**PRESS RELEASE**

**Wednesday 30 November 2016**

**Artistic pioneers, mavericks and rebels line up for *Where Are We Now?* as part of Hull 2017**

**New festival includes: Young Fathers • Charlotte Church • Akala • Bill Drummond • Andrew Weatherall and Sean Johnston • Jamie Reid • Chester P • Hollie McNish • The Four Owls • Mark Cousins**

**First events on sale today**

**Trailer available** [**here**](https://youtu.be/zYRjh6lRTlQ)

The first events and artistic collaborators for ***Where Are We Now?,*** a new festival presented by avant-garde art collective and provocateurs **Neu! Reekie!** as part of Hull UK City of Culture 2017, have been announced today. The festival will take place from 2 until 4 June 2017 with the first events on sale now at [www.hull2017.co.uk](http://www.hull2017.co.uk).

*Where Are We Now?* brings together a lively gathering of some of the most exciting cultural rabble-rousers, agitators, thinkers and luminaries from across Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Through a programme of spoken word events, hip-hop, live music, film screenings, discussions, street theatre, poetry and visual art, Neu! Reekie! and their artistic collaborators pose the question: *where are we now?* The idea is to stimulate debate amongst artists, musicians and writers, as well as the wider public.

The three-day festival includes Mercury Prize winners **Young Fathers**; political activist, writer and singer **Charlotte Church**; rapper and poet **Akala**; artist, musician, writer and producer **Bill Drummond**; Hull music promoter **Altu 'Flowrex' Collingwood** ; 2016 Stanley Kubrick prize-winning filmmaker, writer and curator **Mark Cousins**; artist **Jamie Reid** renowned for his work with the Sex Pistols; *A Love From Outer Space* founders **Andrew Weatherall** and **Sean Johnston**; hip-hop group **The Four Owls**; soul singer **Law Holt**; singer and MC **Eva Lazarus**; spoken word artist **Hollie McNish**; Caught by the River co-founder **Jeff Barrett**; UK rapper **Chester P**; David Bowie aficionado and leader in provocative pop **Momus**; hip hop band **Stanley Odd**; poet and writer **Sabrina Mahfouz**; and legendary Scottish outfit **Finitribe.**

Neu! Reekie! have developed a manifesto for the festival*:*

*"Where Are We Now?' will be a summer festival like no other: a gathering of time-served trouble-makers, spoken word rebels, artistic mavericks & leftfield music pioneers. We'll be converging on the city of Hull to ask of today's counter-culture the soaring, searching question with which David Bowie kissed us goodbye.*

*"The UK has reached a crossroads. Where it goes next is anyone's guess. Dark divisive forces of racism and prejudice are stirring across the UK (and Europe) in the wake of Brexit and across the Atlantic following the election of Donald Trump. We need to ask our artists, musicians & writers where they stand.*

*"For detached hipster unicyclists or stay-at-home clicktavists this may not be your time or place for we promise to ruffle feathers, take to the streets, challenge the dominant narratives, and counterpose Love to Hate.*

*"Convening the radical fusion will be one of the UK's most acclaimed and exciting artistic collectives. With counter-cultural roots going back through the last 25 years - to the legendary Rebel Inc publishing house - Neu! Reekie! intend to take the pulse of the cultural resistance across the UK and its four nations. And have some fun involving the good people of Hull.*

*"Come together. Ask questions. Listen & watch. Dance. Shake things up."*

The festival's opening event, **Neu! Reekie! present *Where Are We Now?*** will take place at Hull City Hall on Friday 2 June, when they will be joined by Young Fathers, Charlotte Church and Hollie McNish. In addition to the musical and spoken word guests, the evening will feature animation and short films.

On Saturday 3 June, Neu! Reekie! and Hull music promoter Altu 'Flowrex' Collingwood will invite the guiding lights of UK hip-hop to The Welly for an evening of live music. The line-up includes Akala, The Four Owls, Stanley Odd and Eva Lazarus. More details about the festival line-up will be announced next year.

**Martin Green, CEO and Director, Hull 2017**, said *"Hull has a rich history of radical thinking and, as many events throughout the City of Culture year show, pushing the boundaries of convention. We're delighted to welcome Neu! Reekie! and artists from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales in 2017 for Where Are We Now? Given the changing global context, it’s more essential than ever for artists to offer commentary on current issues. It will be exciting to see what conversations, debates and thoughts this gang of artistic agitators inspire in this city."*

*Where Are We Now?* is part of the Hull 2017 Roots & Routes season and is one of four weekend festivals due to take place next year that focus on contemporary political, social and cultural issues. The others are **WOW (Women of the World) Hull** (10 – 12 March), which will focus on gender equality; Freedom and Freedoms in a global context (1-4 September) including Bob and Roberta Smith’s summer takeover of Hull School of Art and Design as a ‘Centre for Freedom of Expression’; and **Substance** (8-10 December), which will focus on the significance of the North framed within a cultural context.

**EVENTS PROGRAMME – TICKETS ON SALE FROM TODAY AT** [**WWW.HULL2017.CO.UK**](http://WWW.HULL2017.CO.UK)

**Friday 2 June 2017**

Neu! Reekie! presents Where Are We Now? #1

City Hall, Queen Victoria Square, Hull, HU1 3RQ

Doors 6pm

Ticket Price: £20/£17.50 concession

**Saturday 3 June 2017**

Neu! Reekie! presents Where Are We Now? #2

The Welly Club, 105-107 Beverley Road, Hull, HU3 1TS

Doors 6pm

Ticket Price: £15/£12 conc

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**Neu! Reekie!** is a prize-winning radical arts collective run by poets Michael Pedersen and Kevin Williamson, based in Edinburgh. Neu! Reekie! have hosted events internationally, taken over National Galleries and National Museums, guest curated at major film-festivals and book festivals and have spawned a small DIY record label and publishing house. International outputs have occurred in the US, Japan, Malawi, Indonesia, New Zealand and beyond. Past participants in their projects have included Young Fathers, Charlotte Church, Andrew Weatherall, Irvine Welsh, Hollie McNish, John Giorno, Jean ‘Binta’ Breeze, David Shrigley, Bill Ryder-Jones, Jackie Kay and Primal Scream.

**Young Fathers** are a Mercury Prize winning hip-hop group based in Edinburgh. They formed in 2008 and eventually self-released their debut mixtape, *TAPE ONE* in 2011 which was followed by the critically acclaimed *TAPE TWO* in 2013. Gradually becoming busier with live shows the group had time to record their first full-length album, *DEAD*, which was released on Anticon and Big Dada in the UK and Europe in February 2014. Since January 2016, Young Fathers have toured almost constantly, starting with a headliner through the UK and Europe and followed by a lengthy support slot with Baths all around the USA. The group is made up of vocalists are Alloysious Massaquoi, Kayus Bankole and 'G' Hastings, (who also produces and plays keys and synth live) and drummer Steven Morrison.

**Charlotte Church** has sold over 12 million records worldwide with number one hits in the UK and the USA. More recently she’s been politically active, involved in backing Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour Leadership election and the EU Remain Campaign. Most recently, Charlotte created a new musical version of Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* for Cardiff’s Festival of Voice. Entitled *The Last Mermaid,* the production focused on environmental threats to our oceans and the importance of building connections in an increasingly disparate society.

**Akala** is a UK based Hip Hop artist, writer, poet and historian. The BAFTA and MOBO award winning performer and label owner is also a known for being a social entrepreneur who has appeared on numerous TV programmes across channels such as; ITV2, Channel 4, MTV, Sky Arts and the BBC, speaking on issues such as youth engagement, British and African-Caribbean culture, music and the world of the arts on the whole. Akala and his award winning drummer/music producer Cassell ‘TheBeatmaker’ (Plan B/TheStreets/Keziah Jones) have headlined 8 UK tours and have performed at some of the most renowned festivals across the globe, including Glastonbury, The Big Chill, Wireless, V Festival and SXSW plus more. As well as his impressive headline tours and plethora of festivals, Akala has also toured with the likes of Jay-Z, Nas & Damien Marley, M.I.A, Damon Albarn (Blur/Gorillaz) and Christina Aguilera. Over the past few years Akala has gained a notable reputation as one of the most dynamic and literate talents in the UK having taken part in British Council arts, education and music projects across several counties including South-East Asia, Africa, The Philippines, New Zealand and Australia. Over recent years Akala has become known for his intriguing and compelling lectures in numerous universities across the UK. As well as this, he is also heavily involved in journalism having written for publications such as The Guardian, Huffington Post UK and The Independent.

**Bill Drummond** is a South African-born Scottish artist and writer. In the year 1999 he created The Intercontinental Twinning Association. The Intercontinental Twinning Association exists to twin cities, towns, thoughts or actions with other cities, towns, thought or actions. In the year 2000 The Intercontinental Twinning Association successfully twinned Belfast with your wildest dream. In the year 2001 The Intercontinental Twinning Association successfully twinned the city of Hull with your darkest thought. Bill Drummond also works as a shoeshine boy. In the year 2017 Bill Drummond will be back in Hull. This time he will be working as a shoeshine boy in the centre of the city. He will be shining forty pairs of shoes in exchange for the owners of the shoes, sharing with him their darkest thought. These will become Hull’s Forty Darkest Thoughts. Hull’s Forty Darkest Thoughts will be proclaimed to the world. This is all part of the job of The Intercontinental Twinning Association. This is all part of the job of The Shoeshine Boy of the Western World.

**Mark Cousins** is a film director, producer and writer best known for his 15-hour 2011 documentary *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*. He has worked on numerous cine-essays including *A Story of Children and Film* and *I Am Belfast*, in which the city is personified by a 10,000 year old woman. Mark recently collaborated with Mogwai on the film *Atomic*, Neneh Cherry on *Stockholm My Love*, and was also the recent recipient of 2016 Stanley Kurbrick Prize.

**Jamie Reid** is an anarchist and influential artist probably best known for his work with the Sex Pistols. His work with the Sex Pistols included the Cecil Beaton silver jubilee portrait of the Queen with a safety pin through her nose, and the cover for *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols* - which came in at number two in a Rolling Stone Magazine poll of the best rock album sleeves of all time. He also worked on the Sex Pistols film The Great Rock and Roll Swindle and he has continued his collaborations with the music industry until the present day, designing album covers for bands including Afrocelt Sound System, and the interior of the strongroom Recording Studio in Shoreditch.

Beginning in 2010, ***A Love from Outer Space*** was originally conceived in North London by **Andrew Weatherall and Sean Johnston**. The pair held a mutual regard for Adrian Sherwood records and moved in the same circles for a number of years before ‘the oasis of slowness’, offered by ALFOS was conceived, a refuge from the frenetic ‘velocity’ of modern developments. The infectious uptake of ALFOS’s premise has been undeniable, with tours across the UK, Europe, numerous festival slots and the establishment of a Glasgow base at the Berkeley suite. Originally from Hull, Sean Johnston is a renowned DJ and Andrew Weatherall is a DJ, producer and remixer.

**The Four Owls** are a UK hip-hop group led by the merciless Big Owl (Fliptrix), guided by the teachings of Bird T (Verb T), entertained by the do-or-die spirit of Rusty Take-Off (BVA MC) and inspired by the inventions of Deformed Wing (Leaf Dog). Backed entirely by High Focus artist Leaf Dog on the production The Four Owls maintain a sound that is true to hip-hop in its real form. *Nature’s Greatest Mystery* is High Focus Records most ambitious release to date. The label has quickly gained a reputation for pushing boundaries in a scene that has grown desperate for a new type of binocular vision. The Four Owls are responsible for a modern day classic, fourteen tracks of straight up-and-down head banging rhythms, undiluted lyricism and conceptual brilliance. Who said UK hip hop was dead? Just look to the skies.

**Law Holt** is a soul singer. Her debut EP *Hustle* was released in 2013 which was followed by her debut album *City*. As well as her own glories, LAW has written, recorded, toured and performed internationally with Mercury Prize winners Young Fathers. Following a UK tour with Mykki Blanco, Law Holt will bookend the year with her mini-album *Gone* which is due to be released in December 2016.

Singer and MC **Eva Lazarus**’ musical flavours span across genres such as reggae, hip hop, drum and bass and jungle. In 2016, Eva has performed at festival such as Glastonbury, Soundwave, BoomBap, Outlook and BoomTown where she performed to a crowd of 16,000 people alongside Mungos Hifi. Her most recent release *Flash Your Lighter* features in a new British movie, *Brotherhood* staring and directed by Noel Clarke and grime superstar Stormzy. Produced by Killa Mosquito and also featuring Red Rat, *Flash Your Lighter* has had play from the likes of David Rodigan and MistaJam across BBC Radio 1, 1Xtra, Capital and Kiss.

**Hollie McNish** loves writing poetry. She has published two collections *Papers* and *Cherry Pie* and one poetic memoir *Nobody Told Me*. In 2014 she became the first poet to perform and record an album Versus at Abbey Road Studios and in 2016 collaborated with the brilliant Dutch Metropole Orkest on a second album. Hollie tours extensively across the UK and worldwide as well as being a big fan of online readings – her poetry videos have attracted millions of views, in particular her pieces relating to immigration and parenthood. She has a keen interest in development economics and migration studies and has worked on these topics with organisations such as The Economist, Radio 1, MTV, and UNICEF. *Plum* is her latest poetry collection, relating her thoughts on fruit and flesh from childhood through to supposed adulthood. An exceptional talent who counts Davina McCall, Kate Tempest and Pink amongst her fans, her poem *Embarrassed*, about public breastfeeding, has over 1.5mllion hits on YouTube.

**Caught By The River** began in summer 2007 as a website based solely on a handful of passions shared by the people behind it which included angling, music, books, films, nature and pubs. In the time since the first posting, after two summers at the Port Eliot Festival and several packed out Caught By The River Social Club events, the nature of the site has changed somewhat. Now Caught By The River encompasses everything from watching birds and urban rambling to poetry, art and gardening. The site was co-founded and is overseen by Heavenly Records and Jeff Barrett.

**Chester P** is a rapper and was a founding member of Task Force, Bury Crew and the M.U.D. Family. Noted for his style of psychedelic poetry, Chester P has built a collection of underground classics such as the *From The Ashes* LP right back to the *Music From The Corner* series, he touches on many subjects ranging from life on the streets of north London, mythology, politics, poetry and more.

**Momus** (named after the Greek god of mockery) is the artist name of Nick Currie, born in Paisley, Scotland and currently living in Japan. For over twenty years he’s been releasing albums of weird and poignant songs in a dizzying array of styles on independent labels like 4AD, el and Creation. He is one of underground music’s most controversial and influential provocateurs: from his early days with the Happy Family in the 1980s through his digital troubadour incarnations of the 2000s, Currie has lent his style to Pulp, Beck, the Divine Comedy, and others while remaining fiercely political and uncompromising in his artistic vision. In addition to music, Momus has published three books, a novel told entirely through jokes and two books imagining parallel futures for Scotland and Japan.

**Stanley Odd** are an alternative hip-hop group based in Scotland. Formed in 2009, you’d be hard pushed to find a festival or stage that the band haven’t appeared on and demolished over the last few of years. Their second studio album ‘Reject’ was shortlisted for Scottish Album of the Year 2013, third album, ‘A Thing Brand New’, was placed at No.2 in the Herald’s Best Scottish Albums of 2014 and they were the recipients of the 2013 Scottish Music Awards’ Big Apple Award. Champions of outsiderdom and oddity, the band’s message of resistance, challenge, solidarity and affirmation, mesmerising wordcraft and musical richness have already extended their following across tribes from hard-core grimesters to the folk scene.

**Sabrina Mahfouz** is a British Egyptian playwright, poet and screenwriter who is currently working with the V&A Museum, Royal Opera House, Saqi Books, Futures Theatre and Clean Break. Her 2016 plays are *With a Little Bit of Luck* (Paines Plough), *Slug* (nabokov), *Battleface* (Bush Theatre), *Laylas Room* (Theatre Centre) and *The Love I Feel Is Red* (Tobacco Factory Theatres). Her TV short, *Breaking the Code*, was produced by BBC3 and BBC Drama earlier this year. Her play *Chef* won a 2014 Fringe First Award and Clean was produced by Traverse Theatre and transferred to New York in 2014. Sabrina has been the Sky Arts Academy Scholar for Poetry, Leverhulme Playwright in Residence and Associate Artist at Bush Theatre. *How You Might Know Me*, her latest collection was released in October 2016 and is a poetic exploration of four women’s lives, connected through their experience in different areas of the UKs growing sex industry.

**Finitribe** are a legendary Edinburgh electronic outfit championed by Andrew Weatherall, Paul Oakenfold and Pete Tong among others. *Let The Tribe Grow* EP was released in 1986 and featured the now legendary Balearic Club anthem De-Testimony. Finitribe were now very much ensconced in the acid house movement of 1989, The Second Summer of Love. Detestimony was licensed by Pete Tong for the classic Balearic Beats Vol 1 and to this day it remains a tune that is still played out all over the world. They’re forthcoming and long awaited new album Suilven will appear on One Little Indian in 2017.

**ENDS**

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**Hull UK City of Culture 2017**

**Hull UK City of Culture 2017** is a 365 day programme of cultural events and creativity inspired by the city and told to the world. Hull secured the title of UK City of Culture 2017 in November 2013. It is only the second city to hold the title and the first in England.

**Divided into four seasons**, this nationally significant event draws on the distinctive spirit of the city and the artists, writers, directors, musicians, revolutionaries and thinkers that have made such a significant contribution to the development of art and ideas.

The Culture Company was set up to deliver the Hull 2017 programme and is an independent organisation with charitable status. It has raised £32 million, with over 60 partners supporting the project, including public bodies, lottery distributors, trusts and foundations and local and national businesses. Key contributions are coming from: **Host City** – Hull City Council; **Principal Partners** - Arts Council England, BBC, Big Lottery Fund, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, KCOM, KWL, Spirit of 2012, Yorkshire Water and the University of Hull; **Major Partners** –Associated British Ports, Arco, BP, the British Council, Green Port Hull, Hull Clinical Commissioning Group, MKM Building Supplies, P&O Ferries, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Sewell Group, Siemens, Smith & Nephew and Wykeland Group.

68 per cent of the funding is dedicated to public facing activities, including the widest range of cultural events in every corner of the city, with a further 11 per cent for legacy and contingency. More than £5 million is being invested in volunteering, learning and community engagement. £1.6 million is being invested to ensure a legacy after 2017. This includes capacity building, such as supporting existing events so they can grow, staging curtain-raiser events, developing future programming for after 2017 and building a new platform to support a unified ticketing system for the city.

Hull 2017’s International Partners are: Aarhus, Denmark, which is European Capital of Culture 2017; Reykjavik, Iceland; Rotterdam, The Netherlands; and Freetown, Sierra Leone (twinned with Hull). These relationships are reflected in a number of events throughout the year.

For information go to [www.hull2017.co.uk](http://www.hull2017.co.uk)

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