

PRESS RELEASE: 10am, Wed 10 July 2024

## WORLD PREMIERE OF NEW STAGE SHOW BY LAURIE ANDERSON – A POETIC AND DARKLY COMIC ODE TO THE END OF THE WORLD

- In a critical year for US politics, Laurie's Anderson's *ARK: United States Part 5* brings together new music and the artist's uniquely visual storytelling to explore where we go from here as the clock ticks on AI, the climate crisis and more.
- Tickets go on sale on Friday 12 July, 10am, [factoryinternational.org](https://factoryinternational.org)

Factory International is delighted to present the world premiere of a major new live stage work from legendary artist Laurie Anderson at Manchester's landmark cultural venue, Aviva Studios.

Fuelled by Anderson's fascination with humanity's current reality, *ARK: United States Part V* (12-24 November 2024) brings together new music, cinematic imagery, stories and songs at her largest scale yet. Weaving together multiple threads from her five-decade-long career, *ARK* is an imaginative and personal interrogation of where we are now, asking: what has brought us here and how much time do we have left?

Anderson was born in Chicago in June 1947, the same time and place that atomic scientists began the Doomsday clock's countdown to the midnight of nuclear destruction. Fast forward to the present day and the multiple countdowns that now engulf us: Climate collapse, environmental disaster, and the proliferation of artificial intelligence have all added to a sense of isolation and powerlessness as we retreat further online.

*ARK* fuses these themes in an ambitious new stage show about fear, disaster, preservation, invention, love and escape - from the Biblical Flood to current natural disasters and beyond. Set at a dream-like moment where the data cloud breaks, *ARK* offers a pause where digital representation and reality are separated, within this brief window, Anderson asks: are we running out of time? Is it too late?

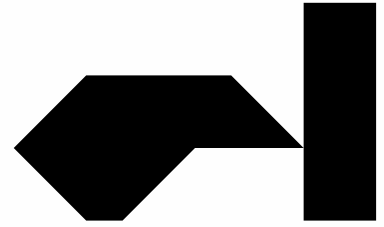
*ARK* features new music, some of it created with the band Sexmob, as well as songs from throughout her career and a collaboration with Sacred Harp singers from across the country,

**Laurie Anderson** says: *"For a long time I've wanted to make a new large-scale work about the United States - a collection of songs and stories about what has shaped this country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I plan to tell these stories moving through myth, journalism, fable, and Tik Tok, conjuring alternate realities and stories from my own life. Part ruminations, part long-form poems, ARK will also be a kind of 3D movie."*

Best known for her multimedia performances and poetic use of technology, Laurie Anderson is one of the world's most pioneering creative artists. As a writer, director, visual artist and composer, she's

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created work that spans the worlds of art, theatre, film and music, receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2024 Grammys and the Stephen Hawking Medal for Science Communication. Her work has been presented all over the world with recent solo exhibitions in Stockholm, Montreal, Adelaide and at Washington D.C.'s Smithsonian. In Manchester, Anderson presented *To the Moon* at MIF19 with Hsin-Chien Huang and in 2017, she broke ground at Aviva Studios.

In the 1980s Anderson presented the unprecedented multimedia epic *United States Parts 1–4*, which mixed music, photography, film, and drawings to explore contemporary America, first performed as a six-hour live performance at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1983. In 2024, the year of a momentous US election, she completes this work with a brand new creation which explores how the world might need to be reconfigured in order to be saved.

**John McGrath**, Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Factory International says: *“The brilliant Laurie Anderson has been part of our journey with Aviva Studios since 2017 when she hosted the groundbreaking ceremony for the building. Along the way she presented her beautiful VR work, To The Moon in the 2019 festival, and then started working with us on ARK, a mind-expanding combination of her visual, musical, storytelling and theatrical worlds. The outcome will be a beautiful way to celebrate the first year in our new building – a space for artists to explore their most exciting ambitions.”*

Programmed and operated by Factory International, the organisation who also deliver the biennial 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 was led by Manchester City Council, with backing of £99.05m from HM Government and £7m National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

## LISTINGS

Press performance: 14 November 2024

Performances: 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 November 2024

Previews: 12, 13 November 2024

## ENDS.

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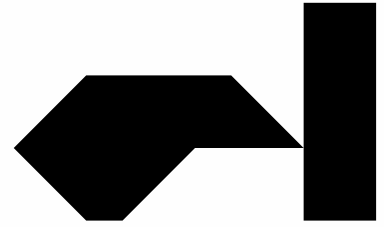
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## NOTES TO EDITORS:

Nonesuch Records releases Laurie Anderson's *Amelia* on 30 August 2024. *Amelia* is the 2024 Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award recipient's first new album since 2018's Grammy-winning *Landfall*. The record comprises 22 tracks about renowned female aviator Amelia Earhart's tragic last flight. Anderson wrote the music and lyrics for this subjective narrative piece. On the album, she is joined by the Czech orchestra Filharmonie Brno, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies, and Anohni, Gabriel Cabezas, Rob Moose, Ryan Kelly, Martha Mooko, Marc Ribot, Tony Scherr, Nadia Sirota, and Kenny Wolleson.

### About Laurie Anderson

Laurie Anderson is a writer, director, composer, visual artist, musician and vocalist who has created groundbreaking works that span the worlds of art, theatre, experimental music, and technology. Her recording career was launched by *O Superman* in 1981.

Anderson's live shows range from simple spoken word to expansive multimedia stage performances such as the eight-hour *United States* (1982), *Empty Places* (1990), *Songs and Stories from Moby Dick* (1999), and *Delusion* (2010). In 2002, Anderson was appointed the first artist-in-residence of NASA which culminated in her 2004 touring solo performance *The End of the Moon*.

Anderson had created numerous audio-visual installations as well as films- the feature film *Home of the Brave* (1986), *Carmen* (1992), and *Hidden Inside Mountains* (2005). Her film *Heart of a Dog* (2015) was chosen as an official selection of the 2015 Venice and Toronto Film Festivals. In the same year, her exhibition *Habeas Corpus* opened at the Park Avenue Armory to wide critical acclaim and in 2016 she was the recipient of Yoko Ono's Courage Award for the Arts for that project.

As a performer and musician, she has collaborated with many people including Brian Eno, Jean-Michel Jarre, William S. Burroughs, Peter Gabriel, Robert Wilson, Christian McBride and Philip Glass. Her works for quartets and orchestras, *Songs for Amelia* (2001), has been played in festivals and concert halls around the world and she has invented a series of instruments and electronic sculptures. Anderson has published ten books and been nominated for five Grammys throughout her recording career with Warner Records and Nonesuch. She released *Landfall*, a collaboration with the Kronos Quartet, which received a Grammy award in 2018.

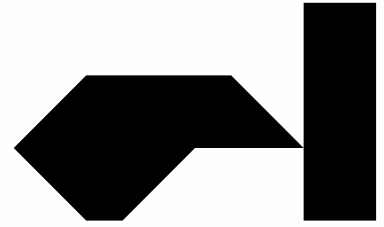
As a composer, Anderson has contributed music to films by Wim Wenders and Jonathan Demme, dance pieces by Bill T. Jones, Trisha Brown, Molissa Fenley, and scores for theater productions including plays by Robert LePage. She has created pieces for National Public Radio, France Culture and the BBC. She has curated several large festivals including the Vivid Festival in Sydney (2010) and the Meltdown Festival at Royal Festival Hall in London (1997).

Her visual work has been featured in many galleries and museums including in 2003, the Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon in France produced a touring retrospective of her work entitled *The Record of the Time: Sound in the Work of Laurie Anderson*. In 2010 a retrospective of her visual and installation work opened in São Paulo, Brazil and later traveled to Rio de Janeiro. Anderson's largest solo exhibition at The Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum in Washington D.C., titled *The Weather* (2021-2022), showcased the artist's storytelling process through her work in video, performance, installation, painting, and other media.

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Her visual work is on long term display at MASS MoCA and her three virtual reality works, Chalkroom, Aloft, and To The Moon, collaborations with the artist Hsin-Chien Huang, won several awards including Best VR Experience at the 74th Venice International Film Festival in 2017 and were featured in the Cannes Film Festival in 2019. A retrospective of her work opened in 2023 at Moderna Museet in Stockholm.

She has received numerous honorary doctorates, prizes and awards including the Guggenheim Fellowship, Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize, and the Wolf Prize. In 2024 she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Recording Academy at the 66th Grammy Awards, the Stephen Hawking Medal for Science Communication at the Starmus VII Festival, and the Gold Medal for Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

In 2021 she served as Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard University and delivered the Norton lectures as video, now available online. She has worked on numerous projects in AI with the Machine Learning Institute in Adelaide, Australia where she was artist in residence in 2020. Anderson continues to tour her evolving performance The Art of Falling and is working on ARK, commissioned by Factory International, premiering in 2024.

Her life partner as well as her collaborator was Lou Reed from 1992 onward. They married in 2008 and worked on numerous projects together until his death in 2013. Anderson lives in New York City.

## About Factory International

Factory International is the organisation behind Manchester International Festival (MIF) and the city's landmark new cultural space, Aviva Studios.

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.

A space for invention and discovery, Aviva Studios was designed by the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), with Ellen van Loon as lead architect – their first major public building in the UK. Its development was led by Manchester City Council, with backing of £99.05m from HM Government and £7m National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

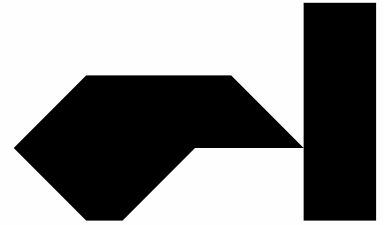
Ultra-flexible in design, the building is based around large, open, adaptable spaces that can be constantly reconfigured, enabling artists to develop and create large-scale work of invention and ambition of a kind not seen anywhere else in the world. A unique canvas to make, explore and experiment, audiences can enjoy the broadest range of art forms from major exhibitions and concerts to intimate performances and immersive experiences.

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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.

[factoryinternational.org](https://factoryinternational.org)

## 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 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](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

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