford, John

Cooper Clarke and checking out a few of his old haunts; **The Thinkers and Drinkers Pub Tour** which visits the watering holes favoured by Manchester's literary thinkers and drinkers; and **Elizabeth Gaskell's Manchester**, which retraces the footsteps of the Manchester novelist including a visit to the author's magnificently restored house.

Events for children and families:

Family Reading Day, a day of fictional fun featuring *The Moomins*; *Steve Antony*; *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* and *Kid Carpet*. Suitable for children aged 3 – 8 and their families.

Current UK Children's Laureate, award-winning writer, illustrator and superstar creator of Clarice Bean and Ruby Redfort, **Lauren Child** is coming to town to introduce her latest laugh-out-loud story about Hubert Horatio, an exceptionally intelligent and sensible child and the unruly grown-ups that he has to steer through life!

Other treats in store include young creative workshops with *Beano* artist **Kev F. Sutherland** and stand-up comedians **Kate McCabe** and **Sean Mason**.

Cathy Bolton and **Sarah-Jane Roberts**, co-Directors of **Manchester Literature Festival**, said: "As a UNESCO City of Literature we are delighted to welcome so many inspirational authors from across the globe to share their stories and ideas with Manchester audiences, as well celebrating our own rich and radical literary heritage. In the birthplace of the suffragette movement, we're particularly thrilled to present such a strong line-up of multi-talented and outspoken women writers and activists."

Kaye Mitchell, co-director of the **Centre for New Writing**, **The University of Manchester** said: "We at the Centre for New Writing are delighted to continue our partnership with the Manchester Literature Festival in 2018. As teachers, writers and students of contemporary literature, we relish the stimulation of a programme that is always lively, bold, and original - that showcases established voices and emerging talent alike and sets the cultural agenda of this most literary of cities."

Councillor Lutfur Rahman, **Manchester City Council's executive member for leisure, culture and schools**, added: "Once again Manchester Literature Festival has lined up an exciting programme of events, walks, and talks for this vital celebration of the written word. From poetry to Scandi thrillers and from memoirs to children's events, this thriving and energetic festival reaches out to every part of the community. In the year when the UK is celebrating the 100th anniversary of *some* women getting the vote, a special programme of events honours the Manchester women who fought so bravely to make their voices heard."

Manchester Literature Festival is supported by Arts Council England and Manchester City Council



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Manchester Literature Festival enjoys ongoing and valued support from its founder sponsors Castlefield, responsible finance and ethical investment specialists with headquarters in Manchester and law firms Squire Patton Boggs and Weightmans. The Midland Hotel continues to support as Festival hotel partner. The Festival also welcomes new sponsors, Northern and Jury's Inn.

Partners include The University of Manchester, the Midland Hotel, Waterstones, Castlefield, Squire Patton Boggs, Weightmans and Big Issue North

Press enquiries for Manchester Literature Festival 2018:

Catharine Braithwaite 07947 644110 cat@we-r-lethal.com

Shelagh Bourke 07971 819016 she@we-r-lethal.com

Notes to editors

Booking tickets

Manchester Literature Festival takes place from 6-21 October 2018 at venues across the city. Advance tickets on sale for MLF Members from Friday 10 August and from Wednesday 15 August for general sale: www.manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk or 0843 208 0500

About Manchester Literature Festival

Now in its 13th year, the Manchester Literature Festival has been building on its previous success expanding audiences and creating new partnerships across the national and international literary world. Patrons of Manchester Literature Festival are Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy, award-winning journalist and Observer critic Rachel Cooke, poet and Scottish Makar Jackie Kay, broadcaster and anchor of BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour Dame Jenni Murray, broadcaster and journalist Miranda Sawyer, poet and publisher Michael Schmidt, acclaimed novelist Kamila Shamsie, and author and broadcaster Erica Wagner.

In 2017 Manchester Literature Festival welcomed The University of Manchester as its official Higher Education Partner. Over the past decade a strong relationship has been formed with the University's Centre for New Writing, and the festival is working closer with the Centre's Co-Directors John McAuliffe and Kaye Mitchell, Professor of Creative Writing Jeanette Winterson, and various lecturers

and alumni. As well as bringing leading international authors to the city, through this partnership the festival will showcase emerging talent and develop a year round programme of activity.

The Festival has tripled in size from 2006 when it featured 30 events attracting an audience of 3,000 to the 2017 Festival which featured 75 events and attracted an audience of 13,000. Over the past 12 years MLF has featured many of the biggest names in literary fiction and spoken word from across the globe, including Martin Amis, Simon Armitage, Margaret Atwood, Kate Atkinson, Malorie Blackman, William Boyd, Tracy Chevalier, Roddy Doyle, Margaret Drabble, Carol Ann Duffy, Helen Dunmore, Jennifer Egan, Anne Enright, Helen Fielding, Neil Gaiman, Seamus Heaney, Alan Hollinghurst, Howard Jacobson, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Armistead Maupin, Eimear McBride, Val McDermid, David Mitchell, Walter Mosley, Andrew Motion, Jo Nesbo, Patrick Ness, Audrey Niffenegger, Ben Okri, Arundhati Roy, Will Self, Kamila Shamsie, Anita Shreve, Lionel Shriver, Kate Tempest, Colm Toibín, Rose Tremain, Joanna Trollope, Sarah Waters, Fay Weldon, Jeanette Winterson, and Xinran.

Manchester Literature Festival takes place in a variety of venues that highlight the city's rich cultural heritage as well as the spoken word. This year's venues include The Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama, The Royal Northern College of Music, the Midland Hotel, Manchester Cathedral, the International Anthony Burgess Foundation, Manchester Central Library, The Dancehouse, the Royal Exchange Theatre, Instituto Cervantes, The Whitworth, Manchester Art Gallery, Elizabeth Gaskell's House, Z-arts, Quarry Bank and the streets and squares of Manchester.