



Manchester
Literature
Festival

Press release: 9 March 2022

POETS, BEATBOXERS, BEYONCE COLLABORATORS AND A BOOKER PRIZE WINNER

Manchester Literature Festival announces its Spring programme of LIVE events with Douglas Stuart, Testament, Warsan Shire and Seán Hewitt

AN EVENING WITH WARSAN SHIRE **Monday 14 March, Contact**

Award-winning Somali-British poet and Beyoncé collaborator, **Warsan Shire** performs and discusses poems from her much anticipated debut collection *Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in Her Head*. One of the most exciting poets of her generation, her first full-length collection builds on the power of individual poems like 'Home' and 'For Women Who Are Difficult to Love'. Warsan wrote the poetry for the award-winning visual album *Lemonade* and the Disney film *Black is King* in collaboration with Beyoncé.

The evening is hosted by **Malika Booker**, poet and founder of *Malika's Poetry Kitchen*, and presented in partnership with the Centre for New Writing, Creative Manchester and Waterstones Deansgate.

FLUX **Saturday 2 April, Contact**

Hip Hop MC, poet and beatboxer **Testament** headlines an evening of spoken word, storytelling, DJs, and live projection art. An acclaimed rapper, playwright and world-record-holding beatboxer, his work includes the Hip-Hop album *Homecut: No Freedom Without Sacrifice*, spoken word performances for radio and television and the celebrated play *Black Men Walking*. **Testament** was Channel 4 writer-in-residence at the Royal Exchange Theatre and his show *Orpheus In The Record Shop* was broadcast on BBC Television in 2021.

He is joined by musician and poet **Keisha Thompson**, Digital Artist **Sean Clarke** and spoken word artist **Amerah Saleh**. The performance is brought to you by Manchester Literature Festival's Young Producers Collective **FLUX**.

DOUGLAS STUART IN CONVERSATION WITH JACKIE KAY

19 April, Contact

The festival is delighted to welcome Douglas Stuart, Booker Prize-winning author of *Shuggie Bain*, to launch his eagerly-anticipated new novel *Young Mungo*, due to be published on 14 April. Set in Glasgow in the 1990s, *Young Mungo* is the deeply moving story of the dangerous first love of two young men and their dream to escape the hyper-masculine and violently sectarian world of the city's housing estates. Written with the same warmth, dark humour and compassion as Douglas's debut, *Young Mungo* is a gripping and powerful novel about the push and pull of family, the painful traps of poverty, addiction and inequality, the dangers of being different, the violence faced by so many queer people, and the resilience of the human spirit. Douglas will be in conversation with MLF patron and poet **Jackie Kay**. The event is presented in partnership with the Centre for New Writing, Creative Manchester and Waterstones Deansgate.

PERFORMANCE BY POET SEÁN HEWITT

Date TBC, Manchester Art Gallery

Poet and writer Seán Hewitt premieres new poems inspired by *Protest!*, the retrospective of the renowned artist, film director and writer Derek Jarman. Sean will perform his new work followed by a conversation about how Jarman has influenced him as an artist, writer and LGBTQ+ elder. The work was co-commissioned by Manchester Literature Festival and Manchester Art Gallery

Seán is the author of the poetry collection *Tongues of Fire*, which was awarded the Laurel Prize. His forthcoming memoir *All Down Darkness Wide* (Jonathan Cape, July 2022), is a luminous story of love, heartbreak, renewal and coming-of-age. Its also a fearless exploration of queer identity, trauma and tenderness.

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Manchester Literature Festival is constantly updating audience guidance in line with government guidance for performance venues. Events at Contact will be at Full Capacity but audiences are encouraged to wear masks / face-coverings and the use of hand sanitiser will be encouraged. Please check the Contact website for further information.

Ends

For press enquiries and review tickets please contact:

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Tickets and listings information:

AN EVENING WITH WARSAN SHIRE

Monday 14 March, 8pm, Contact

Ticket & a copy of *Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in Her Head* £20

Tickets £10 / Under 35s £8

Suitable for age 14+

<https://contactmcr.com/shows/an-evening-with-warsan-shire/>

FLUX

Saturday 2 April, 7.30pm, Contact
Tickets: £10 full price / £8 under 35s / £5 conc
Suitable for age 14+

<https://contactmcr.com/shows/manchester-literature-festival-presents-flux/>

DOUGLAS STUART IN CONVERSATION WITH JACKIE KAY

Tuesday 19 April, 7.30pm, Contact
Ticket & a copy of Young Mungo £26 / Tickets £12 / Under 35s £10
Suitable for age 14+

<https://www.manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk/events/douglas-stuart-in-conversation-with-jackie-kay-39859>

SEÁN HEWITT

Date TBA Manchester Art Gallery

Join the conversation: #MLF22 @McrLitFest

Notes to editors

Manchester Literature Festival's Young Producers Programme provides 16-25-year-olds the opportunity to curate and deliver an event for MLF. Following a 6 month mentoring programme, they have been given a budget, support and guidance to help bring their event ideas to life. MLF's first cohort of Young Producers are using storytelling as a tool to collaborate in imagining the future they'd like to see, and are providing opportunities for upcoming artists to have an equal platform alongside established voices. The Young Producers programme has been generously supported by funding from Postcode Community Trust and GMCA.

Any ticket revenue received will help Manchester Literature Festival survive this challenging time and deliver its annual festival in October 2022

Now in its 17th year, **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 include former Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy, award-winning journalist and Observer critic Rachel Cooke, poet and Scottish Makar Jackie Kay, broadcaster and former anchor of BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour Dame Jenni Murray, poet and publisher Michael Schmidt, acclaimed novelist Kamila Shamsie and author and broadcaster Erica Wagner.

Over the past 16 years, the Festival has featured many of the biggest names in literary fiction and spoken word as well as prominent cultural figures from across the globe, including Tori Amos, Simon Armitage, Margaret Atwood, Kate Atkinson, Malorie Blackman, William Boyd, Jung Chang, Roddy Doyle, Margaret Drabble, Carol Ann Duffy, Jennifer Egan, Inua Ellams, Anne Enright, Bernardine Evaristo, Neil Gaiman, Guy Garvey, Bobby Gillespie, Seamus Heaney, Alan Hollinghurst, Nick Hornby, Kazuo Ishiguro, Howard Jacobson, Alan Johnson, Barbara Kingsolver, Hanif Kureishi, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Deborah Levy, Johnny Marr, Paul Mason, Armistead Maupin, Val McDermid, David Mitchell, Paul Morley, Walter Mosley, Andrew Motion, Jo Nesbo, Patrick Ness, Audrey

Niffenegger, Ben Okri, Arundhati Roy, Will Self, Elif Shafak, Lemn Sissay, Kamila Shamsie, Zadie Smith, Elizabeth Strout, Kae Tempest, Neil Tennant, Colm Toibín, Rose Tremain, Sarah Waters, Vivienne Westwood, Colson Whitehead, Jeanette Winterson and Xinran.

The Festival has also welcomed prominent activists, campaigners and disruptors including Patrisse Cullors (co-founder of Black Lives Matter), Angela Davis, Reni Eddo-Lodge, Caroline Criado Perez, George Monbiot, Rebecca Solnit and Gloria Steinem.

Manchester Literature Festival gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our main funders Arts Council England, Manchester City Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, our higher education partner The University of Manchester, and our hotel partners The Radisson Edwardian and The Midland.