



Just Festival 2017: Press Release

The world is in a difficult place at the moment. From the domestic to the global, the personal to the political, for those who wish to make the world a better place it may feel as if there is a surging tide of issues and injustice that might knock us off our feet at any moment. So from the 4th - 27th August, the Just Festival will be taking a closer look at issues that goes against the current and stand up for social justice. In our distinctly different programme, we will engage with a wide range of social justice issues facing people around the world. We will also delve into the past as we reflect on three significant historical anniversaries, 100 years of the Balfour Declaration, 70 years of Indian Independence and 500 years since the Protestant Reformation, all of which have shaped the world around us. Our two beautiful and historic venues, St John's Church and the Quaker Meeting House, will be home to theatre, music, art and debate that will challenge perceptions, celebrate differences and promote respectful dialogue.

There will be a strong Indian presence in the performance side of our programme. Ragamala Dance Company will join us from the United States as they combine a Western aesthetic with an Indian ethos, to create a physical piece that has rich tradition and deep philosophical roots. The incredible young women of *Kranti (Meaning Revolution in Hindi)* will share their own stories of sex work, trafficking and surviving in Mumbai's Red-Light Area in their critically acclaimed play *Lal Batti Express*.

Active Inquiry will be bringing their amazing Theatre of the Oppressed show to St John's. Augusto Boal, the creator of Theatre of the Oppressed said "*I want the Spectator to take on the role of Actor and invade the Character and the Stage. I want them to occupy their own space and offer solutions*". The Leith based arts company will invite the audience to do just that as they create pieces which demand that the audience attempt to solve the problems for the characters on stage.

In *Seriously Funny* we will be inviting comedians to collaborate with academics as they aim to educate and entertain. Many comedians will be coming to Edinburgh this year to focus upon a social justice issue; by giving them the chance to work with an expert in this field they will be able to create a one-off show, as informative and rewarding for themselves as it is for the audience. On 4th August St Johns Church will host its first ever drag night as the bigotry fighting supergroup DENIM will be bringing some liberation to the pews. Bethany Black brings her honest and very funny life story to the Quaker Meeting House on the 12th. The former human rights lawyer turned comedian, Daphna Baram, will give her take on the state of the international political (whatever it may be) on the 18th. And on the 25th August junior doctor and comedian, Ed Patrick will bring you his firsthand account from the frontlines of the NHS.

For 5 nights only, we will be welcoming the very best in Ugandan theatre as the creators of *Freedom* adapt their award-winning film for the stage. Nisha Kalema's powerful story of a young woman faced by the very worst kinds of misogyny swept the board at the Ugandan Film festival picking up three awards. Kalema herself won Best Actress for her portrayal of Amelia will reprise her role at St Johns, for what is set to be the most significant piece of Ugandan drama ever seen on the Fringe.

Away from the song and dance, Fringe goers will have the chance to hear from and discuss with experts on a whole spectrum of social justice issues. We look forward to local and international perspective from charities, NGOs, academics and many others as they discuss some of the biggest, and some of the more overlooked, challenges facing society. Our conversation programme has consistently provided the backbone to our festival offering, as

we allow the public to go further than being just an audience member and encourage them to engage in the discussion.

We hope that all those who come to the Just Festival this August will leave inspired, enlightened and ready to join the movement to fight for a more united world.

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