



Press Release

CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED THEATRE SHOW DARK NOON AMONGST NEW WORKS ADDED TO FACTORY INTERNATIONAL'S 2024 PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME

Following the success of the official opening season of Aviva Studios, Factory International is delighted to announce a series of additions to the 2024 performance programme at Manchester's landmark new venue. They join previously announced projects including the UK premiere of Robert Wilson's *Jungle Book*, a brand-new stage production by Maxine Peake, a music and multi-media theatrical experience by Laurie Anderson and award-winning dance from Ivan Blackstock.

- In the year of a crucial US election, fix+foxy's award-winning theatre production *Dark Noon (6-10 March)* explores one of the great American myths – the Wild West. Staged for the first time since its breakthrough UK premiere at Edinburgh Fringe in 2023, this explosive production - directed by **Tue Biering** and **Nhlanhla Mahlangu**, and told by seven South African actors - takes audiences on an epic journey through the bloody history of the birth of modern America and asks: what if history wasn't written by the victors, but by the vanquished?
- Collective Ma'Llouba's *The Long Shadow of Alois Brunner (21-23 March)* by Syrian playwright **Mudar Alhaggi** and directed by multi-award-winning **Omar Elerian** - which has its UK premiere at Aviva Studios - raises searing questions about refuge, justice and hope. Weaving together Syrian and German history to interrogate the true story of one of the most wanted Nazi criminals to escape sentencing, the thought-provoking play explores exile, accountability and political memory and the complex thread that ties the past to the present.
- A specially commissioned programme of work celebrates internationally acclaimed Manchester-based artist **David Hoyle**. Cabaret star, actor, and accomplished visual artist, Hoyle's infamous alter-ego 'The Divine David' transported him from radical alternative settings to the studios of Channel 4. *Please Feel Free to Ignore My Work (10-28 April)* is part retrospective, part occupation that celebrates the artist's prolific body of work across multiple mediums created over four decades. A brand-new theatre show on Saturday 27 April will bring the three-week residency at Aviva Studios to a climax.

They join a series of previously-announced original new theatre and dance works commissioned by Factory International and presented at Aviva Studios in 2024:

- Visionary director **Robert Wilson** joins forces with CocoRosie for a spellbinding stage adaptation of the *Jungle Book*, featuring stunning set designs, dazzling costumes and a dreamy original soundtrack (28-31 March).

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- **Maxine Peake, Sarah Frankcom, and Imogen Knight** join forces with **Gazelle Twin** and Daisy Johnson to present a feminist theatrical reimagining of John Bowen's *Robin Redbreast* – first broadcast as part of the BBC's Play for Today series in 1970, and widely regarded as a precursor to *The Wicker Man* (*Robin/Red/Breast*, 17-26 May).
- **Keith Khan's** *The Accountants* (7-11 May) takes real data about India and China and transforms it into a visual allegory for the stage, combining stunning visuals and dance from leading choreographer Xie Xin from Shanghai and Mumbai's Terence Lewis.
- Award-winning dance artist and cultural innovator **Ivan Michael Blackstock** presents the Olivier award-winning *TRAPLORD* (Sept 2024), a dance performance meditating on life, death and rebirth.
- A new music and multi-media theatrical experience by **Laurie Anderson**, *ARK* (Nov 2024) will explore how the world needs to change in order to be saved, fuelled by Anderson's fascination with humanity's current reality and weaving together threads from her decades-long career.

As part of Factory International's extensive international touring programme, **Philip Venables** and **Ted Huffman's** critically acclaimed MIF23 production *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions*, based on the cult 1977 book by Larry Mitchell and Ned Asta, will return to the UK for a number of performances at The Southbank Centre, London later this month (25-28 Jan) following its 2023 world premiere in Manchester and subsequent performances in Aix-en-Provence, France and Bregenz, Austria.

Factory International also supported two performances at the Lincoln Centre in New York this month as part of the 19th edition of the cutting-edge international theatre festival Under the Radar; **Jessica L. Hagan and Ryan Calais Cameron's** *Queens of Sheba* (5-13 Jan) and **Inua Ellams' Search Party** (5-13 Jan). This is part of an ongoing initiative led by Arts Council England to promote artists and companies based in England to a global audience. The programme has already supported artists including **Javaad Alipoor, Lucy McCormick, Jess Thom, Selina Thompson, Rachel Mars and Jasmine Lee-Jones** to take and present work at the US festival.

Programmed and operated by Factory International, the organisation who also deliver the world-famous Manchester International Festival (MIF), Aviva Studios hosts a year-round programme by leading artists from across the world, creating a global destination for arts, music and culture in the heart of Manchester. The venue's development is led by Manchester City Council, with backing of £99.05m from HM Government and £7m National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

Factory International's 2024 performance programme includes:

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Dark Noon

6-10 March

Staged for the first time since its breakthrough UK premiere at Edinburgh Fringe in 2023, fix+foxy's *Dark Noon* is an award-winning African western about European migration from Danish director Tue Biering and co-director Nhlanhla Mahlangu. Told by seven South African actors, *Dark Noon* (6-10 March) is a brutal recreation of the glorified American wild west, the utopian landscape that drew 35 million Europeans across the Atlantic in search of a new home. The production challenges our understanding of history as told by the victors and puts the vanquished in the director's chair. Described by The Guardian as "a savage and gripping live documentary" (5 stars), the performers scrutinise the presumptions and misconceptions of the American Frontier, turning the Hollywood myth of the 1950s on its head.

The Long Shadow of Alois Brunner

21-23 March

The UK premiere of Collective Ma'Llouba's *The Long Shadow of Alois Brunner* (21-23 March) by Syrian playwright Mudar Alhaggi and directed by Omar Elerian interrogates the true story of one of the most wanted Nazi criminals to escape sentencing. Instrumental to the deportation of over 100,000 European Jews to concentration camps and ghettos, Alois Brunner evaded numerous arrest attempts – fleeing to Damascus where he was instrumental in building Syria's intelligence services. Weaving together Syrian and German history, this thought-provoking play explores exile, accountability and political memory – and the complex thread that ties the past to the present.

Jungle Book - Robert Wilson & CocoRosie

28 - 31 March 2024

Visionary director Robert Wilson joins forces with CocoRosie – their fourth collaboration in theatre – for a spellbinding stage adaptation of the classic story, featuring stunning set designs, dazzling costumes and a dreamy original soundtrack. Co-produced by Factory International, *Jungle Book* has already wowed audiences in Paris, Florence and Antwerp, before arriving in Manchester for its very first shows in English.

Please Feel Free to Ignore My Work

10–28 April

A specially commissioned programme of work celebrates internationally acclaimed Manchester-based artist David Hoyle. Cabaret star, actor, and accomplished visual artist, Hoyle's infamous alter-ego 'The Divine David' transported him from radical alternative settings to the studios of Channel 4. *Please Feel Free to Ignore My Work* (10–28 April) is part retrospective, part occupation that celebrates the artist's prolific body of work across multiple mediums created over four decades. A brand-new theatre show on Saturday 27 April will bring the three-week residency at Aviva Studios to a climax.

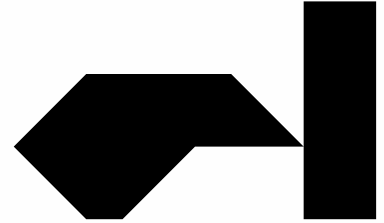
The Accountants: Keith Khan

7 – 11 May

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Keith Khan's *The Accountants* takes real data about India and China and transforms it into a visual allegory for the stage. Taking mega themes – the uses (and misuses) of money, spirituality, technology, food, media, space and sports – *The Accountants* combines dance from leading choreographers from China and India with stunning visuals. Created by Keith Khan, a multi-disciplinary artist known for his work with themes of Caribbean folklore, spiritualism and mysticism as well as significant cultural work from Notting Hill Carnival to the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Robin/Red/Breast - Maxine Peake, Sarah Frankcom and Imogen Knight

17 – 26 May

Widely regarded as a precursor to *The Wicker Man*, John Bowen's *Robin Redbreast* was first broadcast in 1970 as part of the BBC's famous *Play For Today* TV series, exploring similar themes of paganism and fertility sacrificial rites within a horror setting. 50 years on, Maxine Peake, Sarah Frankcom and Imogen Knight – co founders of Music, Art, Activism and Theatre (MAAT) – are creating an immersive theatrical reimagining. Their feminist take shifts the focus towards Norah – the woman whose body the local village claims as its own. For *Robin/Red/Breast* they join forces with acclaimed electronica artist Gazelle Twin and Booker Prize-shortlisted writer Daisy Johnson.

TRAPLORD: Ivan Michael Blackstock

September 2024

Award-winning dance artist and cultural innovator Ivan Michael Blackstock presents *TRAPLORD*, a dance performance meditating on life, death and rebirth. Wandering between dreams and reality, *TRAPLORD* takes audiences on a heroic journey to self-actualisation, using dance, theatre and spoken word to explore raw themes of mental health and masculinity. Co-produced by Factory International, *TRAPLORD* premiered at 180 Studios, London, and won the 2023 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production.

ARK: Laurie Anderson

November 2024

Six years after breaking ground on the site of Aviva Studios and four years after presenting *To the Moon* for Manchester International Festival 2019, Laurie Anderson returns with a hugely ambitious new music and multi-media theatrical experience, *ARK*, asking the question: if we are headed towards disaster, will there be an Ark? Fuelled by Anderson's fascination with humanity's current reality and weaving together threads from her decades-long career, *ARK* is an exploration of how the world might need to be reconfigured in order to be saved.

FACTORY INTERNATIONAL ON TOUR

The Faggots & Their Friends Between Revolutions

25 – 28 Jan 2024: Southbank Centre, London

Based on the 1977 cult book by Larry Mitchell and Ned Asta, *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions* is a music theatre piece that reimagines the history of the world through a queer lens. In this musical adaptation by composer Philip Venables and director Ted Huffman, the original text is taken on a kaleidoscopic journey by a cast of actors, singers and musicians.

Has previously travelled to: France and Austria. Premiered at MIF23

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R.O.S.E.

September 5–12, 2024, Park Avenue Armory, New York, USA

Dissolving boundaries between stage, dancer, musician, and spectator to subvert conventional notions of experiencing dance, this Armory commission celebrates the freedom, energy, and intimacy that run through the best of club culture and modern dance. Award-winning choreographer Sharon Eyal is known around the world for her intoxicating and boundary-blurring choreography. Along with her creative partner Gai Behar, an imaginative innovator of the underground club scene, the pair create captivating performances bristling with dark hedonism, futuristic androgyny, hypnotic repetition, and remarkable muscular control. They are joined by Caius Pawson of London-based multi-arts organization Young to envision this scintillating synthesis of contemporary dance, electronic music, and nightlife.

Premiered at MIF23

ENDS.

Tickets for Dark Noon and The Long Shadow of Alois Brunner are on sale to members today and on public sale on Friday.

Upcoming press performances*

Dark Noon: Wednesday 6 March, 7.30pm

The Long Shadow of Alois Brunner: Thursday 21 March, 7.30pm

Jungle Book: Thursday 28 March, 7.30pm

The Accountants: Tuesday 7 May, 7.30pm

Robin/Red/Breast: Friday 17 May, 7.30pm

*Please note requests to attend press performances are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Plus ones will only be allocated where capacity allows, unless required to support an access need.

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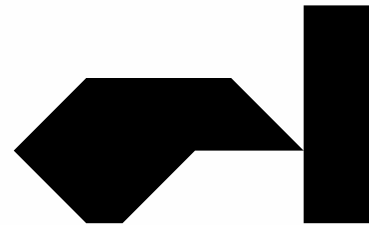
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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Factory International

Factory International commissions, produces and presents a year-round programme of original creative work and special events at Aviva Studios, its landmark new home in Manchester, online, and internationally through its network of co-commissioners and partners. It also stages the city-wide Manchester International Festival every other year.

Factory International builds on the legacy of Manchester International Festival, one of the world's leading arts festivals, and the first to be entirely focused on the commissioning and producing of ambitious new work. Staged every two years in Manchester since 2007, world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work in venues and spaces across Greater Manchester.

The design of Aviva Studios is led by Ellen van Loon of the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). Built with flexibility in mind, the building is based around large, open, adaptable spaces that can be constantly reconfigured, enabling artists to develop and create large-scale work of invention and ambition of a kind not seen anywhere else in the world.

A unique canvas to make, explore and experiment, audiences can enjoy the broadest range of art forms from major exhibitions and concerts to intimate performances and immersive experiences. The venue's development is led by Manchester City Council, with backing of £99.05m from HM Government and £7m National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

Factory International plays an important role in the lives of Greater Manchester residents, bringing jobs, skills, training and creative opportunities. Through the Factory Academy, Factory International is training the creative workforce of the future, while its pioneering creative engagement and artist development programmes create year-round opportunities for local people to get involved, from participating in flagship commissions to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums.

Factory International is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

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About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the

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creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £467 million of public money from Government and an estimated £250 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

www.artscouncil.org.uk

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