

Just Festival 2018 : OutsideIn

OutsideIn: the theme of this year's Just Festival will resonate with many.



In a time of unprecedented anxiety about what the future holds, do we feel excluded – by our nationality, our sexuality, our race or even our age – from our communities? Or do we feel included, part of a ‘special’ group, one that will protect us against threats (perceived or real) to our safety, our independence, our status or our money?



The president of arguably the most powerful country in the world wants to build a wall to keep (some) people out. Some people in the UK say they ‘want their country back’. Awareness of LGBT issues

may have grown, but homophobic attacks continue. Last week an

asylum seeker in Glasgow was asked why he would be concerned about his daughter facing female genital mutilation in his country of origin, as '99% of girls there put up with it'.

In a world that often seems overwhelmed with hatred, fear, greed and intolerance, the Just Festival – now in its 18th year – seeks to challenge perceptions, celebrate differences and promote respectful dialogue. Its



wide programme of talks, discussions, drama, exhibitions, music and dance looks at issues that affect all of our lives, from the ***Ethics of Aid*** (Café at St John's, 6pm 20 August) to the loneliness of modern life (***Trapped in Isolation***, Café at St John's, 6pm 15 August, ***Connected Lives*** [Active Inquiry],



Hall at St John's, various dates), migration (***Where Are You Really From?*** [Glasgow Citizens Theatre/World Spirit Theatre] Hall at St John's, 7.15pm 24/25 August),

bloominauschwitz ([Menagerie], Hall at St John's, various dates) and women's rights (***Every Girl Matters***, Hall at St John's, 7.15pm 21 August, ***Fierce Females***, Café at St John's, 6pm 7 August).

The current political situation is no doubt just one of the contributors to the alarming rise in mental health problems in all age groups. Depression, anxiety and stress all contribute to feelings of exclusion, and in a new exhibition ***Let It Art***, Youth Arts View explores young people's thoughts on peace, conflict, terrorism and violence. The project approaches the issues of terrorism – and media



coverage of terrorism – in a creative and engaging way, and the results will be on display throughout the festival period.



HarmonyChoir may have started life as a research project to find evidence of the beneficial effects of choral singing, but it's grown into a well-established choir tackling stigma around mental health and engaging people with varying

mental health backgrounds. **Take Note! Youth Choir** is Harmony's new youth project, and at 5.30pm on 3 August the two groups will come together in a joyous celebration. They'll each have their own concerts too of course – Harmony on 24 August and Take Note! on 4 August. This year Harmony is the Just's festival-supported project, with 50p from every ticket sold being donated to the charity.



In Western society older people often feel excluded from mainstream life; their experience is ignored, their opinions invalidated, their confidence eroded. In **Age & Stage**, (Church



at St John's, various dates), Active Enquiry invites us to engage in stories told by older community members and their carers through devised and interactive theatre, while Faith in Older People presents **Identity & Belonging** (Hall at St John's 5.15pm 16 August), a

reflection through storytelling on religion, belief, culture and family roots, and their impact on our sense of being

human.



Life of a Funeral Director

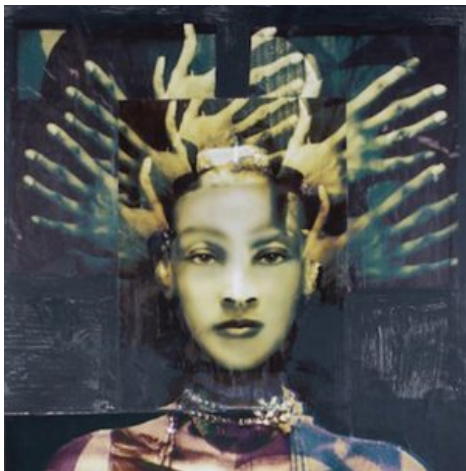
The one certainty in life is, of course, death. Just 2018 (in partnership with local alliance Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief) looks at how we deal with it now (***Life of a Funeral Director***, Café at St John's, 6pm 16 August), how we dealt with it then (***Scottish Funeral***, Café at St John's, 6pm 9 August) and how we might deal with it better (***End of Life Doulas***, Café

at St John's, 6pm 23 August).



And when you've discussed, debated and thought until you can think no more, what could be more unifying than a dose of good music? The Nevis Ensemble's vision is 'music for everyone, everywhere'. It takes its full-

scale orchestral performances to public spaces as diverse as train stations and swimming pools, and on 7 August it takes one to St John's, where it will offer you an hour of classics, ceilidh music, jazz, pop and a



new commission from Matthew Grouse (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). Meanwhile, throughout the month, Alabaster Box will bring you stunning a capella ***Sounds From the Gold Coast***, linking African cultures to the Christian message, and in ***We ARE***, Los Angeles all women band Adaawe will dedicate their high-octane hour of drumming, storytelling, singing and dance to the women of Ghana.

Looking for something completely – *completely* – different? In ***Crow*** (Church at St John's, 7pm 25 August), vocalist Bird Radio performs poetry and song as you have never heard them performed before. In a unique collaboration with sonic duo



Pig7, he works with live processing, found sound and synthesis to channel, through his own voice, the spirit of Ted Hughes' masterpiece on grief.

At the 2018 Just Festival have your thoughts stirred and your preconceptions shaken. And go away singing, because in a world that seeks to keep us apart, Just seeks to bring us together, to bring the outside in.

Just Festival 2018, 3-26 August 2018, St John's Church and Cornerstone Centre, Princes Street (corner of Lothian Road), Edinburgh EH2 4BJ.

The full programme is at www.just-festival.org hard copies can be picked up from St John's or at venues throughout the city.

Tickets may be purchased online, by phone/text (0745 377 0061) or from the Just Box Office outside St John's Church (2.30-9.30pm, 3-25 August, closed Sundays).

All images courtesy of Just Festival.

