



Manchester Literature Festival

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DIVAS, DISSIDENTS, PIONEERS & RADICALS

Manchester Literature Festival 2017: a gathering of the world's leading literary names with five new commissions

Friday 6 – Sunday 22 October 2017

Manchester venues, citywide

- The 2017 festival launches with *How to be Champion: An Evening with Sarah Millican*, a special in-conversation with the comedian, broadcaster and debut author
- Nigella Lawson and Jeanette Winterson muse on food, literature and pleasure
- Jon Savage talks Burgess, Punk and The Sex Pistols
- Shami Chakrabarti, Britain's leading human rights campaigner, takes aim at the oldest and most pervasive injustice of all: gender inequality.
- Michael Morpurgo delivers the Castlefield Manchester Sermon at Manchester Cathedral
- Roddy Doyle, one of Ireland's finest writers, talks about his new novel *Smile*

More to enjoy for 2017, Bookend events outside the main festival dates:

- Cult author and gay rights pioneer Armistead Maupin returns to Manchester to reveal his long-awaited memoir, *Logical Family*
- Award-winning American author, activist and feminist Rebecca Solnit in conversation with Jeanette Winterson about *The Mother of All Questions: Further Feminisms*

- Jennifer Egan makes a rare UK visit to talk about her forthcoming novel, *Manhattan Beach* – her first foray into historical fiction
- Ali Smith and Jackie Kay – MLF regulars and firm friends join forces to discuss the art of creativity and read extracts from their forthcoming books, *Winter* and *Bantam*

In the 2017 festival, many events touch on the increasingly important topics of activism, protest, citizenship, race, class, feminism, identity and our place in the world. **Maxine Peake** hosts *Protest: Stories of Resistance*, featuring writers **Michelle Green**, **Courtia Newland** and **Kit de Waal**; journalist, blogger and author **Reni Eddo-Lodge** talks about her book *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*; **Michael Rosen** discusses his childhood adventures with his communist parents and his first forays into political theatre and activism; **Howard Jacobson** talks about the art of satire and writing as resistance to Trump; **George Monbiot** launches his new book *Out of the Wreckage: A New Politics in an Age of Crisis*; and **Paddy Armstrong**, one of The Guildford Four, talks about his new memoir *Life After Life* and how he rebuilt his life after the appalling miscarriage of justice.

The Real Story present 4 writers from the crowdfunded anthology *Know Your Place: Essays on the Working Class by the Working Class* (published by Dead Ink); Comma launch volume II of *Refugee Tales* with readings from **Caroline Bergvall**, **Kamila Shamsie** and **Marina Warner**, and **Sabrina Mahfouz**, **Asma Elbadawi**, **Nafeesa Hamid** and **Hibaq Osman** perform poetry and work from the brilliant British Muslim Women Writers anthology *The Things I Would Tell You*.

Other writers appearing at the Festival this year include Sarah Hall, Claire Tomalin, Will Self, Alan Hollinghurst, Kamila Shamsie, Marina Warner, Simon Schama, Linda Grant, Elif Shafak, Nadeem Aslam, Andrew McMillan, Hollie McNish, Yiyun Lee and Kit de Waal.

As always there is the opportunity to take afternoon tea the elegant Midland Hotel or embark on one of a series of literary walks exploring the city's diverse literary history.

Manchester Literature Festival takes place in a variety of venues from the old to the new and from the elegant to the cutting edge, celebrating 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 Portico Library, The Midland Hotel, Manchester Cathedral, the International Anthony Burgess Foundation, Manchester Central Library, The Dancehouse, The Irish World Heritage Centre, The Royal Exchange Theatre, Instituto Cervantes, The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester Art Gallery, Elizabeth Gaskell's House, Gorilla, Z-arts and the streets and squares of Manchester.

Earlier 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 also has the ongoing and valued support of the Festival's founder sponsors - Castlefield, responsible finance and ethical investment specialists with headquarters in Manchester, as well as law firms Squire Patton Boggs and Weightmans and The Midland Hotel.

More about Manchester Literature Festival's 2017 programme:

Sarah Hall, one of the world's finest living short story writers, presents new collection, *Madame Zero*. Hall is an exquisite chronicler of landscapes – rural, industrial, and emotional – and these daring, uncanny tales glitter with poetic and erotic imagery.

Will Self, cult author, broadcaster and critic introduces his new novel, *Phone*, a wildly funny send-up of contemporary British life.

Danish virtuoso **Dorthe Nors** appears at the Festival for the first time to discuss her highly acclaimed work.

Harriet Harman talks about her 30 years in politics, her memoir, *A Woman's Work*, and the many challenging experiences of being the UK's longest continuously serving MP with host Sarfraz Manzoor.

Simon Schama, historian and broadcaster, discusses *Belonging: The Story of The Jews 1492-1900*, the second volume of his epic history of the Jewish people with MLF Patron and critic Erica Wagner.

Arundhati Subramaniam attended the first Manchester Literature Festival in 2006 and returns to share her sensual, soulful poetry exploring the contradictory nature of living in a Third World megalopolis.

As well as the annual Castlefield Manchester Sermon, this year written and read by Michael Morpurgo in the auspicious surroundings of Manchester Cathedral, the Festival includes **four other special commissions:**

This year's **The Royal Literary Fund Commission** is presented by **Malika Booker**, poet, storyteller, theatre-maker, and founder of the international writing development initiative Malika's Poetry Kitchen. She presents a vibrant and lyrical response to recent rhetoric around Brexit, immigration and the political posturing of party leaders.

This year's **Midland Hotel Writer in Residence** is acclaimed British short story writer and novelist **Tessa Hadley**, who reads her newly commissioned story over afternoon tea.

For this special co-commission with The Whitworth, **Zaffar Kunial's** series of new poems responds to the work of artist Raqib Shaw, whose paintings of fantastical worlds draw on renaissance and baroque imagery, combined with theatrical extravagance, myth, nature and religion.

Poet, artist and documentary filmmaker Imtiaz Dharker will be writing **The New North and South**, this year's Manchester Art Gallery co-commission, responding to solo exhibitions from South Asian artists Neha Choski, Risham Syed, Mehreen Murtaza, Waqas Khan and Hetain Patel.

Literary Reputations

Joanna Moorhead will be waxing lyrical about her late cousin **Leonora Carrington**, the artist at the forefront of the Surrealist movement and her extraordinary life from Lancashire to Mexico City.

Cabaret For Freedom: A Celebration of the Life & Work of Maya Angelou. Live music and poetry from Shirley May, SuAndi, Isaiah Hull, Segun Lee-French and Young Identity writers alongside special guests. Presented in partnership with Black History Month

Lyndall Gordon, Outsiders: Five Women Writers Who Changed the World. A provocative look at the women who wrote the novels that changed the world: Mary Shelley, Emily Bronte, George Eliot, Olive Schreiner and Virginia Woolf.

Walks and Talks

Literary Manchester is explored through a series of walking tours, sponsored by Weightmans. A new addition for this year is **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** visits the watering holes favoured by Manchester's literary thinkers and drinkers and **The Gothic Literature Walking Tour** reveals the dark history of the city's streets. There is also a walking tour that retraces the footsteps of **Elizabeth Gaskell**, including a visit to the author's magnificently restored house.

Events for children and families

Comedy Club 4 Kids: Professional comics **Sean Mason** and **Kate McCabe** show children aged 8 to 11 how to write and perform comedy, finding the funny in their own experiences and turning it into confidently delivered stand-up and sketches.

Family Reading Day at Manchester Central: a day of fictional fun featuring Ben Faulks (Mr Bloom from CBeebies), author and illustrator Ed Vere, Clare Foges and Al

Murphy (creators of the Kitchen Disco and Bathroom Boogie picture books) and Michael de Souza, co-author of the Rastamouse book and TV series. Suitable for children aged 3 – 8 and their families.

Bhuchar Boulevard Company presents **Child of the Divide**, a story of family, identity and belonging, marking the 70th anniversary of the partition of India, a moving play by **Sudha Bhuchar** in association with Big Imaginations, Partition History Project and Polka. Suitable for children aged 8+ and their families.

Cathy Bolton and Sarah-Jane Roberts, Co-Directors of Manchester Literature Festival, said: “A great festival should bring people together to listen to other voices, introduce them to new ideas, challenge their preconceptions and enjoy new experiences. We look forward to welcoming over 100 of our most talented writers, thinkers and activists to Manchester this October to share their work and address burning issues of the day; questioning and re-imagining our relationships with each other and the world around us. We are grateful for the continued support of our many partners and funders, and look forward to sharing our passion for stories and adventures with audiences across the city.”

John McAuliffe, co-director of the Centre for New Writing, The University of Manchester said: “Manchester Literature Festival is a highlight of this city's cultural year. It is one of those places where new work is heard, and where, for us and for our students, new ideas emerge and develop. We are delighted to be working as partners with this year's Festival which brings so many international stars and original new writers to the city, and we look forward to its provoking afternoons and long, engaging evenings.”

Councillor Luthfur Rahman, Manchester City Council's executive member for Culture and Leisure, added: “Once again Manchester Literature Festival brings a line up of writers from the UK and all over the world to inspire and celebrate our city. At the forefront of this year's festival are events which focus on the important issues of activism, protest, citizenship, race, class, feminism and identity, and their place in the world. We hope that Mancunians and visitors will come together to enjoy this feast of wisdom and words.”

Press enquires for Manchester Literature Festival 2017
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Manchester Literature Festival is supported by Arts Council England and

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Notes to editors

Booking tickets

Manchester Literature Festival, place from 6-22 October 2017 at venues across the city. Tickets on sale from early August - to find out more and to book, please visit www.manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk or call 0843 208 0500.

About Manchester Literature Festival

Now in its 12th 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.

The Festival has tripled in size from 2006 when it featured 30 events attracting an audience of 3,000 to the 2016 Festival which featured 85 events and attracted an audience of 13,500. 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, Anne Enright, Helen Fielding, Neil Gaiman, Seamus Heaney, Alan Hollinghurst, Howard Jacobson, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Eimear McBride, Val McDermid, David Mitchell, Walter Mosley, Andrew Motion, Jo Nesbo, Patrick Ness, Audrey Niffenegger, Ben Okri, Kamila Shamsie, Anita Shreve, Lionel Shriver, Kate Tempest, Colm Toibín, Rose Tremain, Joanna Trollope, Sarah Waters, Fay Weldon, Jeanette Winterson, and Xinran.