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Page 1 of 5

Press release — 9 March 2017

FULL PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED FOR MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 2017 FIRST UNDER NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JOHN MCGRATH

- Festival opens with large-scale event for audience of thousands created by the people of Manchester from an idea by **Jeremy Deller**
- Manchester music legends **New Order** perform at Old Granada Studios in spectacular immersive environment by visual artist **Liam Gillick**
- Major exhibition at Manchester City Art Gallery explores legacy of **Joy Division** and **New Order** through the wealth of visual art their music has inspired
- **Frank Gehry, John Adams** and **Lucinda Childs** recreate seminal work bringing together music, art and movement
- **Thomas Ostermeier** premieres newest work, an urgent response to the populist politics sweeping Europe
- **Yael Bartana** recasts Dr Strangelove's war room with famous women taking charge of the world
- **Jane Horrocks** stars in industrial musical drama based on story of Manchester's cotton famine
- Opera for babies by award-winning director **Phelim McDermott** allows them crawl around during the performance

Manchester International Festival today announces the programme for the 2017 Festival, which takes place 29 June – 16 July this year.

This is the first edition of the festival under new Artistic Director **John McGrath**, and features more than 20 world premieres.

'I am thrilled to share the remarkable list of artists who are working with us to create this year's Festival. These names, drawn from the United States, Egypt, Austria, China, France, Pakistan, Germany, and Iceland underscore how truly international MIF is.

Only a Festival of new work could speak so compellingly to the current state of the world. Everything has changed in the last 12 months, and our artists are responding in real time. This is where MIF's commitment to commissioning new ideas from artists comes in to its own: many of these pieces are being made right now, and will continue to evolve in response to the events happening around us.' John McGrath, Artistic Director and CEO

Artists in the 2017 Festival include **Boris Charmatz, Jane Horrocks, New Order, Liam Gillick, Yael Bartana, Arcade Fire, Phil Collins, Underworld, Lucinda Childs, Frank Gehry, John Adams, Thomas Ostermeier, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, Matthew Herbert, Anna Meredith, Olga Neuwirth, Huang Ruo, Mohammed Fairouz, Philip Venables, Jeremy Deller, Mary-Ellen McTague, Jóhann Jóhannsson, Company Wayne McGregor, Simon Stephens, Scott Graham, Susan Hefuna, Sampha, Raymond Yiu, Paloma Gormley, Nigel Barrett** and **Louise Mari, Mary-Anne Hobbs, Samson Young** and many more.

Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council, said:

"In just over a decade from its early beginnings in 2005 MIF has helped secure Manchester's centre-stage position on the global arts scene, and has become a much talked about and anticipated fixture on the international arts calendar.

"It has attracted thousands of visitors from around the world, providing an important economic boost to the city, whilst also inspiring local people to get involved.

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Page 2 of 5

"The calibre of internationally renowned artists, musicians and performers announced for this year's event shows that MIF is continuing to break new ground, and is set once again to showcase Manchester as the vibrant centre of innovation and creativity that it undoubtedly is."

For the first time, MIF opens with a large-scale public event. *What Is the City but the People?* will see a unique selection of individuals from across Manchester, recruited via open auditions, walking along a runway through Piccadilly Gardens for an audience of thousands. From an idea by artist **Jeremy Deller**, *What Is the City* features live music from **Graham Massey**, assisted by an unexpected mix of local musicians. Directed by Richard Gregory and made in association with Islington Mill.

At Old Granada Studios, Manchester musical legends **New Order** collaborate with visual artist **Liam Gillick** for five special performances throughout the Festival. *New Order + Liam Gillick: So it goes..* sees the band playing with a 12-strong synthesiser ensemble, orchestrated and conducted by Joe Duddell inside a unique installation from Gillick. Over at Manchester Art Gallery, major new exhibition *True Faith* explores the ongoing significance and legacy of **Joy Division** and **New Order** through the wealth of visual art their music has inspired, with work from artists such as Julian Schnabel and Mark Leckey.

In *What if Women Ruled the World?* artist **Yael Bartana** enlists international female experts alongside a cast of leading actresses to help answer this most relevant of questions. Inspired by the apocalyptic ending of *Dr Strangelove*, *What if Women Ruled the World?* is created with the Royal Court's **Vicky Featherstone** and writer **Abi Morgan**.

The apocalypse also looms large in *Party Skills for the End of the World*. In this immersive theatre event you'll learn the essential skills you'll need to survive when the end is nigh – from starting a fire to mixing the perfect Martini. Created by **Nigel Barrett** and **Louise Mari** of the acclaimed Shunt Collective, *Party Skills* is accompanied by *Dinner Party at the End of the World*, created by wonderful Manchester chef and MIF favourite **Mary-Ellen McTague**.

One of Europe's most daring and exciting choreographers, **Boris Charmatz** will be opening his newest work at MIF17. Staged in the vast, atmospheric space of Mayfield, a 25-strong ensemble of dancers will perform, in succession, *10000 Gestures* – none repeated, every one unique.

Cotton Panic! tells the story of a pivotal moment in North West history – the Civil War era Cotton famine, when the supply of raw cotton dried up and the prosperous North was brought to its knees. Featuring live music, drama, words and film, the show is created by **Jane Horrocks**, **Nick Vivian** and **Wrangler**, the new band of **Stephen Mallinder** of Cabaret Voltaire.

ToGather is a major show from Egyptian-born artist **Susan Hefuna** at the Whitworth. The exhibition explores stories of migrants to Manchester, and includes a public performance developed with Company Wayne McGregor and around 20 people who have recently arrived in the city.

Also focusing on new arrivals is *The Welcoming Party*, a new work for children and families by acclaimed company **Theatre-Rites** which uses puppetry and immersive theatre to tell the stories of young people who have travelled to Manchester looking for a place where they can feel safe and sound. Younger audiences can enjoy *BambinO*, an opera for babies aged 6 – 18 months, composed by Scottish Opera's **Liam Paterson** and directed by Improbable's **Phelim McDermott**, fresh from directing at the ENO and LA Opera.

Last and First Men is an extraordinary new multimedia work by Oscar-nominated Icelandic

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Page 3 of 5

composer **Jóhann Jóhannsson** (*Arrival, Sicario, Blade Runner 2049*), combining music, film and **Tilda Swinton's** elegiac narration. The **BBC Philharmonic** will be performing live with the film at the Bridgewater Hall.

Oscar-winning filmmaker **Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy** (*Girl in the River*) reflects on the lived experience of Partition with **HOME1947**. A series of films within an installation at the Lowry, this remarkable commission visits residents of Delhi and Lahore 70 years on from the largest mass-migration ever.

In *Fatherland*, Frantic Assembly's **Scott Graham**, Underworld's **Karl Hyde** and playwright **Simon Stephens** have created a bold new show about contemporary fatherhood. This emotive collage of words, music and movement will transform the Royal Exchange Theatre, animated by a 13-strong cast, and a thirty-strong chorus delivering Hyde's extraordinary score.

Karl Hyde will also be working with his **Underworld** collaborator **Rick Smith** on *Manchester Street Poem*, a project that will bring to life the stories of those who find themselves homeless in the city in a live installation taking place in an empty city centre shop over several days.

Music for a Busy City takes six leading composers - **Mohammed Fairouz, Matthew Herbert, Huang Ruo, Anna Meredith, Olga Neuwirth** and **Philip Venables** – out of the concert hall and into the public spaces of Manchester. Six new pieces of music will be created in response to a specific spot, from shopping centres and train stations to the Town Hall.

MIF will be the operator for Factory, a brand new multi-arts centre for Manchester designed by internationally-renowned architects **OMA**, led by **Rem Koolhaas** and **Ellen van Loon**. Two shows this year represent a glimpse of the kind of artists and partnerships that might be seen in Factory. *Returning to Reims* is an urgent response to the new populist politics sweeping Europe. Directed by **Thomas Ostermeier**, this is a co-production with his Berlin theatre, the Schaubühne, and with Manchester's HOME.

Available Light is a legendary collaboration between choreographer **Lucinda Childs**, composer **John Adams** and architect **Frank Gehry** – three of the greatest American artists of the last 50 years. This revival highlights the kind of major artistic figures that Factory will be inviting to showcase their work.

Hong Kong-based artist and rising star **Samson Young** premieres a major new work inspired by mythic tales of 17th-century Chinese travelers making their way to Europe on foot. *One of Two Stories, or Both (Field Bagatelles)* is a five-part radio series and an installation at the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art.

Artist **Phil Collins** will bring MIF to a close with *Ceremony*, a live film event celebrating one of Manchester's greatest residents – Friedrich Engels – in a uniquely contemporary and playful way. Collins will bring Engels back to Manchester in the form of a Soviet-era statue, collected from Russia and transported across Europe, to be installed in Manchester's Tony Wilson Place. Performers, musicians and the people of Manchester will help create a unique 'live film', mixing footage from the statue's journey across Europe with live coverage of its inauguration, featuring a soundtrack by **Mica Levi** and **Demdike Stare**, a new anthem by **Gruff Rhys**, and stories of today's Manchester workers - who Collins met during his year-long MIF17 residency.

Lost Memories Dot Net is MIF's first ever game commission courtesy of **Nina Freeman**, the most innovative and individual of video game designers. It signals a strong move by MIF into the digital realm this year – with several of the productions having live digital showings, and a much enhanced online offer in all aspects of the festival.

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Page 4 of 5

On a less high-tech note, a little bit of West Wales comes to Manchester as the Machynlleth Comedy Festival decamps for a weekend at MIF. This bijou festival-within-a-festival follows the success of MIF's first foray into comedy in 2015 with promoters Invisible Dot.

Two pieces celebrate the centenary of local hero Antony Burgess's legacy. At the Whitworth, film installation *No End to Enderby* by **Graham Eatough** and **Simon Sutcliffe** takes the core character from one of Burgess's great novels on a time-traveling journey. In *The World Was Once All Miracle*, composer **Raymond Yiu** has created a major new symphonic song cycle in response to a series of Burgess's poems, performed by the **BBC Philharmonic**.

Reggie 'Regg Roc' Gray directed one of the big hits of MIF15: *FlexN Manchester*, a thrilling transatlantic street dance collaboration featuring dancers from Greater Manchester and Reggie's native New York. Two years on Reggie will be returning to the Festival for a residency at Contact.

Also returning after the success of the 2015 edition, the Festival's debate strand invites audiences to debate today's hot-button topics: power, heroes, community, technology, anger and change. Curated by MIF, FutureEverything, The Guardian and VICE, *Interdependence: We Need to Talk* features artists from the Festival and beyond.

MIF17 features more music than ever before – from the best of local promoters and thrilling world music at the Festival's own Pavilion Theatre, to one-off gigs from big names including **Arcade Fire**, **Sampha**, **Bonobo** and new music from a resurgent **Ride**. 6Music's tastemaker **Mary-Anne Hobbs** curates a special series of gigs themed around Dark Matter, with artists as diverse as local grime stars **Levelz**, experimentalists such as Haxan Cloak, and heavy, heavy rockers **Sunn O))),**

Festival Square, the home of the Festival on Albert Square, is getting a new look for MIF. Designers **Paloma Gormley** and **Nicholas Henniger** are creating new structures to welcome the 125,000 people that will visit to enjoy delicious food and drink, experience music, talks, club nights, free DJs every night and much more. Some of the UK's best chefs will be cooking on Festival Square, including **Gary Usher**, **Mark Hix** and **Paul Heathcote**. Media partners the BBC, the Guardian and Manchester Evening News will all have a presence on Festival Square; look out too, for walking tours themed around MIF commissions.

New for MIF17 is a major programme of work with local people, My Festival. My Festival is MIF's creative community, a year-round initiative designed to build ongoing relationships between MIF and local people through creative projects, skills development and training and more.

My Festival projects include *Festival in My House*, a series of micro international festivals curated by local people and hosted in their own houses for neighbours, friends and MIF audiences, and six busarries for Greater Manchester-based creative professionals supported by the Jerwood Charitable Foundation.

MIF works closely with many venues, festivals and other cultural organisations around the world. The financial and creative input from these partners helps to make many MIF projects possible, and guarantees they have a life after the Festival has ended. MIF has worked with 50 commissioning partners on 47 new shows over the first five Festivals (2007–2015), shows which have travelled as far afield as Los Angeles, Shanghai and Abu Dhabi since their premieres at MIF. This year 12 of MIF's commissions will have a future life in cities ranging from Hong Kong to Vienna.



29 June - 16 July 2017

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Page 5 of 5

Notes to Editors

Manchester International Festival (MIF) is the world's first festival of original, new work and special events, staged every two years in Manchester, UK. MIF launched in 2007 as an artist-led festival presenting new works from across the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture. MIF has commissioned, produced and presented world premieres by artists including Björk, Steve McQueen, Robert Wilson, Wayne McGregor, Maxine Peake, The xx, Zaha Hadid Architects, Damon Albarn, Punchdrunk, Elbow and Marina Abramović.

MIF brings together world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds to create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work, staged in venues across Greater Manchester – from theatres, galleries and concert halls to railway depots, churches and car parks. MIF works closely with venues, festivals and other cultural organisations around the world, whose financial and creative input helps to make many of these projects possible. The Festival also works widely within communities around Manchester, originally with MIF Creative and now with a new initiative called My Festival.

MIF's Artistic Director and CEO is John McGrath, previously the Founding Artistic Director of National Theatre Wales. Earlier this year, MIF was confirmed as the operator of Factory, a new £110 million cultural centre in Manchester due to open in 2020.

MIF is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.

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