***EVERYTHING TO BE SAID***

**The Hull ’17 INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF POETRY AND PERFORMANCE**

**The Vision**

A festival of new poetry festival providing a bridge between page and performance appealing to a wide audience who enjoy the power of the crafted word in all its varied forms.

New work will be at the heart of this exciting venture which will provide a fresh platform in the landscape of British poetry festivals. Packed with world premieres, each participating poet will receive a commission for a new work as part of a core group of 17 attending poets – The Hull ’17 who will all be resident in Hull for the 4 days of the festival.

With the demise of some long standing poetry festivals such as Aldeburgh there’s a gap for a new, different, broader festival to exist in the country. This festival has the ambition to offer something brand new.

The festival will celebrate and raise the profile of Hull as a major poetry city . Hull has inspired poets as varied as Andrew Marvell, Andrew Motion, Douglas Dunn and Stevie Smith, resulting in Peter Porter calling it 'the most poetic city in England'. This festival will give a nod to the past but will embrace the future supporting and encouraging new local talent and giving them a platform alongside first class national and international poets .

'*Poetry is nobody's business except the poet's, and everybody else can f\*\*\* off.' -* Philip Larkin

Often abrasive, vulgar and bloody-minded, Philip Larkin was one of the most original voices of the 20th Century. He is both the inspiration and point of departure for***Everything to be Said*** *– including the title which derives from Larkin’s poem Nothing To Be Said.* This festival provides the polar

opposite energy to Larkin’s line ;

*‘ In Mill-towns on dark mornings Life is slow dying ..’*

From **Thursday 28 September to Sunday 1 October 2017,** the BBC and partners will curate a unique celebratory festival of original poetry and performance that will take place in situ in Hull and across R1/1Xtra, Radio 2, Radio 3, Radio 4, 6 Music ,BBC Four, BBC Arts Online BBC Look North, BBC Radio Humberside and The Space. It has ambitions to commission new work for BBC 2, R3 and R4 and to connect with BBC 1 shows such as The One Show.

Philip Larkin, as Hull's most famous mouthpiece, inspires the focus of the festival. 'Originality', he wrote, 'is being different from oneself, not others.' Participating artists are therefore asked to step outside their comfort zone and try something new, whether a different discipline or tone to their normal output. Each writer will be paired with an artist from a different discipline to create a new piece of work to be showcased during the festival.

At the end of the festival, a Philip Larkin Award for Originality will be given to the participant who has most bravely and successfully responded to this challenge.

This festival will provide a unique bridge between poetry and spoken word, showcasing artists of different backgrounds and disciplines, both national and International. It will engage with and has ambitions to attract a wider audience than many traditional poetry festivals do, offering events for younger, diverse and minority audiences as well as the more mainstream. We will work with Hull City of Culture and the other partner organisations in Hull on audience building from now until the festival and also legacy .

If Larkin is the figurehead of the festival, Hull provides the spirit*.* Hull is a place to think, to be inspired - to be original. The motto of the festival, therefore, is:

***'Hull - See Things Differently'.***

Partners

Hull City of Culture

Hull City Council

Humber Mouth

First Story

Hull Libraries

Hull University

Forward Publishing

BBC

Arts Council

British Council

Poetry Society

Apples and Snakes – celebrating their 35th anniversary in 2017

As well as having a major presence in the City Centre, we will take poetry into all the small corners of Hull working with partner organisations and local BBc radio and TV and BBC Learning . We will build links further afield with other literary festivals such as Crossing Borders (Rotterdam) and Beverley and Bridlington

**Humber Mouth**

Humber Mouth festival will sit together in 2017 to maximize impact and use of resources for a joint poetry moment in the city . Humber Mouth will bring their festival forward from November for one year , and run for 10 days , from September 28

**National Poetry Day 2017**

Will be on Thursday 28 September , moving forward to sit within the festival and tie in with our themes. This has already been agreed .We will work with them to ensure National Poetry day begins in Hull and extends to the rest of the country from the festival.

**International**

The British Council will bring artists to the festival exclusively from places which have strong links to Hull;

Reykjavik, Iceland

Rotterdam, Netherlands

Aarhus - European City of Culture 2017

Freetown, Sierra Leone

and also Poland which will be their focus for 2017.

Polish is now the second most widely spoken language in Britain yet we know relatively little about its culture. *Contains Strong Language* will change that by giving space to its poets and spoken word artists.

**Company of Artists – The Hull 17**

17 of the most interesting , diverse poets in the country will be invited to Hull for all 4 days of the festival to form a company of artists . The group will be visible engaging in activities all over the city .

Each poet will take part in several events rather than just attending for a single reading including a broadcast, a performance, a schools event , a workshop … We will create a ‘cast’ of artists for the festival who will have time to socialize and share with each other and the public.

There will be a strong focus on new performers as well as new work.

Alongside the Hull 17 the festival will showcase brand new talent, bringing together the 4 new writers identified in the ***Verb New Voices*** scheme with the winners of the Poetry Society’s ***New Poets competition*** and a group of new young writers from the Caribbean supported by The British Council .

**Commissions**

As well as taking part in several events, each writer will receive a commission for a new piece of work which will be showcased during the festival. Each poet will be partnered with an artist from a different discipline for a project such as a musician, photographer, fine artist, theatre director, performer etc. We will encourage people from different backgrounds and art forms to work together.

We will also ask each artist to engage with our outreach and education programme.

The new pieces will premiered at the festival in an appropriate space as the festival will focus on new as well as existing work .

**The Artists**

The festival will surprise, bringing practitioners with different backgrounds together from different art forms for events, workshops, interviews, performances and broadcasts. Poetry and the spoken word will have a prominence, but music, dance, comedy and theatre will feature too.

Carol Ann Duffy – Poet Laureate has confirmed her attendance .

We will also approach poets such as:

John Cooper Clarke

Hollie Mcnish

Kate Fox

A Firm of Poets – A shifting collective of 4 Northern (always 2 men, 2 women usually involving Matt Abbott)

Joelle Taylor

Kate Tempest

George The Poet

Tony Harrison

Patience Agbabi

Byron Vincent

Andrew Macmillan

Helen Mort

Mona Arshi

Zodwa Nyoni

Inua Ellams

Jo Shapcott

Jacob Sam-La Rose

Zaffar Kunial

Andy Brooks International beat boxer and performance poet.Martin Daws (Young People’s Poet Laureate for Wales)

Warsan  Shire

Bohdan Piasecki

Suli  Breaks

George the Poet

Khadija Ibrahim

Hedwig Gorski

Events will aim to appeal to a wide audience – extending the traditional reach of many established poetry festivals and breaking that mold to include the word play of

comedians such as Hull native Lucy Beaumont, Johnny Vegas (To Hull and Back) and Issy Suttie; the craft of songwriters such as Tracey Thorne and Ben Watt (Everything But The Girl formed whilst they were at Hull University) and Paul Heaton (born in Hull); and the performance skills of actors such as Maureen Lipman, Andrew Lincoln and

Tom Courtney – all from the city. We also want to include RAP cross over artists too such as Isiah Hull and Solomon O.B.

It is important that the programme has something for all audiences so a wide range of diverse artists, established and new, well-known and unknown will be on offer. We will encourage established artists to work with new talent in our commissions.

**Events in larger spaces such as City Hall**

Each of the 3 evenings of the festival there will be one large scale event .such as;

1. The final of First Words – R1xtra’s performance poetry competition
2. A new drama with music from the Philharmonic Orchestra
3. A poetic songwriter such as Laura Marling unplugged .
4. As well as hearing from the poets, the festival will feature readings from Hull poets of the past such as Larkin Marvell and Stevie Smith by our very best British Actors such as Benedict Cumberbatch, Adrian Lester, Maxine Peake, Sophie Okonedo and Olivia Coleman.

**Learning**

The festival will open on Thursday with free poetry readings for Hull schools where poets on the GCSE syllabus will perform alongside the Chief Examiners from the relevant exam boards.

In partnership with Hull University and BBC Learning we will give writing workshops for both beginners and experienced writers. Selected writers from Hull secondary schools will perform work written from the First Story project which will be running from September 2016 to September 2017. We will offer the students workshops in performance too.

We will offer the key Poetry Society lecture which will be in Hull in 2017, commission a major cultural figure to deliver a talk on the state of poetry and invite the Oxford Professor of Poetry to deliver his inaugural lecture in Hull .

**The programme will consist of ;**

* An opening stunt event such as poems written by Hull school children through the work of First Story being written across the Humber Bridge in LED lighting . An aerial poem drop of lines from Hull poets
* A small number of special and ambitious commissions, designed for broadcast (both Television and Radio) as well as on-site performances.
* A busy performance and talks schedule, suitable for radio broadcast including The One Show, The Today programme and a live Front Row to open the festival on Thursday night
* All the major radio arts programmes will record editions with an audience, such as (R3) The Verb, Free Thinking , (R4) Poetry Please! With Great Pleasure, Word of Mouth.
* As well as events in the main 3 venues and in the street , we will offer smaller events in communities outside the city centre, tailored to the demographic of the area.
* Creative pieces – a new radio drama commission written by a poet to be broadcast on R4. Broadening the appeal and base of poetry, we will present pieces of theatre by poets such as Louise Wallwein’s Glue which examines adoption through poetry, and will commission 2 new pieces for R3 and R4 drama slots from poets.
* Events – Each evening we the festival will host a major event such as a recording of a drama with music from the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra to be broadcast live on R3 , Kate Tempest and her band. Laura Marling unplugged .

On Saturday night , radio will host a Glastonbury style evening where all the radio networks will broadcast from the festival between 6 and midnight, passing the broadcast baton and presenting output that

will appeal to their listeners. Listeners will also be able to follow the whole evening digitally rather than tuning to each network.

* Word First - Radio 1’s spoken word initiative to find and nurture 6 new artists. Broadcast on Sunday with DJ Target
* Many non-broadcast, on-site only events and outreach.
* A listening/viewing space to present speech and TV archive programmes which use poetry in interesting ways such as the films of Tony Harrison and various radio recordings including arts programmes and poetic radio dramas.
* A programme of educational and extended learning activities to be developed with partners and BBC Learning.
* Performances on cross-channel ferries linking Hull to Rotterdam
* Digital interaction will be a big part of the festival, extending the experience for a wider audience.
* Audiences will be able to go into Hull with interactive technology on walks and tours. Eg. An interactive poetry map of Hull and GPS technology offering an interactive audio tour of the city
* The festival should involve events for young children as well as adults, attracting BBC TV programmes such as Cbeebies Poetry Pie and leading children’s poets such as Jackie Kay, Jacob Sam-La Rose and John Agard.
* We will offer readings by key GCSE poets such as Carol Ann Duffy and Imtiaz Dharker to secondary school students at the beginning of a new school year
* A film club offering screenings of films form the rich BBC poetry archive such as Black Daisies for the Bride and V by Tony Harrison alongside new films commissioned for the festival
* Apples and Snakes are 35 in 2017. They will host a major birthday performance event during the festival
* Public group discussions around what’s happening in poetry hosted by Ian McMillan

**Site**

The festival will have a heart, a central location to create atmosphere and to promote a festival feel which can be branded and dressed to fit the themes.

The festival will use 3 main spaces – The Arts College will be the main space for broadcasting where we will build a social hub for the audience and artists to mix and a green room space for the artists to collaborate too.

Kardomah - a vibrant performance cabaret space and Hull City Library with it versatile spaces.

We will use City Hall for our big evening events as well as outside spaces , pop up areas for short crowd performances and workshop space.

There will be a vibrant poetry café at the Art College where we will have groups such as Poem for You who will write you a sonnet while you wait.

As well as the main sites, we will work with the partners particularly Humber Mouth to programme activity during the festival and in the build up outside the city centre .

**Audience Building**

Our Verb New Voices project will focus on finding and developing new poets from Hull and the East Riding . Beginning in September 2016 we will provide mentoring and support for 4 new artists who will receive a package of development support, a targeted 2 day workshop at the BBC in Hull as well as professional development support with writing and performing across the year . All the workshop and development is funded by the BBC . The artists will also receive a broadcast on The Verb and will perform new work at the festival .

We will commission Poetry Takeaway to work in busy urban spaces to talk to people who would never readily attend an event such as this. TBC - We are hoping they will bring their idea of a 24 hour Takeaway to Hull for the Saturday of the festival .

First Story – one of the partners is working throughout 2016 /17 in secondary schools in Hull developing new writing with secondary school children. The festival is providing a venue for a big showcase of the work achieved during the school year 16/17/

We will work with BBC local radio and TV to support localized activity and take pop-up versions of The Verb into communities with presenter Ian McMillan .

Humber Mouth have been running audience building events across Hull for many years with schemes such as Head in a Book and Word on the Street .

New projects include involving the over 50’s in North point Shopping Centre, and the How Was Your Day initiative, getting communities to connect through social media capturing contributions from sister cities to Hull . We continue to work together in this coming year to extend that reach.

BBC learning are bringing their R1 Academy to Hull for 2017. We are in discussions with them to include poetry and writing in their remit .

The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra will be working with us on a major drama commission. In the run up to the event, the orchestra will work with the Hull City of Culture music team to identify and work with a choir of Hull Children to perform live as a chorus for the piece.

We will work with local art groups on the design, making poetry bunting to decorate the city and on the ambition to create a poem to span the Humber Bridge .

We will put poetry in the landscape – working with freight and trucking companies and various Hull businesses.

**Poetry Market Place**

The main hub – the Art College and broadcasting base will contain a poetry market –where we will invite groups to run a stall such as small publishers, magazines, the Poetry Society, cake makers with poetry themed cakes, book binders, Penned in the Margin, etc etc

**Design**

We will work with the Hull design college to offer a professional contract to design the look of the festival . Everything from the programme to the way the venues are dressed and the look of the website.

Throughout the year, schools will be invited to make poetry bunting which will be showcased across the city .

**Digital**

As well as having a bespoke webpages, the festival will invite the best poets to be found in digital spaces to attend and give them a platform to blog and write a live response to the events .

**Sustainability**

If successful, this new festival will become a regular feature in the BBC Arts calendar, happening bi-annual and moving venue with the Cities of Culture.

*Everything to be Said* would therefore remain in Hull in 2019. This will enable us to ensure the festival has a legacy that is sustainable in the city and that lessons learned can be built on.

**Funding**

As well as existing programme budgets, the BBC will provide an extra 100k to support the festival which will cover venue hire, the cost of additional event support staff and technical staff to broadcast from non- BBC venues and for the poetry website.

We need funding from the Arts Council for the commissions and to extend and broaden the festival, particularly to support and present new work and commissions .

**Legacy .**

1. **For the City**

The city of Hull will have given birth to a brand new national festival. As this event will get a huge amount of local and national coverage , it will help accelerate the changing public perception of Hull as a vibrant Arts city . As well as celebrating the past, this festival will look mainly towards the future helping to enhance a feeling of confidence in the city’s place in the story of poetry in the country. It will open up the opportunities around poetry in practical as well as creative ways to a wider audience .

1. **For the Artists**

As the festival is a celebration of new work, the relationships fostered between artists in different disciplines will hopefully keep developing and lead to further work. As we are asking all artists to be resident at the festival, opportunities to discuss and share their work will be built into the timetable. It is inevitable that new creative connections will be made and follow on from an intense 4 days of working together . It will provide an opportunity for networking and to share contacts and ideas.

1. **For the Arts Organisations**

The development and delivery of this festival will involve close partnership working with all the partners who will have created a new major international festival from scratch which will stay in Hull for at least another outing . The learning curve for all involved is immense. The partnerships and connections developed during this process are already sparking creative ideas across the organisations which will naturally develop and continue to grow.

1. **For those taking part**

As we are providing – with partner organisations - a whole raft of activities, both passive and active around the writing, performing and reading of poetry and spoken word during the festival and in the build – up, new skills will have developed which will be supported through schools, colleges and groups of individuals into the future . We will raise the awareness of the fun and importance of poetry both its legacy and its future in the city . Between festivals we will work with partners to ensure the engagement is sustained through workshops, support networks and performing outlets for new talent .

Volunteers will benefit from having worked on a major National arts event and delivering events to differing sizes of audience as well as for the local and national broadcaster. This will allow volunteers to gain useful new skills in the areas of organization and communication , as well as being able to observe how a major festival operates.