

HAY FESTIVAL

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NEWS RELEASE: Friday 25 May 2018

Hay Festival publishes *Letters to the Future: On Equality and Gender* by **Laura Bates** and **Owen Sheers**

Hay Festival has today released *Letters to the Future: On Equality and Gender* (Hay Festival Press, paperback, £5), in which pioneering feminist, activist and bestselling author **Laura Bates** joins playwright and poet **Owen Sheers** in writing letters to the next generation, exploring and planning for a future where women and men live free of gender prescription and expectation.



Published to coincide with Secondary Schools day at Hay Festival Wales (Friday 25 May), this new collection invites readers to join the authors in their imagining and mapping-out of the benefits for all in creating an equal future.

Seeds of the project were sown last year when Sheers drew on Bates' work in delivering his reformation of masculinity for the festival's 30th anniversary series of reformations. His tender, challenging poem addressed to his daughters, *The Men You'll Meet*, was delivered to live audiences at Hay Festival events throughout the year.

Laura Bates will talk about the project with Owen Sheers along with her new book *Misogynation* on Saturday 26 May. For more information and to download the free teaching resources for the collection visit hayfestival.org/letters-to-the-future/

Becky Shaw, Publisher at Hay Festival Press, said: "We are delighted to publish *Letters to the Future* by Laura Bates and Owen Sheers. This book is for adults and young people exploring all the issues around equality and gender that face societies everywhere. We hope that it will provoke

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discussion and engagement, and that it will sit alongside some of the further recommended reading both authors have suggested here.”

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Laura Bates, pioneering feminist, activist and bestselling author, has given voice to hundreds of thousands of women through her international Everyday Sexism Project. Drawing attention to both hidden and blatant sexist acts and attitudes, Laura has exposed the startling truth behind misogyny in our society: systemic, ingrained and ignored. Her new book *Misogynation* is out now, published by Simon & Schuster.

Owen Sheers is a poet, novelist and playwright. Twice-winner of the Wales Book of the Year, his books of poetry include *Skirrid Hill*, winner of a Somerset Maugham Award, the BAFTA-nominated *The Green Hollow*, and the verse drama *Pink Mist*. In 2013 he received the Hay Festival Medal for Poetry. In 2018 he was awarded the Wilfred Owen Poetry Award. Sheers’ theatrical work includes *The Two Worlds of Charlie F.*, winner of the Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award, *Mametz*, and National Theatre Wales’s 72-hour *The Passion*. He is chair of Wales PEN Cymru and Professor in Creativity at Swansea University.

ABOUT HAY FESTIVAL 2018

Featuring over 600 of the world’s greatest writers, global policy makers, pioneers and innovators in 800 events across 11 days, Hay Festival Wales (24 May-3 June) showcases the latest ideas in the arts, sciences and current affairs, alongside a rich schedule of music, comedy and entertainment. A galaxy of literary stars gathers to launch new work, while the biggest ever HAYDAYS and #HAYYA programmes give young readers the opportunity to meet their heroes and get creative.

Explore the 2018 programme and book tickets at hayfestival.org or call 01497 822 629.

The Festival site is free to enter, with ticketed events in 10 tented venues, plus a range of sites to explore, including the Festival Bookshop; the HAYDAYS courtyard; the Hay Festival Wild Garden; creative workshops in the Make and Take Tent, the Scribblers Hut, The Cube and the Mess Tent; and market stalls, cafés and restaurants.

In an age increasingly characterised by abbreviated content and algorithmic recommendation, Hay Festival promotes serendipitous discovery through the long-form, immersive experience, offering a platform for informed conversation and the chance for inspiration to take hold.

The Festival runs a wide programme of education work supporting coming generations of writers and culturally hungry audiences of all ages – Hay Festival Wales opens with two free Schools Days of programming, the Beacons Project gives students aged 16–18 the chance to learn from internationally acclaimed writers, students in tertiary education can get free tickets, and Hay Compass is a special space on site to learn and discover, with free access to inspiring speakers.

PROGRAMME IN BRIEF

Award-winning novelists discuss their work, including **Margaret Atwood, Ian McEwan, Alexander McCall Smith, Asne Seierstad, Anuradha Roy, Colm Tóibín, Jilly Cooper,**

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Andre Aciman, Maggie O'Farrell, Rose Tremain, Salman Rushdie, Marian Keyes, Lionel Shriver, Kamila Shamsie, Alan Hollinghurst, Jojo Moyes, Jack Zipes, Philip Pullman, Ruth Jones, Simon Mayo, Juan Gabriel Vasquez and Javier Cercas. Poets **Tishani Doshi, Owen Sheers and Mererid Hopwood** join **Margaret Atwood** in a special commemoration of Armistice 100.

Conversations around internationalism, democracy and peacekeeping feature world leaders, policy makers and award-winning journalists, including: political strategist **Donna Brazile**, General Secretary of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs **Maurice Gourdault Montagne**, *Fire and Fury* author **Michael Wolff**, **Sarah Churchwell**, **A. C. Grayling**, **Gordon Brown**, **David Miliband**, the British Army's **Adrian Bradshaw**, former Israeli Prime Minister **Ehud Barak**, **Shashi Tharoor** and peace builder **Scilla Elworthy**. Gender equality and race dominate conversations on Britain today that include **Akala**, **Afua Hirsch**, **Rose McGowan**, **James O'Brien**, **Laura Bates**, **Helen Pankhurst**, **Germaine Greer** and **Robert Webb**.

The past is reimagined by leading historians including **Anthony Beevor**, **Helen Rappaport**, **Sujit Sivasundaram**, **Alison Weir**, **Melvyn Bragg**, **David Olusoga**, **Simon Schama**, **Bettany Hughes**, **Emily Wilson** and **Amy Lamé**. Meanwhile, education is interrogated as **Amanda Spielman** discusses Ofsted and the future of education.

Health and wellbeing take centre stage in sessions with **Ruby Wax**, **Suzanne O'Sullivan**, **Johann Hari**, **Edmund de Waal**, **Daniel Davis**, Alzheimer's Society ambassador **Wendy Mitchell** and **Bryony Gordon**. Meanwhile, **Nigel Shadbolt**, **Ella McPherson**, **Philip Ball**, **Akram Khan**, **Marcus du Sautoy**, **Richard Dawkins**, **Elisa Passini** and **Anne-Marie Imafidon** showcase the latest ideas in STEM with talks.

Hay on Earth looks at innovations in sustainability and the future of farming, with Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs **Michael Gove** and Google's sustainability lead **Kate Brandt**. Meanwhile, nature and travel writers take audiences around the world, including **Monty Don**, **Horatio Clare**, **Patrick Barkham**, and adventurers **Bear Grylls**, **Ursula Martin**, **Andy Kirkpartick** and **Chris Bonington**.

Stars of stage and screen appear including **Andrew Davies** (*Les Misérables*), **Bill Nighy** (*The Bookshop*), actors **Jim Broadbent**, **Simon Russell Beale** and an all-star **Letters Live** cast. There's comedy from **Russell Kane**, **Shazia Mirza**, **David Baddiel**, **Dara O'Briain** and **Bridget Christie**, with music from **Jake Bugg**, **Laura Mvula**, **Les Amazones d'Afrique** and **Gabrielle Aplin**, while **Goldie** presents his memoir *All Things Remembered*.

HAYDAYS and #HAYYA events feature **Ed Vere**, **Michael Morpurgo**, **Judith Kerr**, **David Walliams**, **Beverley Naidoo**, **Jacqueline Wilson**, **Cressida Cowell**, **Lucy Worsley**, **Lauren Child**, **Katherine Rundell**, **Juno Dawson**, **Holly Bourne**, **Patrick Ness**, **Patrice Lawrence** and **Alex Wheatle**. Workshops blend creative writing, illustration, textiles, coding, dance, drumming and animation, while RSPB Cymru and Rooted Forest School take young people outdoors.

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Notes to editors

For IMAGES, INTERVIEWS, FURTHER INFORMATION or to apply for PRESS ACCREDITATION, please contact Hay Festival publicity director Christopher Bone at christopher@hayfestival.org or 07506 522540.

Hay Festival

www.hayfestival.org

Hay Festival brings readers and writers together to share stories and ideas in sustainable events around the world. The festivals inspire, examine and entertain, inviting participants to imagine the world as it is and as it might be.

Nobel Prize-winners and novelists, scientists and politicians, historians and musicians talk with audiences in a dynamic exchange of ideas. The Festival's global conversation shares the latest thinking in the arts and sciences with curious audiences live, in print and online. Hay Festival also runs wide programmes of education work supporting coming generations of writers and culturally hungry audiences of all ages.

In 1987, the festival was dreamt up around a kitchen table in Hay. Thirty-one years later, the unique marriage of exacting conversations and entertainment for all ages has travelled to editions in 30 locations, from the historic town of Cartagena in Colombia to the heart of cities in Peru, Mexico, Spain and Denmark. The organisation now reaches a global audience of hundreds of thousands every year and continues to grow and innovate, building partnerships and initiatives alongside some of the leading bodies in arts and the media, including the BBC, Welsh Government Department of Education, Visit Wales, ACW, the British Council, Oxfam, TATA, Friends of Hay Festival, Baillie Gifford, Good Energy, NERC and the National Trust.

Acclaimed author, actor and writer **Stephen Fry** is President of the organisation; **Peter Florence** is Director; and **Caroline Michel**, CEO of leading literary and talent agency Peters Fraser + Dunlop, is Chair of the Festival board.

Coming up...

- Hay Festival Wales, UK (24 May-3 June 2018)
- Hay Festival Querétaro, Mexico (6-9 September 2018)
- Hay Festival Segovia, Spain (20-23 September 2018)
- Hay Festival Arequipa, Peru (8-11 November 2018)
- Hay Festival Wales Winter Weekend, UK (22-25 November 2018)
- Hay Festival Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (31 January-3 February 2019)