**CONTAINS STRONG LANGUAGE**

**THE HULL FESTIVAL OF POETRY AND PERFORMANCE**

'*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 *Contains Strong Language : The Hull Festival of Poetry and Performance.*

From **Thursday 28 September to Sunday 2 October 2017,** the BBC and partners will curate a 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, BBC Four, BBC Arts Online and The Space. ? Live / Recorded for TV broadcast

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. 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.

If Larkin is the figurehead of the festival, Hull provides the spirit*.* Hull has inspired poets as varied as Andrew Marvell, Andrew Motion, Douglas Dunn, Tom Paulin, Stevie Smith, Christopher Reid and Sean O'Brien, resulting in Peter Porter calling it 'the most poetic city in England'. Hull is a place to think, to be inspired - to be original. The motto of the festival, therefore, is:

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

Sustainability

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

Contains Strong Language will 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.

National Poetry Day will (hopefully) move to sit within the festival and tie in with our theme.

Partners

Hull City of Culture

Hull City Council

Humber Mouth

First Story

I thought it was inappropriate for this type of organization to be part of the Steering Group.Hull Libraries

Hull University

Forward Publishing

BBC

Arts Council

British Council

East Riding Wordquake (Libraries & Literature Festivals)

We will build links with other literary festivals such as Crossing Borders ( Rotterdam ) and Beverley and Bridlington

Humber Mouth

Discussions are on-going with Humber Mouth and Hull City Council about our festivals sitting together to maximize impact and use of resources for a joint poetry moment in the city in 2017 This would mean Humber Mouth bringing their festival forward from November for one year.

International

We will work with the British Council to 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 is a focus for them.

It is really important that the artists coming to the festival will be asked to do more than one event and to stay for the duration . We will create a ‘cast’ of artists for the festival who will have time to socialize and share with each other and the public.

As well as performing to audiences, we will commission new work from artists which will be premiered at the festival and encourage people from different backgrounds and art forms to work together . We will also ask each artists to engage with our outreach and education programme.

Work with Firm of Poets – commissioned as spoken word artists in residence and to deliver engagement programme – with digital dimension.

THE PROGRAMME

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.

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 Isy 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.

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

The programme will consist of ;

* 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.
* All the major radio arts programmes will record editions with an audience, including (R3) The Verb, Free Thinking , (R4) Poetry Please! With Great Pleasure, Word of Mouth, Front Row,
* Creative pieces – a new radio drama commission written by a poet to be broadcast on R4
* Events – a major public recording of a drama with music from the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra to be broadcast on R3
* 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

SITE

The festival should 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 events will be spread across the city in spaces such as Kardomah , the Hands on History museum, City Hall and the Art College .

There will be spaces for short crowd performances and workshop areas for young people to get involved.

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

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