



Festival Highlights Revealed!

**Simon Armitage heads stellar line-up at Didsbury Arts Festival 2013
Saturday 22 – Sunday 30 June**

22 April 2013

Poet Simon Armitage, Manchester jazz star Matthew Halsall, writer Jackie Kay and internationally-acclaimed pianist, Kathryn Stott, will provide some of the highlights during Didsbury Arts Festival 2013.

The area's annual showcase of talent, now in its fifth year, will take place from Saturday 22 June to Sunday 30 June, with more than 100 events and exhibitions taking place all over Didsbury. Featuring for the first time an extensive fringe programme, this year's festival will represent a huge range of the arts from music, theatre, dance and comedy to visual arts, crafts, writing and film – all happening at local venues!

One of Britain's best-loved contemporary poets, Simon Armitage will close the nine-day festival on Sunday 30 June with readings from his poetry and from his latest book, *Walking Home*, a humorous account of his trek along the Pennine Way two years ago. A touch of brass will provide a fitting musical accompaniment to Yorkshireman, Armitage, in what promises to be an unforgettable evening at Didsbury Baptist Church.

A dazzling talent on the UK jazz scene, musician Matthew Halsall will be raising the roof at Didsbury Baptist Church on Friday 28 June. The Manchester-based trumpeter, also starring at the Manchester Jazz Festival in August, will perform tracks from his latest album, the appropriately-named *Fletcher Moss Park*, accompanied by his own band.

Following a sell-out charity concert at DAF 2011, concert pianist, Kathryn Stott, returns this year with a host of musical luminaries, including the astonishing, young, violin virtuoso, Venezuelan, Giovanni Guzzo. Kathryn Stott & Friends will perform at Emmanuel Church on Thursday 27 June in aid of local charity, Francis House Hospice.

Another DAF stalwart, Jackie Kay, is making a welcome return - this time as a special guest of Manchester's Poets & Players (Emmanuel Church, Saturday 29 June). With music from Chris Davies, cellist Sarah Moody and friends this promises to be an inspirational afternoon.

Among the many other highlights during Festival week is a Short Film Showcase, a classical concert performed by students of Chetham's College and a promenade theatre production of *The Turn of the Screw*, intriguingly staged in the house and gardens of the historic Old Parsonage.

Don't miss the Festival's opening weekend and lots of fun for all the family, kicking off with a craft and buskers' fair outside Didsbury Library (Saturday 22 June). Enjoy art on the railings and live music from local bands and artists in the Creative Space in Fletcher Moss Park on Sunday afternoon (23 June). There will also be poetry of a different kind from local school pupils!

There are some surprises in store, with a gigantic pink pig taking up residence outside Didsbury Library on the following Saturday (29 June)! If you don't believe it, just come and see for yourself! The beautiful Parsonage Gardens will be the focus for family fun on the closing day of the Festival (Sunday 30 June) with an entire afternoon programme of puppet theatre, walkabout puppets, Punch & Judy and storytelling. Bring a picnic and blanket and get ready to meet the giant, flying Dodo

and a flock of cheeky, tropical birds and to follow Mother Hen on a mystery journey

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Organised by a group of enthusiastic local residents, the aim of DAF is to celebrate the vibrancy of Didsbury people and places and the wealth of artistic talent that make Didsbury so special. Attracting audiences of up to 10,000 people, since its launch in 2009, the festival has now become an annual fixture on the local calendar.

DAF Director, Maria Stripling, said: 'We wanted to celebrate DAF's fifth anniversary in style and I think we've achieved this in terms of the very high quality and diversity of our 2013 programme.'

'This year's Festival will include some amazing headline artists and events. And the introduction of DAFringe, allowing more artists to organise their own events and choose their own local venues, is a very exciting development. We are also delighted to be expanding our outreach programme into residential care homes as well as schools.'

Maria added: 'There really is something for everybody this year, so look out for the programme which will be available online from early May and coming through your letterbox shortly afterwards!'

Most events free; some ticketed. Visit the DAF website at:

www.didsburyartsfestival.org

All enquiries to:

info@didsburyartsfestival.org

DAF 2013 is sponsored by Aba Quality Monitoring Ltd, Manchester City Council and Siemens.

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