

**HARROGATE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS REVEALS FIRST TASTE OF WORLD-CLASS LINE-UP FOR VIRTUAL ARTS WEEKENDER CELEBRATING THE BEST IN BOOKS, MUSIC, SCIENCE & MORE  
'HIF WEEKENDER': 23 – 26 JULY 2020**

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**PREMIERE OF NEW BRASS COMMISSION *ECLIPSE* by DAVID LANCASTER featuring soloist MIKE LOVATT  
INTERVIEWS with JOHN SUCHET | STELLA DUFFY | ANTHONY HOROWITZ | BEN PALMER  
ADAM RUTHERFORD | LEWIS DARTNELL | CLAUDIA HAMMOND  
PERFORMANCES from STEVEN ISSERLIS | TASMIN LITTLE | MAHAN ESFAHANI  
NAVARRA STRING QUARTET | MISHA MULLOV-ABBADO GROUP  
GEORGE HARLIONO | SILAS BASSA | ABIGAIL HAMMETT & IWAN OWEN | RACHAEL GREEN  
SEAN PAYNE | NOAH STONEMAN | GRANNY'S ATTIC  
GRAEME PARK DJ SET**

**THEAKSTON OLD PECULIER VIRTUAL CRIME WRITING FESTIVAL  
LEE CHILD | JOSEPH FINDER | MARK BILLINGHAM | VAL MCDERMID interviewed by MARK LAWSON  
VAL MCDERMID'S NEW BLOOD ft DEEPA ANAPPARA | JESSICA MOOR | TREVOR WOOD | ELIZABETH KAY  
IAN RANKIN | N.J. COOPER | STEVE MOSBY | AA DHAND | EMMA KAVANAGH | AMANDA JENNINGS  
STEVE CAVANAGH & LUCA VESTE present *TWO CRIME WRITERS & A MICROPHONE*  
THEAKSTON OLD PECULIER CRIME NOVEL OF THE YEAR: WINNER CEREMONY**

**Harrogate, 2 July 2020:** Harrogate International Festivals is thrilled to announce first names for its new, free virtual festival bringing world-class culture to everyone at home, the **HIF Weekender**.

From 23 to 26 July, the HIF Weekender will present a celebration of the arts, featuring performances and interviews with internationally acclaimed musicians, best-selling authors and innovative thinkers to coincide with what would have been the legendary long weekend of Harrogate's *Theakston Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival*.

The HIF Weekender begins with a bang, crowning the winner of the UK's most prestigious crime fiction prize – *Theakston Old Peculier Crime Novel of the Year* – in a virtual ceremony recognising the best of the best. The celebrations continue with crime writing royalty **Ian Rankin**, who was set to be the *2020 Theakston Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival Programming Chair*, interviewed by **N. J. Cooper** about Rebus, writing and Rankin's 'lost' festival year. **Lee Child** will reflect on his extraordinary career with fellow author **Joseph Finder**, and **Mark Billingham** on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his iconic detective Tom Thorne and debut novel *Sleepy Head*. **Steve Mosby** will be joined by **AA Dhand**, **Emma Kavanagh** and **Amanda Jennings** to explore what it means to be a crime writer in the age of pandemic and why the genre has dominated reading lockdown reading habits, and **Steve Cavanagh** and **Luca Veste** are set to present a virtual version of their popular podcast *Two Crime Writers & A Microphone* for the weekend.

Queen of crime **Val McDermid** will be joined by journalist and broadcaster **Mark Lawson** to unpack the heritage and impact of her infamous New Blood panel, discussing the vital role this showcase has played in shaping bookshelves and literary careers, how trends have changed over the past 17 years, as well as giving a peek behind the scenes into how she selects her chosen four... all before welcoming this year's formidable debut talent to share the virtual stage: **Deepa Anappara, Elizabeth Kay, Jessica Moor** and **Trevor Wood**.

For centuries music has provided refuge in times of crisis and Harrogate International Festivals has taken the bold step of commissioning a new work to premiere during the HIF Weekender, in a statement demonstrating the Festival's commitment to supporting the arts scene and the artistic community at this precarious time.

Highly respected, Yorkshire based composer **David Lancaster** was commissioned by the Festival following the cancellation of the Summer Season. Inspired by the pandemic, Lancaster's piece for brass band **Eclipse** was scored in just five days and represents the darkness and danger facing the arts at this time, with an invitation to remain hopeful until the light returns. The Festival has brought together musicians from around the world – from young players starting out on their journey to professionals at very top of their careers – to come together digitally as a community on the hallowed Harrogate stage for a collaborative world premiere led by acclaimed virtuoso trumpeter **Mike Lovatt**.

Jazz maestro **Mischa Mullov-Abbado** – who has also been commissioned by the Festival for new work premiering this autumn – is welcomed as a Guest Curator for the festival weekend, as well as performing with the Mischa Mullov-Abbado Group. Reflecting the Festival's dedication to championing new talent, Mullov-Abbado has handpicked some of the most exciting contemporary young musicians to join the line-up: rising stars and former finalists from the *BBC Young Jazz Musician of The Year*, **Sean Payne** and **Noah Stoneman**.

There will be a host of further classical performances from world renowned musicians including distinguished British cellist **Steven Isserlis**, the **Navarra String Quartet**, multi-award-winning concerto violinist **Tasmin Little**, Tehran born harpsichordist **Mahan Esfahani** – a three time nominee for Gramophone's Artist of the Year – as well as a raft of emerging artists: pianist **George Harliono**, who was recently shortlisted for Classical BRIT Award, Argentinian composer and pianist **Silas Bassa**, violin and piano duo **Abigail Hammett** and **Iwan Owen**, and tenor saxophonist **Rachael Green**.

For folk fans *BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award* nominees **Granny's Attic** are on hand to entertain, or if rave and house music is more your scene, **Graeme Park** – the DJ responsible legendary Hacienda in Manchester and at the heart of the cultural boom of Cool Britannia – will be joining the line up with a live DJ set and interview, so be sure to have your disco ball ready at home.

Alongside mesmerising music and first-class fiction, the HIF Weekender presents a series of cultural conversations with the best in the business including celebrated conductor **Ben Palmer**, Deutsche Philharmonie Merck in Darmstadt, and Founder and Artistic Director of Covent Garden Sinfonia; theatre maker and co-director of the Fun Palaces campaign, **Stella Duffy**, will be discussing the state of the arts in lockdown; newsreader and presenter **John Suchet** will reveal the man behind the music with his compelling biography of Beethoven; and one of the UK's most prolific and successful writers – **Anthony Horowitz** – will be sharing anecdotes from his career, celebrating 10 years of *Alex Rider* and giving an early glimpse at his new novel *Moonflower Murders*.

As part of the Festival's *Berwins Salon North* strand of TED-style talks designed to change your life for the better, the weekender welcomes geneticist, author, and broadcaster **Adam Rutherford** to advise on *How to Argue with a Racist*, BBC Radio 4's *All in the Mind* **Claudia Hammond** will explain why we should be talking rest seriously, and astrobiology research scientist **Lewis Dartnell** will tell the virtual audience the ultimate origin story.

And not forgetting little ones, in addition to the host of activities and resources on the Festival's HIF Player, the HIF Weekender will be introducing children to brass music with **Back Chat Kids**, sharing singalongs with **Family Singing Sessions** and History's Maid **Kate Vigurs** will be revealing the horribly entertaining parts of history that children love!

Since 1966, Harrogate International Festivals has proved an artistic force to be reckoned with, presenting inspiring and ambitious cultural experiences in the most interesting spaces across Harrogate and the region, dedicated to its

charitable purpose of ensuring as many people as possible have access to the arts. This commitment now takes the Festival to our digital doorstep, but for those unable to connect HIF has created a CD version of the weekender available to the public. The festival is also hosting a colourful window campaign to spread joy on the streets of Harrogate and brighten up the **#ViewFromMyWindow**, as well as live performances from the Band on a Bus helping residents stay upbeat and merry, and etchings of **10 Word Crime Stories** as a nod to *Theakston's Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival*.

**Sharon Canavar, CE of Harrogate International Festivals, said:** *"Out of crisis comes creativity, and Harrogate International Festivals is delighted to present a world-class line-up for our first virtual HIF Weekender. Bucking the trend, we have opened our digital doors and wallets to fund artists and commission new work, knowing the transformative value that the arts bring in supporting communities – both locally and for our international audience. Whilst there is no denying that this is a hugely challenging time for the arts and for artists, festivals play a vital part in the creative industries ecology and defining our cultural landscape, and so we are extremely proud to be presenting this rich selection to our audiences world-wide for free, ensuring the arts remain accessible to all at a time when we need it the most."*

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact:**

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**About Harrogate International Festivals**

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'Harrogate International Festivals' is a charitable organisation with a mission to present a diverse year-long programme of live events that bring immersive and moving cultural experiences to as many people as possible. Delivering artistic work of national importance, the Festival curates and produces over 300 unique and surprising performances each year, celebrating world-renowned artists and championing new and up-coming talent across music, literature, science, philosophy and psychology. The HIF+ ongoing education outreach programme engages schools, young people and the local community with workshops, talks, projects and inspiring activities, ensuring everyone can experience the Festival's world class programme and the transformative power of the arts.

Established in 1966, Harrogate International Festivals are an artistic force to be reckoned with and a key cultural provider for the North of England.

Find out more at:

- Website: [www.harrogateinternationalfestivals.com](http://www.harrogateinternationalfestivals.com)
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