

Press Release

The World in One City: Full Programme for *Spirit of '47* Announced

Today the International Festival and British Council announce full details for *Spirit of '47*, a co-curated programme celebrating international cultural collaboration. The 10 day season of events features performances, screenings and talks from all over the world.

Spirit of '47 marks the 70th anniversary of the International Festival and is inspired by the founding principals of the first Festival. In 1947, a group of visionary figures including first Festival Director Rudolf Bing, Henry Harvey Wood, Head of the newly formed British Council in Scotland and leaders from across Edinburgh, conceived of an arts festival that would welcome people from all over the world to the Scottish capital, in a celebration of cultures and people.

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, this bold and ground-breaking partnership recognised the potential for international understanding through cultural collaboration, and laid the foundations for the global gathering of artists and audiences which has taken place in Edinburgh every August since.

Spirit of '47 champions the optimism and continued resonance of this partnership, bringing together an eclectic line-up of artists from Syria to Stirlingshire. In 2017, this open spirit asks questions of national identity, global citizenship, conflict and migration.

The programme offers a rare opportunity to hear a diverse range of cultural perspectives from over 20 nations, featuring artists from Scotland, England, USA, Ukraine, Lebanon, Cuba, China, Jamaica, Palestine, Chile, Argentina, Syria, Portugal, Germany, Iran, Pakistan, India and more.

Artists include writer and performer Azade Shahmiri (Iran), author Paul Auster (USA), theatre directors John Tiffany, Vicky Featherstone and David Greig (UK), sitar virtuoso Anoushka Shankar (India), Mercury Prize winning Benjamin Clementine (UK), Qawwali singer Faiz Ali Faiz (Pakistan), Scottish folk singer-songwriter Karine Polwart, and Turner Prize-winning visual artist and musician Martin Creed. Special events celebrate fresh playwriting from around the world, European musical collaborations and an afternoon of film, music and discussion examining the current conflict in Syria.

A partnership with BBC Arts Digital extends the reach of the season, making events available live and on demand to a global audience online.

Fergus Linehan, International Festival Director, said: 'It has been an enormous pleasure to work with our colleagues at the British Council to realise a programme that captures the spirit of 1947 while expressing the diverse and collaborative spirit of 2017. Whether it is looking forward to the playwriting voices of the future or looking back to post-war Jamaica, India and Edinburgh, *Spirit of '47* will, I hope, give a sense of how culture continues to flow and flourish across oceans, continents and borders'.

Graham Sheffield, Director Arts, British Council, said: 'The British Council's mission - to build connections between the UK and the rest of the world - has always been closely linked to the vision of the Edinburgh International Festival, and I'm delighted that, 70 years after we established the very first Festival together, we are working together in a new spirit of collaboration. The values that drove us to establish what is now one of the most successful arts festivals in the world are just as pertinent in today's geo-political context as they were in the broken and war-torn Europe of 1947. In 2017 our horizons are global, the artforms more diverse, but the need for arts and culture is no less. *Spirit of '47* will restate to a global audience in Edinburgh our strong belief that the arts can connect and inspire us in the most turbulent times'.

Spirit of '47 Programme

Minefield, written and directed by Argentinian Lola Arias, is a searing piece of documentary theatre which charts the experiences of both British and Argentinian soldiers during the Falklands War, performed by veterans from both sides of the conflict. Since opening as part of LIFT '16 last summer, *Minefield* has toured internationally to unanimous acclaim.

Voicelessness is a rare chance for UK audiences to see work by emerging female Iranian director, writer and performer Azade Shahmiri. A story of determination and hope, it imagines a dystopian future for global society 50 years from now, where freedom of expression has been muted and suppressed.

For over 20 years, the Royal Court's International Playwrights' Programme, with the support of the British Council, has encouraged emerging writers all over the world to address urgent subjects in their societies. *New and Now* is a series of new play readings developed through this programme and staged over six mornings. Royal Court Artistic Director Vicky Featherstone and Associate Directors John Tiffany, Lucy Morrison and Sam Pritchard work with writers including Natal'ya Vorozhbit from Ukraine, Zhu Yi from China, Guillermo Calderón from Chile, Dalia Taha from Palestine, Maya Zbib from Lebanon and Cuba's Laura Liz Gil Echenique.

The *New European Songbook* pairs together European musicians with an artist who has recently migrated to their country, to create a new song. This songbook of new works is performed live for the first time in two special concerts, a celebration of the diverse talents and cultural influences present within Europe today. The varied line-up of artists includes the UK's Matthew Herbert and Karine Polwart; singer Conchita Wurst collaborating with Austrian-based Syrian trio Basalt; Fado singer Carolina; composer Shalan Alhamwy with soprano Rasha Rizk; and musicians from Jordi Savall's Orpheus XXI project, with more artists to be announced. The *New European Songbook* is a major creative collaboration between European broadcasters through the European Broadcasting Union, broadcast by BBC Arts Digital and BBC Radio 3.

Spirit of '47 partners with Edinburgh International Book Festival to present *Paul Auster at 70*, featuring the iconic American novelist and author of the New York Trilogy in conversation. Auster will chart his life and career across 70 years and consider the vast social, political and artistic developments experienced throughout both his lifetime, and that of the International Festival.

Virtuoso sitar player and world music progressive Anoushka Shankar performs work from *Land of Gold*, an album about movement and travelling inspired by the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe, created with musicians and artists based across Europe and India. She is joined by Pakistani Qawwali singer Faiz Ali Faiz with a programme of song from the devotional Sufi tradition, in an evening that marks the 70th anniversary of the Partition of British India and creation two independent states, India and Pakistan.

Mercury Prize-winning singer-songwriter Benjamin Clementine has been compared to Nina Simone, Leonard Cohen, Anohni and Rufus Wainwright. Born in London to Ghanaian parents, Clementine refined his skills as a homeless busker on the streets of Paris, and found success with his debut album *At Least For Now*. He visits the Festival Theatre in a special concert as part of *Spirit of '47*.

The season includes a late-night residency from artist, musician and Turner Prize-winner Martin Creed, whose nightly cabaret *Words & Music* runs throughout the Festival. Creed's work with the British Council has taken him all over the world - in *Words & Music*, he presents a non-conformist evening inviting the audience to question what exactly constitutes a work of art.

Spirited Voices is series of talks featuring artists, writers and cultural commentators exploring themes of culture and conflict, global citizenship and internationalism. Participants include writer and journalist Raja Shehadeh, writer and director David Greig, broadcaster Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, Jamaican poet and novelist Lorna Goodison, Grenadian writer Jacob Ross and Guyanese artist Roshini Kempadoo.

Film screenings include *Reflections on Syria* during which artists from Syria present their stories and memories through film, music and theatre, and *The World in One City* - a newly commissioned documentary from the Scottish Documentary Institute charting the history of the International Festival as a place of ideas and cultural exchange, featuring interviews alongside rare archive footage.

A partnership between *Spirit of '47* and BBC Arts Digital extends the reach of the season online. Play readings, films, discussions and music will be live streamed from The Studio at the Festival Theatre, and in harmony with *Spirit of '47*'s principles, these performances will be available internationally, live and on demand from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts>.

Spirit of '47 is based at The Studio on Potterrow, with additional events at the Usher Hall, Festival and King's Theatres. It runs for 10 days during the International Festival from Sunday 6 to Wednesday 16 August.

Tickets for all events are now on sale and available from Hub Tickets on 0131 473 2000 or at eif.co.uk.

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Notes to Editors

Edinburgh International Festival

- The Edinburgh International Festival is an unparalleled celebration of the performing arts and an annual meeting point for peoples of all nations. Committed to virtuosity and originality, the International Festival presents some of the finest performers and ensembles from the worlds of dance, opera, music and theatre for three weeks each August.
- The International Festival continues to attract people both locally and from across the globe, with audiences from 84 nations attending last year's cultural celebration in Edinburgh.
- In 2017 the International Festival celebrates its 70th anniversary. The International Festival was established in 1947 to 'provide a platform for the flowering of the human spirit' through a shared celebration of artistic excellence and cultural exchange. The 2017 programme celebrates 70 years of outstanding virtuosity and innovation, and explores how the Festival's founding ideals still resonate today.
- The 2017 International Festival runs from Friday 4 to Monday 28 August, welcoming 2,020 artists from 40 nations to perform in Scotland's capital city.

British Council

- The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. Using the UK's cultural resources we make a positive contribution to the countries we work with - changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.
- The British Council work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Each year we reach over 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications.
- Founded in 1934, the British Council is a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. The majority of its income is raised delivering a range of projects and contracts in English teaching and examinations, education and development contracts and from partnerships with public and private organisations. Eighteen per cent of funding is received from the UK government.

Full Programme Listings

THEATRE / PERFORMANCE:

Minefield (ARGENTINA / UNITED KINGDOM)

Written and directed by Lola Arias; performed in English and Spanish with English and Spanish supertitles.

First commissioned by LIFT and co-produced by: Brighton Festival, Royal Court Theatre, Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Theaterformen, Le Quai Angers, Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, Maison des Arts de Créteil and Humain Trop Humain / CDN de Montpellier.

The Studio
6-9 Aug 7pm
1hr 40mins
£20 (fees apply)

Voicelessness (IRAN)

Written, directed and performed by Azade Shahmiri

Performed in Farsi with English supertitles

The Studio
14 & 15 Aug 7.30pm
55 mins
£15 (fees apply)

Martin Creed's Words and Music (UNITED KINGDOM)

The Studio
4-27 Aug 10.30pm (except 8, 9, 15 & 21 Aug)
1hr 15mins
£20 (fees apply)

New and Now INTERNATIONAL PLAYS FROM THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE

The Studio, 1hour
£10 (fees apply)

Bad Roads (Ukraine) | 8 Aug 11am

By Natal'ya Vorozhbit, translated by Sasha Dugdale

Directed by Vicky Featherstone

A harrowing and bitterly funny play about the Ukrainian civil war, as seen through the eyes of the women fighting, reporting and enduring the conflict.

Ghalia's Miles (Lebanon) | 9 Aug 11am

By Maya Zbib, translated by Katharine Halls

Directed by Lucy Morrison

Fleeing Lebanon in the hope of building a new life in Europe, Ghalia makes an extraordinary journey through the Middle East.

Drainage Alley (Cuba) | 10 Aug 11am

By Laura Liz Gil Echenique, translated by William Gregory

Directed by John Tiffany

This story of a quiet alleyway in Havana explores Cuba poised on the cusp of opening up to the world.

You never touched the dirt (China) | 11 Aug 11am

Written and translated by Zhu Yi

Directed by Sam Pritchard

This subtle and witty play tackles the breathtaking economic transformation of China, the dreams it enables and those it crushes.

There is no one between you and me (Palestine) | 12 Aug 11am

By Dalia Taha

Directed by Lucy Morrison

A woman returns to a hometown she no longer recognises in this haunting new play from Dalia Taha.

Speech (Discurso) (Chile) | 13 Aug 11am

Written and directed by Guillermo Calderón, translated by William Gregory

Performed by Kika Markham

Guillermo Calderón returns to the subject of Chilean president Michelle Bachelet in a new version of this extraordinary monologue.

MUSIC:

Anoushka Shankar (INDIA/UK)

Opening performance by Faiz Ali Faiz PAKISTAN

Usher Hall

16 Aug 7.30pm

£14 - £34 (fees apply)

New European Songbook SOUNDS FROM A CONTINENT IN FLUX

The *New European Songbook* is a major creative collaboration between European broadcasters. Events will be live-streamed by BBC Arts Digital and recorded for broadcast through an initiative of the European Broadcasting Union, supported by BBC Arts Digital and BBC Radio 3.

The Studio

11 Aug 7pm & 12 Aug 7pm

1hr 45mins

£19 (fees apply)

Benjamin Clementine (UNITED KINGDOM)

Festival Theatre

10 Aug 7.30pm

£20 - £35 (fees apply)

SCREENINGS:

Reflections on Syria (SYRIA)

The Studio

13 Aug 3pm

1hr 30mins

£8 (fees apply)

The World in One City 70 YEARS OF THE EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

The Studio

10 Aug 5pm, 19 Aug 2.30pm & 5pm

1 hour

£8 (fees apply)

TALKS & DISCUSSIONS

Paul Auster at 70 (USA)

Presented by Edinburgh International Book Festival

King's Theatre
14 Aug 6.30pm
1 hour
£15 (fees apply)

Spirited Voices INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS
The Studio
£6 (unless otherwise stated)

Cultural Connections

Fergus Linehan, Director of the Edinburgh International Festival and Graham Sheffield, Director Arts of the British Council discuss global citizenship and culture as a connecting spark.

7 Aug, 1pm
1hour 1 Free

War Dialogues

In times of conflict, artists can offer fresh and often challenging perspectives alongside, and in contrast to, mediated accounts of war, allowing human experiences to come to the fore. A panel of leading artists and academics gather to explore the role of contemporary artists in conflict, and to discuss the importance of challenging accepted truths through art.

7 Aug 3.00pm
1 hr 15 mins

Arts in the Aftermath of Conflict

We explore the role artists and art play in rebuilding societies torn apart by war in different global contexts. Artists and practitioners discuss the power of culture to rebuild trust between communities, welcoming 'the other' and providing safe spaces for the exploration of contested 'truths'.

9 Aug 2.00pm
1 hour

The Power of Plays

Journalists, writers and cultural commentators discuss the unique ability theatre has to examine different perspectives, effect change and unravel layers of complexity in times of political turmoil. The panel includes writer and journalist Raja Shehadeh; writer and Artistic Director of the Royal Lyceum Theatre, David Greig; broadcaster Yasmin Alibhai-Brown and the Royal Court's International Director Elyse Dodgson.

12 Aug, 1.30pm
1hr 30mins | Free

Fire Down Below

Journalists, writers and artists discuss the disintegration of Britain's Empire after the Second World War, in particular examining the situation in the Caribbean. Panellists include Jamaican Poet Laureate and novelist Lorna Goodison, Grenadian writer and Editor Jacob Ross and Guyanese artist and academic Roshini Kempadoo join Marina Salandy-Brown, Director of NGC BOCAS Literature Festival in Trinidad.

15 Aug, 1pm
1hr 30mins

Contesting the Spirit of Unity: Whose Festival? Whose Culture?

The first International Festival sparked more than one cultural gathering in Edinburgh, when 'uninvited' theatre companies attended and performed self-funded, on what later became 'the Fringe'. This event examines the origin of the 'culture wars', an underappreciated part of the development of Edinburgh as a Festival City.

16 Aug, 11am

1hr 15mins

The Edinburgh International Festival receives core grant support from The City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland. Scottish Charity Number SC004694.

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. A registered charity: 209131 (England and Wales) SC037733 (Scotland).