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Press release — **EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER**

FIRST SHOWS ANNOUNCED FOR MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 2017

New Artistic Director John McGrath reveals snapshot of his first programme, running 29 June – 16 July 2017

Artists – including Boris Charmatz, Yael Bartana, Vicky Featherstone, Scott Graham, Karl Hyde, Simon Stephens and Jeremy Deller – engage with urgent stories of our time

Also announced for autumn 2016 is major community participation programme featuring micro international festivals taking place in local houses

Following his appointment in 2015 as the new Artistic Director of Manchester International Festival, John McGrath today announces the first shows from his debut Festival programme, which runs 29 June – 16 July 2017.

Bringing together international artists from the worlds of visual art, dance, theatre and music, the line-up looks forward to the full MIF17 programme, to be announced 9 March 2017.

The first four Festival commissions run from the global – **Yael Bartana's** upending of Dr Strangelove's phallogocentric worldview – to the local, with *What Is the City but the People?* a uniquely Mancunian self-portrait. The Festival reaffirms its European connections with new work by **Boris Charmatz**, and looks deep in to the heart of the men of England with *Fatherland*.

The first four MIF17 commissions are:

- ***What if Women Ruled the World?*** – this vital and dramatic new work addresses the most urgent question of the current moment. Taking Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove* as a provocation, the film's final scene of a surviving nucleus of male leaders repopulating the earth is the inspiration to imagine a reverse scenario: what if women ruled the world? Each night, a group of 10 women and one man will be confronted by some of the urgent crises of our time: climate change, military escalation, mass migration. In this brand new work created by artist Yael Bartana, with the performance directed by Royal Court Artistic Director **Vicky Featherstone**, a professional cast will be joined by a group of female experts: scientists, politicians, artists and thinkers of global reputation. Together, they'll spend the evening trying to solve that night's global emergency as the clock ticks above them...

- ***What Is the City but the People?*** – for the opening event of MIF17, Manchester's meeting place will be the setting for a self-portrait of the city. A specially designed walkway in Piccadilly Gardens will welcome a selection of local residents, who will parade on the runway to musical accompaniment for audiences both in the streets and online. Ranging from high-fashion statements to far more personal moments, *What Is the City but the People?* will capture Manchester through its outfits, attitudes and individuality. Created by the People of Manchester from an idea by **Jeremy Deller**, in association with Islington Mill.

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- **10000 Gestures** – Boris Charmatz, one of Europe’s greatest dance makers, reveals his newest work in a special pre-premiere in Manchester. Celebrated for his radical and experimental approach to contemporary dance, *10000 Gestures* sees Charmatz take over a found space in the city centre for this joyful, provocative piece in which the 25-strong ensemble dance without ever repeating a single movement.

- **Fatherland** – a bold new theatre show created by **Scott Graham** from Frantic Assembly, Underworld’s **Karl Hyde** and playwright **Simon Stephens**, focusing on contemporary fatherhood in all its complexities and contradictions. Inspired by conversations with fathers and sons from the trio’s home towns in the heart of the country, *Fatherland* is a survey of life in England’s towns today. The show will transform the familiar spaces of Manchester’s Royal Exchange Theatre, with a cast of 13 men and a remarkable, all-embracing musical score by Karl Hyde and **Matthew Herbert**.

John McGrath said: *‘It’s exciting to be announcing our first four commissions and events for MIF17, with 20 more still to come. As a Festival of new work, MIF is uniquely able to respond to our changing world. The artists in our 2017 programme have a lot to say about the times we live in – and they’re responding in unexpected ways, from reimagining Dr Strangelove to creating a huge fashion runway in Piccadilly Gardens. MIF has always been and will remain fiercely international, inviting major artists such as Boris Charmatz and Yael Bartana to create new work. We’re also proudly engaged in our city: My Festival, our new initiative, will provide a range of new ways for local artists and communities to be part of what we do, year-round. As the incoming Artistic Director, I’m thrilled to be part of MIF’s extraordinary creative ambition, and I look forward to sharing more of our plans in the months ahead.’*

New for MIF17 is a major programme of work with local people, **My Festival: MIF’s Creative Community**.

My Festival is a new year-round initiative designed to build ongoing relationships between MIF and local people through creative projects, skills development and training and more.

The first My Festival project is *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. The pilot projects in November and December 2016 are:

- **M8 Festival** – curated by Yatie Aziz from Cheetham Hill, featuring cross cultural music, food and dance
- **Mehndi Festival** – curated by Nija Dalal-Smith from Levenshulme, inviting Manchester-based visual artists from across different disciplines to interpret this traditional art form and create their own contemporary mehndi hand decoration

For more information on My Festival and to submit ideas for your own micro festival, visit www.mif.co.uk/my-festival

Tickets for *10000 Gestures* and *Fatherland* go on sale at 10am on Thursday 17 November via mif.co.uk and 0843 208 1840. Tickets for *What if Women Ruled the World* go on sale in March 2017.

The full MIF17 programme will be announced Thursday 9 March 2017.

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Notes to Editors

What if Women Ruled the World?

A city centre space to be announced

Dates to be announced

www.mif.co.uk

Creative team

Created by **Yael Bartana**

Vicky Featherstone Performance Director

Commissioned and produced by Manchester International Festival and European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017.

What Is the City but the People?

Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, M1 1RG

29 June 2016

6.30pm

Free, no ticket required

Created by the People of Manchester from an idea by Jeremy Deller. In association with Islington Mill.

Commissioned and produced by Manchester International Festival

Fatherland

Royal Exchange Theatre, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7DH

6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 July, 7.30pm

6, 8, 9, 13, 15 July, 2.30pm

Previews, 1, 3, 4 July, 7.30pm

Tickets £39 - £12 / limited concessions £5 off

£12 for Greater Manchester residents on a lower income

www.mif.co.uk / 0843 208 1840

Creative Team

Scott Graham Co-Author & Director

Karl Hyde Co-Author & Composer

Simon Stephens Co-Author & Writer

Matthew Herbert Co-Composer & Music Producer

Jon Bausor Designer

Jon Clark Lighting Designer

Ian Dickinson for Autograph Sound Sound Designer

Eddie Kay Choreographer

Anne McNulty CDG Casting Director

Nick Sidi Dramaturg

Commissioned and produced by Manchester International Festival, Frantic Assembly, the Royal Exchange Theatre, Lyric Hammersmith and LIFT

10000 Gestures

A city centre space to be announced

13, 14, 15 July, 8pm

Tickets £25 / limited concessions £5 off

£12 for Greater Manchester residents on a lower income

www.mif.co.uk / 0843 208 1840

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Creative Team

Boris Charmatz Choreography

Salka Ardal Rosengren, Or Avishay, Matthieu Barbin, Nadia Beugré, Alina Bilokon, Nuno Bizarro, Dimitri Chamblas, Julie Cunningham, Olga Dukhovnaya, Bryana Fritz, Kerem Gelebek, Samuel Lefevre, Maud le Pladec, Ligia Manuela Lewis, Mani Mungai, Marlène Saldana, Julian Weber and more to be announced Interpretation

Yves Godin Lighting Designer

Jean-Paul Lespagnard Costume Designer

Fabrice Le Fur General Stage Manager

Marion Régnier Dresser

Magali Caillet-Gajan Rehearsal Coach, Touring

Sandra Neuveut, Martina Hochmuth, Amélie-Anne Chapelain Production Direction
Curated for MIF by **Matthias von Hartz**

Produced by Musée de la danse, in coproduction with Volksbühne Berlin, Manchester International Festival, Festival d'Automne à Paris.

My Festival: MIF's Creative Community is supported by The Baring Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Its associated Jerwood Creative Fellows programme is supported by Jerwood Charitable Foundation.

Fatherland is supported by PRS for Music Foundation. PRS for Music Foundation is the UK's leading charitable funder of new music and talent development across all genres. Since 2000 PRS for Music Foundation has given more than £23.6 million to over 5,300 new music initiatives by awarding grants and leading partnership programmes that support music sector development. Widely respected as an adventurous and proactive funding body, PRS for Music Foundation supports an exceptional range of new music activity – from composer residencies and commissions to festivals and showcases in the UK and overseas. www.prsformusicfoundation.com

John E. McGrath is the Artistic Director of Manchester International Festival (MIF).

Appointed to the role in 2015, previously John was Artistic Director of National Theatre Wales (NTW) achieving an international reputation for large-scale site-specific work, digital innovation, international collaboration and extraordinary community involvement. Highlights at NTW include Michael Sheen's *The Passion*, staged in Port Talbot with over 1000 local residents taking part; the critically-acclaimed *Coriolanus* performed in an aircraft hangar for the London 2012 Festival; musician Gruff Rhys' genre-defying *Praxis Makes Perfect*; Blast Theory's 'life coach' app *Karen*, and his own pioneering staging of Tim Price's *The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning*.

John has worked as a theatre director in New York, London and from 1999 – 2008 was Artistic Director of Contact Theatre in Manchester where he developed a new model for engaging young, diverse artists in all areas of the theatre's work. At Contact he worked with a range of artists including poet Lemn Sissay's *Storm, Something Dark* and hip-hop theatre artist Benji Reid's *b like water*. John trained and worked in New York for several years as Associate Director of leading experimental company Mabou Mines.

John's book *Loving Big Brother: Performance, Privacy and Surveillance Space* (Routledge, 2004) is an influential analysis of the role of surveillance in contemporary art



29 June - 16 July 2017

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and performance. Awards include the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA) Cultural Leadership Award (2005) and an Honorary Doctorate from the Open University (2015).

Manchester International Festival (MIF) is the world's first festival of original, new work and special events. The Festival is staged every two years in Manchester, UK – the next edition will take place from 29 June to 16 July 2017 at venues all over the city.

MIF launched in 2007 as an artist-led festival presenting new works from across the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture. We've commissioned, produced and presented world premieres by artists as diverse as Björk, Steve McQueen, Maxine Peake, Robert Wilson, Elbow, Wayne McGregor, The xx, Zaha Hadid Architects, Damon Albarn, Punchdrunk and Marina Abramović, among many others.

We bring together artists from different art forms and backgrounds to create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work, which we stage in venues across Greater Manchester – from theatres, galleries and concert halls to railway depots, churches and car parks. We work closely with venues, festivals and other cultural organisations around the world, whose financial and creative input helps to make many of our projects possible and guarantees that they have a life after each Festival has ended.

We also work widely within communities around Manchester, originally with MIF Creative and now with a new initiative called My Festival. Launched in November 2016, My Festival is a diverse network of creative people who are forging closer connections with MIF – taking part in public projects, connecting MIF to their communities, and joining our new programme of training activities, workshops and other special events.

MIF is a registered charity. Alongside the income we receive from Manchester City Council and Arts Council England, our principal funders, we also receive income from ticket sales and co-commissioning partners; from other public bodies, such as the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA); from private sponsorship; from charitable trusts and foundations; and from individual donations.

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