



Manchester  
International  
Festival  
2019 4-21 July  
mif.co.uk

For more information,  
images, quotes and  
interview requests  
please contact:

Ben McKnight  
Press & PR Director  
+44 (0)161 817 4505  
[ben.mcknight@mif.co.uk](mailto:ben.mcknight@mif.co.uk)

Emma Robertson  
Press & PR Manager  
+44 (0)161 817 4542  
[emma.robertson@mif.co.uk](mailto:emma.robertson@mif.co.uk)

Jamie-leigh Hargreaves  
Senior Press Officer  
+44 (0)161 817 4542  
[jamieleigh.hargreaves@mif.co.uk](mailto:jamieleigh.hargreaves@mif.co.uk)

[www.mif.co.uk](http://www.mif.co.uk)

Press release — EMBARGOED UNTIL 08.30am, 29 OCTOBER 2019

## MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL REVEALS FIRST ARTISTS FOR 2019

**Yoko Ono, Idris Elba and Skepta announced as part of next year's MIF programme, which runs from 4-21 July 2019**

Manchester International Festival (MIF) today announces the first artists for its 2019 programme, with each commission set to offer a distinctive and very personal take on how we relate to today's world. MIF19 takes place from 4-21 July 2019, with artists from across the globe creating an enormous variety of new work in spaces throughout the city.

Images can be downloaded here: <http://press.mif.co.uk/mif19/>

### **MIF19 Opening Event**

#### **Yoko Ono**

**BELLS FOR PEACE** - Yoko Ono invites us to gather together in Cathedral Gardens for the opening event at MIF 19 and send a message of peace to the world. Thousands of diverse voices and a people's orchestra of bells from home and abroad will ring and sing out for peace – and welcome the world to Manchester.

Yoko Ono has been among the world's most renowned and respected artists for more than 50 years. This new commission is the first major work she has created for the city of Manchester.

As the opening event for MIF19, **BELLS FOR PEACE** follows the success in 2017 of *What Is the City but the People?*, which was an opportunity for the people of Manchester to present a self-portrait of themselves and the place they live.

Yoko Ono said: *"The beauty of this piece will break the sky and more. One of the reasons this is very different is the fact that all of us will be making the sound together. More than ever, we must come together to heal each other, and the world. PEACE is POWER! I love you all."*

#### **TREE**

Created by **Idris Elba & Kwame Kwei-Armah**

*Tree* takes audiences on a thrilling journey in search of the soul and spirit of contemporary South Africa. Created by Idris Elba, whose album *Mi Mandela* provides the soundtrack, and Kwame Kwei-Armah, the new Artistic



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Director of London's Young Vic, this major world-premiere production takes place in the round within Upper Campfield Market Hall, one of Manchester's most atmospheric spaces.

Idris and Kwame's new work features music, dance and film combined with an exciting and dynamic cast to explore the past, present and future of a country at a crossroads – all through the eyes of one young man on a journey of healing.

**Idris Elba** said *"Kwame and I have both had a strong desire to work with each other for a long time now; we've known each other since we were in our very early twenties and have talked about the kernel of an idea for this show for a while. Our joint ambition being to make a piece of work inspired by South Africa, using the album Mi Mandela as a starting point. We've both experienced personal moments of healing connected with the country and we're starting to explore that together. For me, an interesting part of the process is looking at the next part of the story; the new universe that sprung up after Mandela. To be able to investigate that with Kwame, a writer with such tremendous vision for whom I have great respect and love, and within the artistic community of MIF, is something I've wanted to do for a very long time."*

**Kwame Kwei-Armah** said *"The idea of dancing with a friend whose art and ideas have inspired me for as long as we have known each other simply thrills me. To bring this work to MIF and the Young Vic is as exciting as it gets for me."*

### Skeptta

**DYSTOPIA987** - Skeptta invites you to enter another world in this series of intimate and immersive experiences. Held in a secret Manchester location, *Dystopia987* is a waking dream that presents Skeptta's singular vision of the future: deep, dark, radical and riveting.

Featuring a live set from Skeptta, guest appearances from hand-picked performers and DJs, a wealth of new technology and a cast inhabiting a hidden netherworld, *Dystopia987* is a journey into eternity – a future riven with uncertainty and fear but rich in wonder and possibility.

Since emerging as a producer and MC in 2004, Skeptta has become one of the most significant British artists in music today. The Mercury Prize winner and BRIT Award nominee has built a diverse audience through both recordings and live performances, and his enduring influence is felt throughout contemporary culture.

**Skeptta** described the project as *"Real Life Magic"*.

MIF Artistic Director and CEO **John McGrath** said: *"I'm thrilled to be announcing the involvement of such extraordinary artists in Manchester International Festival 2019. Yoko Ono will be creating a very special opening event for Mancunians - and the world - in the city centre: a joyful response to our complicated times. Idris Elba is one of the most dynamic creative figures working today, and in this new collaboration with the wonderful Kwame Kwei-Armah, he brings his vision and*



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*passion to a brand-new piece of musical theatre. And Skepta, an artist known for pushing musical boundaries, is going to be surprising everyone with a vision of the future that is immersive, high tech and personal.”*

MIF has an ambitious programme of creative engagement activity, collaborating with people from across Greater Manchester as part of **MIF’s Creative Community**; a year-round initiative designed to build ongoing relationships and dialogue between MIF and local people through co design, creative projects, volunteering, skills development, training and more. This programme of work includes **Festival in My House** and **Festival in My Neighbourhood**, an opportunity for the people of Manchester to curate their own mini-festivals year-round.

With MIF set to operate and create the artistic programme for The Factory, the landmark cultural space being developed in the city, the series of pre-Factory events is also continuing. The next is Special Edition, a series of music events with **Bonobo, Bugzy Malone** and **Bicep** organised with Manchester promoters The Warehouse Project and 6 Music’s Mary Anne Hobbs, which take place at Mayfield from 3-10 November. More pre-Factory events will be announced as part of the full MIF19 programme which is due to be announced in March 2019.

### About MIF

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. The next Festival takes place from 4 – 21 July 2019.

MIF has commissioned, produced and presented world premieres by artists including **Marina Abramović, Damon Albarn, Björk, Boris Charmatz, Jeremy Deller, Elbow, Wayne McGregor, Steve McQueen, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, Thomas Ostermeier, Maxine Peake, Punchdrunk, The xx, Robert Wilson** and **Zaha Hadid Architects**.

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 globally, whose financial and creative input helps to make many of these projects possible and ensures that work made at MIF goes on to be seen around the world.

MIF’s year-round **Creative Community** programme also works widely within Manchester with a community of creative people from all backgrounds, ages and corners of the city who are forging closer connections with the Festival.

MIF’s Artistic Director and CEO is **John McGrath**. MIF will also be the operator for The Factory, a new world-class cultural space being developed in Manchester,



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which will commission, present and produce new work from the world's greatest artists, offering a space to make, explore and experiment.

MIF is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. [www.mif.co.uk](http://www.mif.co.uk)

## LISTINGS

### BELLS FOR PEACE

Cathedral Gardens, Corporation St, Manchester M4 3BG  
4 July, 6pm

Book tickets  
mif.co.uk  
No ticket required. Reserved places £5

### Tree

A Young Vic, Manchester International Festival and Green Door Pictures co-production

Upper Campfield Market Hall, Manchester, M3 4FN

4 – 10 July, 8pm (Previews 29 June – 3 July)

Matinees 6-7 July, 4.30pm

Press night 4 July, 8pm

Recommended 14+, under 18s must be accompanied by an adult

Book tickets  
mif.co.uk  
Standing tickets from £30 / Concessions £5 off  
£10 for Greater Manchester residents on a lower wage

### DYSTOPIA987

Secret location in Manchester city centre

17-19 July, 7pm

16+, under 18s must be accompanied by an adult

Book tickets  
mif.co.uk  
Standing tickets from £35 / Concessions £5 off  
£10 for Greater Manchester residents on a lower wage

Tickets on sale to MIF members at 10am 29 October 2018

Tickets on general sale at 10am 1 November 2018

All orders subject to a per transaction fee of £2 (no per ticket fees)