

15 May 2017

Poets to take up residency in Hull schools

This week poets will take up residency in four Hull primary schools to run workshops with pupils to encourage students, teachers and staff to read, write and create poetry as part of Hull UK City of Culture 2017. Each child will create a poem to take home: their work will also be showcased in a special performance and feature in a school poetry anthology on the 2017 National Poetry Day theme of Freedom.

The poetry residency gives a foretaste of the poetry excitements to be found in Hull on National Poetry Day on 28 September, when the city will host dozens of high-profile poetry and spoken word events including **Contains Strong Language**, a new national spoken word and poetry festival delivered in partnership by Hull 2017, the BBC and Humber Mouth. Both the residency and National Poetry Day are organised by the Forward Arts Foundation and the pupils' poetry on freedom will contribute to the creation of resources for other schools to use nationwide.

These resources will include images, how-to guides, films, toolkits and posters and they will have an immediate after-life as examples for other schools in Hull to follow. They will also be made available on the National Poetry Day website for other schools around the country to use to prepare for 28 September.

Michael Good, a teacher at Alderman Cogan school in Whitworth Street, Hull, one of the participating schools, said: "We are delighted to be taking part in this project as it provides our students with a great opportunity to encounter poetry that they may not experience in other ways, to meet professional poets and learn what inspires them. I hope that these sessions will create memories that stay with them for years to come."

On Tuesday 16 May, the four poets will perform their own work, also based on the theme of freedom, to an adult audience at Kardomah94 in Hull.

Andrea Reece from the Forward Arts Foundation said: "We want to inspire a love of poetry in people of all ages and backgrounds and to nurture and support talent. In creating a mini-festival of poetry with the children and teachers of Hull, we hope to inspire other places in the UK to experiment with new ways of bringing poetry into everyday life in the run-up to National Poetry Day."

Martin Green, Chief Executive and Director of Hull UK City of Culture 2017, said: "It has always been a key aim of the Hull 2017 project to give all school-age children the opportunity to be involved in cultural activities. Being involved in the arts empowers children and has been shown to improve life chances and educational outcomes, along with making us healthier.

“The legacy that this year leaves for the people of Hull is a priority for me and the work we are doing with our partners in schools and colleges is central to that.”

The poetry residencies are part of a number of activities and initiatives across the city celebrating poetry and literature, including the Big Malarkey, Contains Strong Language and the Humber Mouth festival.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Hull UK City of Culture

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, starting with Made in Hull, 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.

Hull 2017's second season, Roots and Routes, runs from April to June and explore Hull's unique place as a gateway to Europe and one of the world's busiest ports. Its maritime history and global connections inspire the stories of the city; this season of work will also celebrate Hull's international links, including Rotterdam, Reykjavik and Freetown.

Freedom runs from July to September. Building on the legacy of Hull-born anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce MP, *Freedom* will explore the concept of freedom in all its many forms. The final season, Tell the World will run from October to December.

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 70 partners supporting the project, including public bodies, 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, British Film Institute, Green Port Hull, Hull Clinical Commissioning Group, MKM Building Supplies, P&O Ferries, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Sewell Group, Siemens, Smith & Nephew and Wykeland Group. The National Lottery has contributed more than £10m of this funding, making it the largest single funding body for Hull 2017.

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

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About National Poetry Day

National Poetry Day is an initiative of the Forward Arts Foundation, a charity that celebrates excellence in poetry and widens its audience. National Poetry Day brings together leading poetry, literacy and literary organisations around a shared purpose: promoting the enjoyment, discovery and sharing of poetry.

For more information, please visit: <http://nationalpoetryday.co.uk>

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