SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS AND FILM FESTIVAL CELEBRATES ITS 10TH YEAR

The Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival (SMHFA) today announced its celebratory 10th annual programme, its most ambitious to date, featuring new theatre, film, music, comedy, visual art and literary events from some of the most exciting artists in Scotland and Europe, and spanning over 300 events across Scotland, opening on World Mental Health Day, Monday 10 October 2016.

Over the past decade SMHFA, led by the Mental Health Foundation, has quietly grown into one of the biggest and most significant arts and film festivals in the country, with Scotland-wide audience numbers reaching over 25,000 and a wealth of arts events encouraging awareness of and creative responses to mental health. The theme of this year’s festival is ‘time’ – for the programming team that means time to reflect on what SMHFA could become in the future. In celebration of its first decade, the festival has taken bold new steps this year, commissioning a new theatre work supported by Creative Scotland (One Thinks of It All As A Dream, Alan Bissett’s previously announced play about the life of Pink Floyd frontman Syd Barrett), appointing its first associate artist in Emma Jayne Park, whose interactive dance work for children, Experts In Short Trousers, will tour the country. The festival’s annual International Film Competition is its biggest to date, and the tenth edition also heralds exciting new collaborations with other Scottish arts organisations, including the National Theatre of Scotland, Oran Mor, Traverse Theatre, Aberdeen Performing Arts, Dundee Literary Festival, Africa In Motion, Take One Action and Luminate.

Look out for contributions from a number of major Scottish artists including bands Admiral Fallow and The Cathode Ray, theatre makers Cora Bissett, Jo Clifford, and Pamela Carter, writers Jenny Lindsay, Chitra Ramaswamy and Harry Giles, as well as the comedian Felicity Ward and YA authors Juno Dawson and Cat Clarke. Members of The Phantom Band will create an exciting new live score to the seminal 1930s avant-garde film Borderline, starring Paul Robeson. A packed film programme includes 3 Scottish, 4 UK and 2 European feature premieres, as well as the festival’s increasingly highly regarded International Film Competition, which this year saw a 300% rise in entrants; and multi-media exhibition Out of Sight Out of Mind works with over 100 artists across several venues all over the city.

Importantly, the festival still maintains its deep roots in communities across 17 local authority areas in Scotland. The hundreds of events packing out the festival programme this year are a real tribute to SMHFA’s scope, ranging from grassroots local events to major national touring productions.

COMMENT
Lee Knifton, Head of the Mental Health Foundation, Scotland, said:

‘We’re delighted to be able to announce such a strong, diverse and vibrant programme for the tenth annual Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival. Over the past decade, we’ve worked with hundreds of artists and organisations across Scotland to challenge stigma, raise awareness and encourage creative responses to mental health. By commissioning our first-ever work of theatre, leading our largest ever International Film Competition and launching some high profile collaborations with some of the biggest arts organisations in the country this year, we’re making a big statement about where we hope the festival will be heading over the next ten years. This also seems like a great time to highlight the vital involvement of activists, grassroots organisations and local community groups in making the festival as successful as it is today. Here’s to another ten years.’

Please see next page for selected festival highlights.
HIGHLIGHTS: THEATRE
As previously announced, SMHAF’s flagship production this year is *One Thinks of It All As A Dream*, a new play by Alan Bissett tracing Pink Floyd frontman Syd Barrett’s struggles with mental health and fame, and SMHAF’s first-ever commission. The festival is delighted to announce that Ian Barrett, Syd’s nephew, will join Bissett, author and Pink Floyd expert John Cavanagh and music journalist Nicola Meighan for an evening of discussion, archive footage and music celebrating Syd’s life in the year he would have turned 70. The remaining members of Pink Floyd have given the play, and its soundtrack of the band’s music, their blessing.

For its tenth edition, the festival welcomes new associate artist Emma Jayne Park, a dancer, choreographer and long-term supporter of the festival. Park’s company, Cultured Mongrel Dance Theatre brings together unique combinations of skilled artists to create uncompromising performance work as a vehicle for social change, and this year for SMHAF they tour the delightful *Experts In Short Trousers*, a piece of interactive dance theatre about a group of aliens on Earth, aimed at ages 4+. Park and Julia James-Griffiths also present *The Box/Thinking In The First Person*, a dance double bill exploring the impact of depression. *Where The Crow Flies*, a new work by Lisa Nicoll based on interviews with women in East Lothian, will also tour a number of venues across Scotland during the festival.

SMHAF is also delighted to begin an exciting new collaboration with the National Theatre of Scotland, coming on board with their international community arts festival Home Away to co-host a day of discussions and events around future projects relating to mental health. Playwright Jo Clifford gives a talk exploring the impact of prejudice on transgender people, Pamela Carter discusses her new play on maverick psychiatrist RD Laing, and Cora Bissett directs an evening of performance including musical contributions from members of the Adam World Choir, a choir of transgender/ non-binary people from around the world, brought together for the National Theatre of Scotland’s forthcoming Eve/Adam project.

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One Thinks Of It All As A Dream
Mon 17 – Sat 22 Oct, Oran Mor, Glasgow
Tue 25 – Sat 29 Oct, Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh
Tue 1 – Sat 5 Nov, Lemon Tree, Aberdeen

Syd Barrett: Dream & Reality
Thu 20 Oct, Oran Mor, Glasgow

The Box/Thinking In The First Person:
Sat 15 Oct, Storytelling Centre, Edinburgh

Experts In Short Trousers:
Wed 5 Oct, Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock
Tue 18 Oct, Woodend Barn, Banchory
Tue 25 Oct, The Burrel Centre, Langholm
Fri 26 Oct, The Newlands Centre, Edinburgh

Where The Crow Flies
18-19 Oct – Storytelling centre, Edinburgh
Fri 21 Oct, Clarkston Hall, East Renfrewshire
Wed 26 Oct – Paisley Arts Centre, Paisley

SMHAF @ Home Away: Sun 9 Oct, Tramway, Glasgow

Full listings for the SMHAF theatre programme can be found in the accompanying listings document.

HIGHLIGHTS: FILM
This year’s film programme features over 50 features and short films, screening in cinemas and venues across the country, many of which will be accompanied by lively post-screening discussions of the issues involved. Most of the work showing in Edinburgh and Glasgow has been selected from entries to the festival’s International Film Competition, which offers filmmakers from all over the world a chance to engage with new audiences and challenge perceptions around mental health. This year almost 1600 films from 100 countries were submitted (a 300% increase on last year’s submissions); the winners will be announced at a ceremony in Glasgow in the festival’s first week.

Rick Anthony and Margaret Tait Award winner Duncan Marquiss, of The Phantom Band, will improvise a new live score for *Borderline*, a 1930s avant-garde drama directed by Scot Kenneth Macpherson, starring Paul Robeson and the poet HD (Hilda Doolittle), which was ground-breaking in its progressive treatment of sexuality and race, as well as the cinematic techniques used to portray inner psychological states.

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film highlights continued

Other highlights include the European premiere of *Touched With Fire*, a drama about bipolar disorder starring Katie Holmes; the Scottish premiere of *A Family Affair*, Tom Fassaert’s startling and very moving documentary, which made a huge impact as the Opening Gala film at IDFA this year, the Scottish premiere of #MyEscape, a documentary shot largely by refugees as they fled Afghanistan, Eritrea and Syria, and the UK premiere of *Shoulder The Lion*, an innovative, visually stunning and multi-award winning documentary, including interviews with boxer Katie Dallam, the inspiration for Clint Eastwood’s *Million Dollar Baby*.

*International Film Competition Awards Ceremony*: Tue 11 Oct, CCA, Glasgow
*Shoulder The Lion*: Wed 12 Oct, CCA, Glasgow & Mon 24 Oct, Filmhouse, Edinburgh
*#MyEscape* Wed 12 Oct, CCA, Glasgow
*Borderline with live score*: Thu 13 Oct, CCA, Glasgow
*A Family Affair*: Sat 15, CCA, Glasgow & Tue 18 Oct, Filmhouse, Edinburgh
*Touched With Fire* Mon 24 Oct, GFT, Glasgow; Wed 26 Oct, Filmhouse, Edinburgh

Full listings for the SMHFAF film programme can be found in the accompanying listings document.

**FURTHER HIGHLIGHTS**

- Multi award-winning comedian Felicity Ward plays the only Scottish date of her UK tour *50% More Likely To Die* on World Mental Health Day for SMHFAF. The show, which traces Ward’s struggles with anxiety, received all-round excellent reviews at this year’s Edinburgh Fringe.
- Glasgow-based quintet Admiral Fallow and Edinburgh alternative band The Cathode Ray headline Music Matters, a special gig organised by Edinburgh Carers’ Council.
- Featuring work by 100 artists, all with lived experience of mental health issues, *Out of Sight Out of Mind* is a powerful and ambitious series of exhibitions and multi-media installations across several Edinburgh venues including Summerhall.
- New magazine for young women *She Is Fierce* takes over the Grand Hall at Edinburgh Castle for a Wonderland-themed celebration of young female creativity.
- SMHFAF has two events at Dundee Literary Festival this year. *That Way Madness Lies* is a look at mental illness in the work of Shakespeare, with literary critic Stuart Kelly, journalist Joyce McMillan and psychotherapist and editor Peter Kravitz. YA authors Juno Dawson and Cat Clarke examine mental health as it affects teenagers in *Mind Your Head*.
- *Moving Minds* is a day-long, family-friendly takeover of Kelvingrove Museum in partnership with VoX (Voices of eXperience) celebrating diversity and wellbeing across communities with world music, dance and theatre.
- *Flint & Pitch Revue*: Poet Jenny Lindsay hosts a cabaret night exploring mental health from multiple angles and featuring contributions from performer and poet Harry Giles, journalist and author Chitra Ramaswamy, and singer-songwriter Finn Le Marinel, with more names to be announced.
- *Music and Mental Health Day* in Paisley features an examination of the effects of music on mental health, a therapeutic drumming workshop and a screening of the Brian Wilson biopic *Love & Mercy*.
- *Recovery Fest*, a new addition to this year’s Renfrewshire programme, focuses on events that raise awareness of recovery for people with mental ill health and addiction experiences. Look out for workshops, jam sessions, film screenings, poetry readings and exhibitions.
- *LGBT Health* and The State present *Leith is Burning*, a screening of *Paris is Burning*, Jennie Livingston’s documentary on the New York 1980s drag scene, followed by a dance-based vogue workshop and celebratory end-of-festival Vogue Ball
Music Matters: Thu 27 Oct, Electric Circus, Edinburgh
Out of Sight Out of Mind: 8 – 31 Oct, various venues across Edinburgh (see listings document for full information)
That Way Madness Lies: Fri 21 Oct, Dundee Literary Festival, Dundee
Mind your Head Fri 21 Oct, Dundee Literary Festival, Dundee
The Flint & Pitch Revue: Fri 14 Oct, Bongo Club, Edinburgh
She Is Fierce: Thu 20 Oct, Edinburgh Castle, Edinburgh
Moving Minds: Sat 15 Oct, Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, Glasgow
Music & Mental Health Day: Thu 13 Oct, Paisley Arts Centre, Paisley
Recovery Fest: 8-29 Oct, various venues, Renfrewshire (see listings document for full information)
Leith is Burning: Sun 30 Oct, Thomas Morton Hall, Edinburgh

For full listings of all 300+ SMH difference in Edinburgh please see the brochure or visit mhfestival.com

FEATURE IDEAS

- Alan Bissett and Ian Barrett, nephew of Syd, are available for interview on One Thinks Of It All As A Dream.
- An extended essay on Shakespeare’s treatment of mental health, to tie in with our Dundee Literary Festival event That Way Madness Lies. Journalists Stuart Kelly and Joyce McMillan form the panel.
- An interview with associate artist Emma Jayne Park, currently preparing for her second touring show of the year, whilst recovering from cancer.
- Another look at seminal Scottish psychiatrist RD Laing, who features both in Pamela Carter’s Home Away production and SMH difference One Thinks Of It All As A Dream.
- A magazine piece on Out of Sight Out of Mind, the SMH difference exhibition featuring the work of over 100 artists across numerous venues around Edinburgh
- Interview with Rick Anthony & Duncan Marquiss of The Phantom Band, on their Borderline live soundtrack
- The directors of Shoulder The Lion are available for interview about the UK premiere of their film

ABOUT SMH difference: Now in its tenth year, the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival is one of Scotland's most striking and provocative cultural events, encompassing music, film, visual art, performing arts, dance, and literature. The annual festival takes place in venues across Scotland throughout October, aiming to support the arts and challenge preconceived ideas about mental health. By engaging artists, connecting with communities and forming collaborations, the festival celebrates the artistic achievements of people with experience of mental health problems, explores the relationship between creativity and the mind, and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing.

PARTNERS: The festival is led by the Mental Health Foundation in association with the following national partners: See Me, Scotland’s programme to end mental health stigma, Creative Scotland, NHS Lothian, NHS Health Scotland, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Awards For All, The Royal College of Psychiatrists, Lanarkshire Recovery Network, Voices of eXperience (VOX), Forestry Commission Scotland, The D’Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, WM Mann Foundation, Merchants House of Glasgow, Bipolar Scotland and The List magazine. The festival is also supported by hundreds of arts, community and public organisations across Scotland.

THE MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION is a leading UK mental health charity that conducts robust research, provides practical solutions to help everyone lead mentally healthier lives, and works to raise public awareness and improve mental health services for the entire population. The Foundation is proud of the vital role it plays in hosting, developing and managing the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival.

SMH difference runs from 10-31 October 2016. Images, listings information and additional materials are available to download here: http://tinyurl.com/SMHdifference2016 Please see mhfestival.com for full information.

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