Tuesday 13 June 2017

BRAVE NEW WORDS

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL LAUNCHES 2017 PROGRAMME

The Edinburgh International Book Festival today launches its 2017 programme and, through the lens of Brave New Words, examines not only the big, global questions exploring truth and post truth, terrorism and fanaticism, gender, diversity and identity, death, globalisation and a little bit of Danish lykke but also celebrates the most joyful, intimate and personal stories of individuals. Conversations, performances, lectures, workshops and discussions featuring writers from over 50 countries offer multiple perspectives, interpretations and translations of the changing world around us.

Nick Barley, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said, “Seventy years on from the first Edinburgh Festival, the need for artists and performers to come together in celebration of free speech and the power of creativity is as great as it has ever been. Against a backdrop of political earthquakes, this year’s Book Festival proudly presents an awe-inspiring international array of writers who are closely observing the changing world and - to paraphrase the poet Emily Dickinson - telling it slant.”

Making his first appearance in Charlotte Square Gardens, bestselling US author Paul Auster discusses the parallel lives of the principal character in his latest novel 4 3 2 1, while fellow American Richard Ford explores the reality of the American Dream in 2017 in conversation with Kirsty Wark. Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie debates the role of women in the world with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon; Andrew O’Hagan delivers a keynote lecture on the future of Scotland; Zadie Smith offers an insightful look at the growing pains of young women; comedian Reginald D Hunter joins novelist Tanya Landman to discuss the long shadow slavery casts over the USA and Meik Wiking, Danish author of the bestselling Little Book of Hygge and CEO of Copenhagen’s Happiness Research Institute, launches his new book over a cosy afternoon tea.

In an ambitious move, the Book Festival has responded to the 70th Anniversary of the Festival City by expanding onto George Street and staging showcase events in the Kings Theatre and St Mary’s Cathedral in the West End. Two new venues at the west end of George Street, the Bosco Theatre and The Greenhouse, offer new opportunities for creative programming looking at the relationship the Festival has with the city. With events including LitLong

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The Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd is a Scottish charity (SC010120) and a limited company (registered in Scotland no 79939) and has its registered office at 5A Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, EH2 4DR.
Reading the City, writing workshops, and live writing inspired by the Festival City from the Book Festival’s Poets in Residence as well as drop-in activities for all ages, it is intended that this extension of Charlotte Square Gardens, which will include a box office, pop-up book shop and patio seating area, will open-up the Festival to new audiences.

In a special event, *Paul Auster at 70*, the author discusses his life and work presented at the Kings Theatre in partnership with Edinburgh International Festival and British Council as part of the Spirit of ‘47 programme. In St Mary’s Cathedral one of the Book Festival’s Guest Selectors, David Mitchell, is joined by conductor, pianist and one of the world’s most audacious classical performers, David Greilsammer, to present a collaboration featuring beautiful and extraordinary piano music interspersed with readings of Mitchell’s unpublished micro-stories.

Mitchell’s selected events exploring the interplay between music and words also feature percussionist Evelyn Glennie, composer Sally Beamish, novelist Hari Kunzruand celebrated folk duo The Unthanks. Acclaimed Scottish science fiction writer, Ken MacLeod, brings leading sci-fi, horror and fantasy writers to Edinburgh to look at how imagining a different world can make sense of the one we live in. His guests include international stars Nalo Hopkinson and Ada Palmer alongside Jo Walton and Edinburgh’s own Charles Stross.

Elif Shafak, Turkey’s most-read female novelist, explores the powerful connection between fiction and the political world in which it is written in a series of conversations with American writer Siri Hustvedt, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, Richard Holloway and Heather McDaid. Roxane Gay, the writer responsible for bringing issues of race, gender and identity into the American mainstream, has collaborated with Scottish Makar Jackie Kay to programme a series of discussions featuring writers including Reni Eddo-Lodge, Argentinian novelist Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, Icelandic writer Thordis Elva and Margo Jefferson which will all be chaired by Kay.

In a fascinating exercise in public therapy, US author Laura Albert places herself on the couch with acclaimed writer and psychotherapist Susie Orbach to explore the motivations that led her to invent the persona of J T Leroy. Others coming to Edinburgh to tell their own deeply personal stories include foreign correspondent John Simpson, Anna Pasternak, Jeremy Paxman, actors Stephen McGann and Charlotte Rampling, Sayeeda Warsi, the UK’s first Muslim member of the Cabinet, and punk pioneer and provocateur Cosey Fanni Tutti who will be in conversation with Edinburgh’s own Ian Rankin.

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Influential and successful women from the worlds of sport, politics, business and entertainment are celebrated in a series of events entitled This Woman Can. Yazidi teenager Farida Khalaf tells her harrowing and courageous story of being kidnapped and sold into slavery by ISIS in 2014; Juliana Buhring, Dervla Murphy and Jennifer Tough have all embarked upon life-changing long distance cycle rides; politicians Harriet Harman, Jess Phillips and Catherine Mayer examine their passion and drive for improving the lives of their constituents and Judy Murray tells of her highs and lows not only of raising two top-class tennis players, but also championing girls who have ambitions in the sport.

The Book Festival celebrates an extraordinary array of creativity from great international novelists including Nicole Krauss, Peter Høeg, Caroline Brothers, Karl Ove Knausgaard, Jenny Erpenbeck, Marcel Theroux and André Naffis-Sahely who all launch their new books in Edinburgh. From the USA, Colson Whitehead and Dana Spiotta make their first visit to the Book Festival. Leading European authors include Polish novelist Olga Tokarczuk, Aleš Šteger from Slovenia whose debut novel has just been translated into English and Croatian Daša Drndić. From Ireland Colm Tóibín, John Boyne and Sebastian Barry are joined by Bernard MacLaverty who unveils his first book in sixteen years. Home grown talent includes Maggie O’Farrell and Val McDermid who launches her latest crime novel; Ali Smith returns with the second in her seasonal series and novelist and poet John Burnside introduces two new works.

A series of events celebrating international writing in translation through the Man Booker International Prize (the winner of which will be announced tomorrow) will include 2017 shortlisted authors Dorthe Nors and Samanta Schweblin. Judges Daniel Hahn and Helen Mort are joined by Book Festival Director, and Chairman of the 2017 judging panel, Nick Barley to discuss the merits of the winning novel and it is hoped that the winning author will also be available to join the discussion.

In addition to bringing international authors into Edinburgh, the Book Festival’s Outriders project, supported by the Scottish Government’s Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund through Creative Scotland, sent five talented and very different Scottish writers on five extraordinary journeys across The Americas. Each was accompanied by a local writer, and they will reunite in Charlotte Square Gardens in August to discuss their adventures, and unveil the writing inspired by each of their journeys.

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Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said, “Outriders has been a great opportunity for our writers to explore pertinent and thought-provoking themes on their journeys across two continents. It will be particularly interesting to compare their insights and experiences with those of the local writers who accompanied them. We’re proud to have supported this initiative through £100,000 from the Scottish Government’s EXPO fund, and look forward to seeing the writing inspired by their incredible journeys at the Edinburgh International Book Festival this year.”

The Book Festival is a world leader in using performance and music to explore books on stage in new and innovative ways and in 2017, in a new partnership with Edinburgh’s Royal Lyceum Theatre, the Festival takes three of the most talked about books of the year, Amy Liptrot’s *The Outrun*, Graeme Macrae Burnet’s *His Bloody Project*, and James Kelman’s *Dirt Road*, and creates short dramatic presentations on stage in Charlotte Square Gardens. In an extraordinarily intimate and personal experience, cellist and composer Greg Sinclair turns the thoughts and stories of his audience of three into their very own musical performance. Aidan O’Rourke, who was inspired by James Robertson’s *365 Stories* to write a piece of music every day for a year, joins Robertson to share songs and stories from the two projects with musical accompaniment from Kit Downes. A new solo show from Mark Kydd, *There Were Two Brothers*, is a funny, poignant exploration of fraternal relationships and from songmaker Kirsty Law, author Kirsty Logan and contemporary harpist Esther Swift comes a dark and transporting new performance, *Lord Fox*. Both presented in the Book Festival’s new Bosco Theatre on George Street.

The written word provides the perfect medium to tackle ideas around mortality and to express our deepest emotions and the Book Festival brings together a luminous collection of international authors in the strand Reading the Final Chapter. Sarah Gray, Julia Samuel, Greg Garrett and Carla Valentine are amongst those whose sometimes heartbreaking stories offer hope and cast an unflinching eye on ethical matters such as organ donation and assisted dying. In *Taking the Air*, supported by the Wellcome Trust and in partnership with Durham University’s Life of Breath project, the Festival presents a series of truly fascinating events looking at sighing, singing, poetry, air quality and taking our last breath. Poet Imtiaz Dharker joins Dr Naya Tsentourou to examine the history of the sigh, from poetry to prayer; novelist, poet and librettist Michael Symmons Roberts explores breath as punctuation and instrument and science writer Sam Kean traces the origins and ingredients of the air we breathe. And for those who need a breather, they can drop into The Greenhouse on George Street and help create an illuminated encyclopaedia exploring the language and history of breath and air.

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Spoken Word returns in Babble On with performances from some of the brightest poets and spoken word artists from across the world. Produced in partnership with Luke Wright and Becky Fincham, performers include Roger McGough, Hollie McNish, Harry Baker, Jenny Lindsay and Iona Lee. The Book Festival is also delighted to welcome The Last Poets to Scotland for the first time. Formed in the US in the late 1960s, their performance poetry has influenced generations of musicians and they come to talk of their incredible lives with Christine Otten, whose novel is based on their story.

Actor, raconteur and biographer Simon Callow talks to Jenny Brown about his extraordinary life in The Frederick Hood Memorial Lecture and Cressida Cowell will address the importance of crafting stories to entertain and inspire children in The Siobhan Dowd Trust Memorial Lecture. The Book Festival has collaborated with the University of Edinburgh to create a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) called How to Read a Novel, which uses the 2017 James Tait Black Fiction Prize shortlist to illustrate lessons. As well as events with some of the shortlisted authors, including Garth Greenwell and Eimear McBride, the winners of James Tait Black Prizes will be announced in a special event on Monday 14 August.

To mark the 70th anniversary of the partition of India, and the creation of Pakistan, writers with a deep knowledge of the country come to tell their stories including Aravind Adiga, Amit Chaudhuri who launches his new novel, Meena Kandasamy and Sunil Khilnani while speakers intimately involved with Pakistan include Nadeem Aslam and Dilip Hiro. Celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Scottish New Towns Act, ReimagiNation: Cumbernauld, the first in a series of new festivals created for the New Towns, took place in May and residents from the town gather in Charlotte Square Gardens to tell their personal stories of migration and community. ReimagiNation is part of the Booked! programme of events supported by players of People’s Postcode Lottery.

The breadth and scope of books for children and young people has seen a phenomenal evolution over the last 70 years, demonstrating the freedoms, diversity and plurality of contemporary young lives. Children and young people use fiction as a framework for exploring difficult stories and challenging truths. The Baillie Gifford Children’s Programme welcomes authors and illustrators from as far afield as Australia, New Zealand, Iceland and Iran telling tales of discovery, identity, survival, secrets, mermaids and ponies. Kristina Stephenson, the 2017 Illustrator in Residence, brings her character Sir Charlie Stinky Socks to life to celebrate his 10th birthday; Anthony

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Horowitz introduces the latest instalment of his Alex Rider adventures; Olympian Chris Hoy recounts the adventures of *Flying Fergus*; Alex Wheatle explores the struggle of pursuing one’s dreams while living on a council estate and Julia Donaldson launches her brand-new book *The Ugly Five*. Cressida Cowell unveils her magical new series, *The Wizards of Once* and Patrick Ness, Meg Rosoff and Sarah Crossan explore stories of race, sexual awakening and identity. Those taking their first steps in children’s fiction include actor and comedian Adrian Edmondson and broadcaster Clare Balding while Julian Clary returns with the third outing of his Bold family.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival receives funding from Creative Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council and this year welcomes over 1000 participants from 50 different countries to its tented village in the heart of Edinburgh and runs from Saturday 12 to Monday 28 August 2017. Entrance to the Gardens is FREE and the gardens, cafes, bookshops and all venues are fully accessible. Full details of the programme can be found at [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk). Tickets to all events go on sale at 8.30am on Tuesday 20 June 2017, online at [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk), by phone on 0845 373 5888 or in person at the Box Office at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (on Tuesday 20 June only, thereafter at The Hub, Castlehill).

- Ends -

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Notes to editors:

The Book Festival is sharing the George Street space with Salt n Sauce Promotions, operators of The Stand and New Town Theatre. The Book Festival on George Street will be delivered with the support of Essential Edinburgh, Edinburgh’s first and largest Business Improvement District.
The Festival welcomes the former Artistic Director of the National Theatre, Nicholas Hytner; actor Harriet Walter who explores her approach to playing Shakespeare’s male roles; Robert Webb with his memoir *How Not To Be A Boy* alongside conversations with fellow comedians Sara Pascoe, Joe Lycett, Limmy, Andrew O’Neill and Andy Hamilton who introduces his new novel *The Star Witness*.

Audiences can catch Next Year’s Bestsellers Now in the new Bosco Theatre with three events introducing unpublished forthcoming novels from the likes of Luke Alnutt, Katherine May, Malachy Tallack and Joanna Cannon. Free advance proof copies will be available courtesy of the publishers Canongate, Borough Press and Trapeze.

The First Book Award returns with novels, novellas and short story collections from 49 eligible writers this year, including a political thriller from former Business Secretary Vince Cable, debut novels from renowned non-fiction writers Francis Spufford and Lucy Hughes-Hallett, as well as authors from Scotland, Slovenia, Argentina, Poland, Norway, Switzerland and France. The winning book is voted for by readers and audience members and voting closes at midnight on Friday 13 October.

Amongst the 62 crime writers appearing in 2017, representation from Scandinavia includes Sweden’s Arne Dahl and Karoline Ramqvist, Norway’s Kjell Ola Dahl, Finland’s Antti Tuomainen and Yrsa Sigurdardottir from Iceland. Home grown talent John Gordon Sinclair, Ian Rankin, Denise Mina, James Oswald, Lin Anderson, Alex Gray, Doug Johnstone and Chris Brookmyre are joined by writers from France, Canada, Germany, Italy, Egypt and the USA. Authors writing crime thrillers for children and young adults include Christoffer Carlsson, Lauren St John, Sarah Rubin and Cathy MacPhail.

Scotland’s youngest recipient of a Michelin star, Tom Kitchin, launches his latest offering and food loving audiences can also enjoy an afternoon tea with restaurateurs and food writers including Vivek Singh, Yasmin Khan, Niranjala M Ellawala & Prakash Sivanathan, Fuschia Dunlop and Joudie Kalla.

In partnership with Creative New Zealand and WORD Christchurch, the Book Festival welcomes graphic novelist Sarah Laing, Courtney Sina Meredith with her debut short story collection and poet Hera Lindsay Bird to Edinburgh.

Among the authors launching their brand new books in Edinburgh in August include A C Grayling, Akhil Sharma, Helen Sedgwick, Lars Mytting, Douglas Dunn, Robert Mc Crucm, Omar Robert Hamilton and Jess Richards.