

Manchester
International
Festival
2021 1–18 July
mif.co.uk

Press Release

Embargoed until 10am, WEDNESDAY 12 MAY 2021

HUNDREDS OF LOCAL PEOPLE INVITED TO TAKE PART IN MASS DANCE EVENT FOR MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Manchester International Festival (MIF) is inviting 160 Greater Manchester residents to take part in *Sea Change*, an extraordinary new dance event taking place on Deansgate on Thursday 1 July, the first day of the Festival.

Together with French choreographer **Boris Charmatz** and his team of professional dancers, each participant will learn a series of dance movements to be performed on the spot. The audience will experience the performance by walking or even running past waves of dancers to animate the action into their very own living flipbook.

Participants will need to attend eight rehearsal sessions over ten days between Saturday 19 June and the world premiere on Thursday 1 July. No dance experience is necessary, and all fitness and mobility levels are welcome.

Greater Manchester residents are at the heart of many other events in this year's Festival programme. *Portrait of Black Britain* will see 100 portraits of Black British people, including many from Manchester, displayed throughout **Manchester Arndale** and the city, and over 100 Greater Manchester residents are taking part in *I Love You Too* sharing their love stories for a new book written by eleven Manchester-based writers.

Following a public call out for Manchester-based performers, Festival Square, which will this year take place in new location Cathedral Gardens, will see a packed programme of food, drink and free entertainment from Manchester performers alongside international artists and curated nights from **Jamz Supernova**, **Homoelectric**, **Mr Scruff** and **DJ Paulette**.

And for the first time, Manchester residents will take over the curation of the Festival's talks and discussions series. Featuring a range of speakers, including artists, activists, key workers, campaigners and members of the Greater Manchester community, *Looking Forward to Tomorrow* will explore some of the big issues of the day including the climate emergency and anti-Black racism.

Alongside the hundreds of residents performing and taking part in world premiere events this summer, MIF's dedicated team of volunteers from across the region will help make every stage of the Festival experience happen from helping artists behind the scenes to greeting the public at Festival events.

John McGrath, Artistic Director of MIF says: "At MIF we have a proud tradition of creating large-scale



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participatory events that bring the city together – from MIF17’s catwalk celebration of local residents, What is the City But the People, to Together in One Voice, the joyous mass doorstep singalong during lockdown. This year, whether it’s dancing in the streets of Deansgate, sharing love stories, performing in Festival Square or simply enjoying the many free events and activities around the city, we hope that Greater Manchester residents will be inspired to take part and help create another celebratory moment for the city.”

Taking place from 1-18 July, this year's Manchester International Festival features a vibrant programme of original new work from across the spectrum of visual and performing arts and music by artists from over 20 countries. Events will take place safely in indoor and outdoor locations across Greater Manchester, and a rich online offer will provide a window into the Festival wherever audiences are, including livestreams and work created especially for the digital realm.

Tickets for MIF21 will be on sale on from Thurs 20 May 2021 and can be purchased from mif.co.uk.

To find out more about taking part in Sea Change visit mif.co.uk/get-involved/take-part/sea-change-open-call/

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About Manchester International Festival

Manchester International Festival (MIF) is an artist-led festival of original, new work and special events reflecting the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture. MIF21 takes place from 1 - 18 July 2021.

Staged every two years in Manchester, MIF has commissioned, produced and presented world premieres by artists including Marina Abramović, Damon Albarn, Laurie Anderson, Björk, Boris Charmatz, Jeremy Deller, Idris Elba and Kwame Kwei-Armah, Elbow, Philip Glass and Phelim McDermott, David Lynch, Wayne McGregor, Steve McQueen, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, Yoko Ono, Thomas Ostermeier, Maxine Peake, Punchdrunk, Skepta, The xx, Robert Wilson and Zaha Hadid Architects.

These and other world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds 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 supports a year-round Creative Engagement programme, bringing opportunities for people from all backgrounds, ages and from all corners of the city to get involved during the Festival and year-round, as volunteers, as participants in shows, through skills development and a host of creative activities, such as Festival in My House.

MIF’s new Neighbourhood Organiser programme has connected the Festival to communities across



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Greater Manchester, getting people involved as volunteers, participants, performers and staff. This programme has also helped engage hundreds of unemployed young people aged 19-24 in new skills and training programmes as part of The Factory Academy, set up by MIF to diversify the workforce in the creative sector - set to benefit up to 10,000 unemployed young people living in Greater Manchester over the next five years.

With the creative community seriously affected by the COVID-19 crisis, MIF has been finding ways to offer support to artists and creatives based in Greater Manchester. MIF has selected five Greater Manchester artists for Creative Fellowships, providing mentoring support, a £3,000 bursary, and opportunities to shadow the creation of major Festival productions. MIF has also been supporting those involved in Manchester's music scene through MIF Sounds, providing financial support and professional guidance.

Other initiatives have included online remote residencies, digital workshops and regular online drop-in sessions for freelancers and creatives to offer advice and build networks. Many of these supported artists will present new events during MIF21, online and in-person at Festival Square, including Manchester drag artist Cheddar Gorgeous and theatre-maker Simone French who will host a Matchmakers event aiming to connect artists who are looking to start a new collaboration.

MIF is also a major partner in the Independent Artist Initiative – and has continued to actively be part of GM Artist Hub - supporting independent artists and companies in Greater Manchester develop and share their work in 2021.

MIF will also run The Factory, the new landmark cultural space currently being built in the heart of Manchester and designed by the internationally-renowned architect Ellen van Loon of Rem Koolhaas' OMA. The Factory will commission, present and produce one of Europe's most ambitious and adventurous year-round creative programmes, featuring bold new work from the world's greatest artists and offering a space to create, invent and play.

Attracting up to 850,000 visitors annually, The Factory will add up to £1.1 billion to the economy over a decade and create up to 1,500 direct and indirect jobs. Its pioneering programme of skills, training and engagement will benefit local people and the next generation of creative talent from across the city, whilst apprenticeships and trainee schemes are already underway during the construction phase.

MIF's Artistic Director and Chief Executive is John McGrath.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, IMAGES, QUOTES AND INTERVIEW REQUESTS PLEASE CONTACT:

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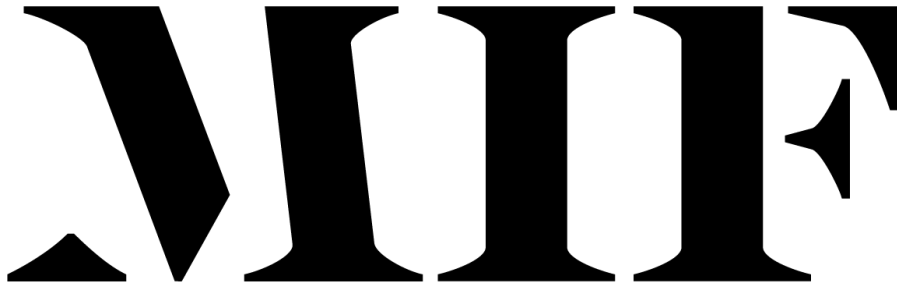
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