



Press Release

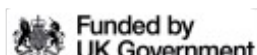
Embargoed until Thursday 26 September 2024

FACTORY INTERNATIONAL ANNOUNCES 2025 PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

- Hamlet *Hail to the Thief*, a dynamic new version of Shakespeare's Hamlet, directed by **Steven Hoggett** and **Christine Jones**, sees Shakespeare's words illuminated by Radiohead's seminal album *Hail to the Thief* re-worked by **Thom Yorke** and performed live by a cast of musicians and actors. It will have its world premiere at Manchester's Aviva Studios, home of Factory International (27 April - 18 May 2025) before transferring to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford.
- **Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT)** and **Complicité** will present the world premiere of the final instalment of **Simon McBurney** and **Crystal Pite's** award-winning dance trilogy, *Figures in Extinction* (19-22 Feb 2025) - a thought-provoking meditation on the natural world and our relationship to it. The performance at Aviva Studios brings together all three parts of the trilogy - the first chance to experience the series as a whole.
- Tickets go on-sale on **Wed 2 October 2024** at www.factoryinternational.org
- Other highlights for 2025 include the world premiere of a large-scale performance work from world-renowned artist **Marina Abramović**, *Balkan Erotic Epic*, exploring eroticism, spirituality and ritual to be presented at Aviva Studios in autumn; and *SHERLOCK HOLMES* a brand-new play directed by Rob Ashford with choreography from **Akram Khan**, which will premiere in Manchester ahead of West End and Broadway runs. Full details to be announced next year.
- 2025 will also see the return of the world-renowned Manchester International Festival across the city from 3-20 July 2025 - the first edition to be curated by Creative Director **Low Kee Hong**. Full details to be announced in March 2025.
- Reflecting Factory International's commitment to ensuring access to the widest possible audiences, Aviva £10 tickets are available for all shows.
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Factory International is delighted to announce a series of major works that will have their world premiere at Manchester's landmark new arts and cultural venue Aviva Studios in 2025. Programmed and operated by Factory International, the organisation who also deliver Manchester International Festival (MIF), Aviva Studios officially opened last October, creating a global destination for arts, music and culture in the heart of Manchester. The venue's development was

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led by Manchester City Council, with backing of £99.05m from HM Government and £7m National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

The world premiere of *Hamlet Hail to the Thief* (27 April – 18 May 2025), will see Shakespeare's great tragedy and Radiohead's seminal album collide for a feverish new live experience that fuses theatre, music, and movement. In this fast-paced distillation of the play, Shakespeare's words and Radiohead's album illuminate one another in thrilling new ways as the music becomes a critical part of the narrative. Personally reworked by **Thom Yorke**, the deconstructed album will be performed live onstage by a cast of 20 musicians and actors.

The production is a collaboration between Radiohead frontman **Thom Yorke**, and celebrated directors, **Steven Hoggett** and **Christine Jones**. Olivier award-winner Steven Hoggett is a

founder member of Frantic Assembly whose credits as a choreographer include *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* and *Black Watch*. Tony and Olivier Award winner Christine Jones is Creator and Artistic Director of Theater For One, and director of New York immersive nightclub experience, *Queen of the Night*. Their projects together as choreographer and designer include *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, *American Idiot* and *Let the Right One In*.

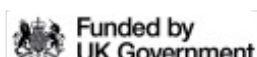
Hamlet Hail to the Thief Ophelia's awakening to the lies and corruption in Denmark, gradually revealed by ghosts and music. Elsinore has become a surveillance state and hectic runs in the blood of its citizens - paranoia reigns and no one is spared a tragic unraveling.

Thom Yorke said "This is an interesting and intimidating challenge! Adapting the original music of *Hail to the Thief* for live performance with the actors on stage to tell this story that is forever being told, using its familiarity and sounds, pulling them into and out of context, seeing what chimes with the underlying grief and paranoia of *Hamlet*, using the music as a 'presence' in the room, watching how it collides with the action and the text. Ghosting one against the other."

Christine Jones said "The first Radiohead concert I ever saw was the *Hail to the Thief* tour in 2003. It changed my DNA. Not long after, I was reading *Hamlet* and listening to the album. I became aware of how many songs from *Hail to the Thief* speak to the themes of the play. There are uncanny reverberances between the text and the album. For years I've wanted to see the play and album collide in a piece of theatre; eventually I shared the idea with Thom, who was intrigued. I wasn't sure what we would make, but I knew I wanted to make it with Steven and continue experimenting and building on work we have done together over many years.

Steven Hoggett said "We are thrilled to have found two venues with Aviva Studios, home of Factory International and Royal Shakespeare Company that complement each other so well. Both are at the very forefront of asking questions about what theatre can be and are two perfect homes for this show."

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Hamlet Hail to the Thief will have its world premiere at Aviva Studios from 27 April to 18 May 2025 (Press Night 7 May 2025) before transferring to Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford Upon Avon from 4 - 28 June 2025. Casting is to be announced in due course.

For the past four years, choreographer **Crystal Pite** and Complicité artistic director and co-founder **Simon McBurney** have weaved their hopes and fears for our current moment into the dance trilogy *Figures in Extinction*. In Spring 2025 **Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT)** and **Complicité** will present the final instalment of this major new collaboration at Aviva Studios - performed by NDT 1 dancers from 19 to 22 Feb 2025 (Press Night 20 Feb 2025).

The first work, *Figures in Extinction* [1.0] - a sweeping exploration of species and environments we have lost and are losing - premiered in The Hague in 2022, receiving the top prize for a dance production at the 2022 Nederlandse Dansdagen. The second work, which premiered in February 2024, is a searing look at our need for connection in a separated world. Making its world premiere at Aviva Studios, *Figures in Extinction* [3.0] is the third and final piece of this moving trilogy, offering a spark in the darkness as to where we might go next through a mixture of dance, video and spoken word.

Co-created by **Crystal Pite** - who is known for her breathtaking and boundary-pushing work in dance - and celebrated actor, writer, director and co-founder of Complicité **Simon McBurney**,

Figures in Extinction is a thought-provoking meditation on the natural world and our relationship to it. The performance at Aviva Studios brings together all three parts - the first chance to experience the *Figures in Extinction* series as a whole.

Another highlight for 2025 - also announced today - is a daring large-scale performance work by world-renowned artist **Marina Abramović** exploring eroticism, spirituality and ritual. Uncovering ancient beliefs and folktales, *Balkan Erotic Epic* blends artforms - bringing together performance, dance and traditional Balkan throat singing to explore and enact the eroticism embedded in Balkan mythology. *Balkan Erotic Epic* will premiere at Aviva Studios in autumn 2025 - full details will be announced next year.

Marina Abramović says: "I was born in the Balkan. As a child, I have been exposed to many spiritual rituals in the house of my grandmother which left me with deep and lasting impressions that continue to shape the way I see the world today. I have long desired to look into ancient and pagan beliefs, folktales, and rites rooted in the mythologies of this region of Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, along with Gypsy and traveller cultures. In the past, for so many ancient cultures, procreation and life itself were based on numerous ceremonies aimed at creating an understanding of our existence. By rediscovering this forgotten past, I would like to create a new understanding and context for the public today."

Also joining the line-up for 2025 is *SHERLOCK HOLMES*, a brand-new play which will premiere at Aviva Studios in Manchester in autumn 2025, ahead of West End and Broadway runs. Written by British writing team **Rachel Wagstaff** and **Duncan Abel** (*The Girl on the Train*, *The Da Vinci*

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Code), the play will be directed by Tony and Olivier Award-winner **Rob Ashford** - with choreography from Olivier Award-winner **Akram Khan**. Staged as a mystery within a mystery, the case presented to Holmes forces him to confront his murky past. Sherlock Holmes is an original tale which will offer a new and deeply theatrical exploration of the mind of the famous detective, while remaining faithful to the mysterious world created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

John McGrath, Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Factory International says: "I am delighted to be sharing some of our highlights for 2025 as we approach the end of our first year in our extraordinary new building. Each of these projects features the kind of inventive and ambitious ideas and collaborations that Aviva Studios was built for - embodying our vision to be a space where artists can imagine new possibilities. We're truly excited to be working with such a fantastic array of partners on these projects and can't wait to bring them all to life."

2025 will also see the return of the world-renowned Manchester International Festival from 3-20 July 2025 - the first edition to be curated by **Creative Director Low Kee Hong**. One of the world's leading arts festivals, and the first to be entirely focused on the commissioning and producing of ambitious new work, MIF has been staged every two years in Manchester since 2007, and has commissioned, produced and presented world premieres by artists including Björk, Jeremy Deller, Akram Khan, David Lynch, Wayne McGregor, Steve McQueen, Yoko Ono, Maxine Peake, Skepta, Christine Sun Kim, and The xx.

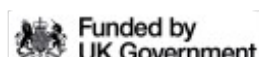
The 2025 edition of Manchester International Festival (MIF) will include a host of world premieres and special events by artists from around the world unveiled in venues and spaces across the city. For the second time the festival will also take place at Aviva Studios - the new permanent home of Factory International - including the much-loved Festival Square which will take over the riverside outdoor spaces of Aviva Studios with free live music and a wide variety of food and drink. Full details to be announced in March 2025.

Low Kee Hong, Creative Director, Factory International says:

"I am so excited to be curating the 2025 edition of Manchester International Festival, an event I have long admired for its visionary and bold take on what tomorrow can look like. I look forward to unveiling an ambitious programme of international and interdisciplinary new work next year, across Manchester and at our extraordinary home in the heart of the city, Aviva Studios, from 3-20 July."

Aviva Studios officially launched in October 2023 as a major addition to the city's cultural scene, following a series of preview events including a spectacular exhibition by Yayoi Kusama. Its opening production, the Matrix-inspired Free Your Mind was created by a world-class creative team including Danny Boyle, Es Devlin, Boy Blue co-founders Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy and Michael 'Mikey J' Asante and Sabrina Mahfouz and featured over 50 dancers from the Northwest and across the UK. It was followed by The Welcome, an invitation from local people to celebrate the new cultural space opening in the heart of their city, programmed by Greater Manchester residents.

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As well as staging and presenting extraordinary events, Factory International is training the creative workforce of the future, through its award-winning Factory Academy programme, providing opportunities for hundreds of Greater Manchester residents to develop careers in the creative industries, Manchester's fastest-growing sector. The latest Factory Academy courses are open for applications at the end of the month.

Factory International's artist development initiatives are also creating opportunities for artists from the North of England, particularly those most underrepresented in the sector. The latest opportunities for autumn include the annual Factory Fellowship which gives emerging artists the chance to learn alongside international creatives by working on a production in Factory International's artistic programme and Artist Takeovers, which offers artists from any discipline the chance to experiment on a large scale in Aviva Studios' flexible spaces, alongside guidance from industry experts. Applications for the next cohort of Factory Fellows will open on 11 October 2024, followed by applications for Factory Sounds - an annual programme designed to support and raise the profile of musicians and the music industry in Greater Manchester - on 4 November.

Reflecting Factory International's commitment to ensuring access to the widest possible audiences, Aviva £10 tickets are available across its year-round programme.

Councillor Garry Bridges, Deputy Leader, Manchester City Council, said: "

Aviva Studios

has undoubtedly made a big impact on the city in its first year of opening. As well as delivering a world-class programme of culture and creativity here on our doorstep, it creates employment opportunities and the chance to develop specialist skills for local people of all ages. Next year's programme looks amazing, and we can't wait to welcome audiences from far and wide to experience the venue and everything our city has to offer."

Rebecca Ball, Area Director North, Arts Council England said: "Factory International's first year in its home at Aviva Studios has brought some hugely ambitious work to Manchester and the 2025 season will continue this innovative programming with some exciting events, performances and collaborations as well as the return of the Manchester International Festival. We're proud to support Factory International as part of our national portfolio as it continues to help make the city an international destination for creativity and culture, alongside offering opportunities for the next generation of artists and cultural leaders through the Factory Academy and its artist development initiatives. 2025 will be an exciting time to be in Manchester and I look forward to seeing some of the programme myself."

Ends.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Hamlet Hail to the Thief and Figures in Extinction on sale on 2 October at factoryinternational.org. Full details of the MIF25 programme will be announced in spring 2025.

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LISTINGS:

Hamlet Hail to the Thief

World premiere, Aviva Studios, home of Factory International
27 April to 18 May 2025 (Press Night 7 May 2025)

Hamlet Hail to the Thief is Co-Produced by Factory International and Royal Shakespeare Company. It is Commissioned and Co-Produced by ATC Experience Ltd., Nate Koch, and Vivek J.Tiwary for TEG+.

Figures of Extinction

World premiere, Aviva Studios, home of Factory International
19 to 22 Feb 2025 (Press Night 20 Feb 2025)

A co-production by Nederlands Dans Theater and Complicité. Part 3 co-commissioned by Factory International, Manchester. Co-produced by Schrit_tmacher Festival, Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg and Montpellier Danse.

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ABOUT FACTORY INTERNATIONAL

Factory International is the organisation behind Manchester International Festival (MIF) and the city's landmark new cultural space, Aviva Studios.

Factory International commissions, produces and presents a year-round programme of original creative work and special events at Aviva Studios, its landmark new home in Manchester, online, and internationally through its network of co-commissioners and partners. It also stages the city-wide Manchester International Festival every other year.

Factory International builds on the legacy of Manchester International Festival, one of the world's leading arts festivals, and the first to be entirely focused on the commissioning and producing of ambitious new work. Staged every two years in Manchester since 2007, world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work in venues and spaces across Greater Manchester.

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A space for invention and discovery, Aviva Studios was designed by the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), with Ellen van Loon as lead architect – their first major public building in the UK. Its development was led by Manchester City Council, with backing of £99.05m from HM Government and £7m National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

Ultra-flexible in design, the building is based around large, open, adaptable spaces that can be constantly reconfigured, enabling artists to develop and create large-scale work of invention and ambition of a kind not seen anywhere else in the world. A unique canvas to make, explore and experiment, audiences can enjoy the broadest range of art forms from major exhibitions and concerts to intimate performances and immersive experiences.

Factory International plays an important role in the lives of Greater Manchester residents, bringing jobs, skills, training and creative opportunities. Through the Factory Academy, Factory International is training the creative workforce of the future, while its pioneering creative engagement and artist development programmes create year-round opportunities for local people to get involved, from participating in flagship commissions to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums.

Factory International is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

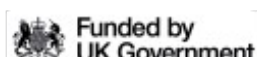
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ABOUT ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £467million of public money from Government and an estimated £250 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

www.artscouncil.org.uk

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