

Press Release
For immediate release

Pitlochry Festival Theatre announces 2022 Winter Words Line up

Coinciding with the start of Scotland's *Year of Stories*, **Pitlochry Festival Theatre** is thrilled to announce the exciting line-up for this year's **Winter Words** which will take place online from **14-20 February**.

Like last year, the 18th year of **Winter Words** will be a little different offering a smaller series of digital events. But the upcoming festival will be both live and interactive and, as with every year, will bring together an exciting line up of well-known, and well-loved authors, playwrights, poets, adventurers, broadcasters, and TV personalities all in one virtual space.

From 14-20 February, Pitlochry Festival Theatre will be introducing a stimulating and entertaining line up of conversations with, amongst others, television actress and presenter **Denise Welch** who will be talking about *The Unwelcome Visitor: Depression and How I Survive It*, her bracing yet accessible account of living with depression; a pre-recorded interview with **Alexander McCall Smith**, author of the highly successful *No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series and one of the world's most prolific and most popular authors who will be discussing his new novel *Love in the time of Bertie* and other novels he published in 2021; celebrated Scottish playwright and crime writer **Denise Mina** who will be discussing her latest novel *Rizzio*; Scottish Makar and 2012 Costa Poetry award winner **Kathleen Jamie** who will be in discussion with playwright David Greig; author and Guardian theatre critic **Arifa Akbar** who will be talking about her acclaimed Costa nominated biography *Consumed: A Sister's Story*; and writer and broadcaster **James Crawford** who will be discussing his acclaimed BBC television series *Scotland from the Sky*.

Also featuring in this year's line-up will be award-winning, best-selling and critically acclaimed author **Craig Russell**, whose latest novel *Hyde* last year won the prestigious McIlvanney Prize; award-winning Scottish author **Ewan Morrison** discussing his novel *How to Survive Everything*; Edinburgh writer and editor **Arusa Qureshi** who will be talking about her book *Flip the Script: How Women Came to Rule Hip Hop*; illustrator **Eilidh Muldoon** who will lead a live illustration session for all the family; local historian and former chair of Pitlochry Festival Theatre **Colin Liddell**, who will be talking about Pitlochry Festival Theatre's history over the last 70 years; and Scottish actor **Kenny Boyle** who will be discussing his debut book *The Tick and Tock of the Crocodile*.

This year's closing event, sponsored by the Highland Book Prize, will be the author and ecologist **Andrew Painting** and **Merryn Glover** in conversation about how landscape, specifically the Cairngorms, has inspired their writing. Both authors feature on the Highland Book Prize 2021 longlist.

This year's festival will also feature on Saturday 19th February *What Are You Reading?* a free virtual book shop café where people will be able to recommend and talk about their favourite book to others. Pitlochry Festival Theatre's Associate Director Amy Liptrott will host the event.

Like last year, the festival will have an all-access **Winter Words** package which will give online viewers access to all 13 online events plus the opportunity to receive recordings to watch at their leisure for a period, shortly after the festival.



All tickets will be limited this year – book now to avoid disappointment.

Individual tickets and package options go on sale for **Winter Words** on **Thursday 20 January at 10am**. To find out more and for tickets call the Box Office team on **01796 484626** or visit www.pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com/winterwords

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**For all press interviews please contact Duncan Clarke PR:
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Notes to Editors

2022 Line up

Mon 14 Feb – 5-6pm – Craig Russell: *Hyde*

About the book: Winner of the McIlvanney Prize 2021 Edward Hyde has a strange gift - or a curse - he keeps secret from all but his physician. He experiences two realities, one real, the other a dreamworld state brought on by a neurological condition. When murders in Victorian Edinburgh echo the ancient Celtic threefold death ritual, Captain Edward Hyde hunts for those responsible. In the process he becomes entangled in a web of Celticist occultism and dark.

Craig Russell's novels have been translated into twenty-five languages worldwide. He is the first person in the history of the award to win the McIlvanney Prize twice. Screen rights to his latest novel, *Hyde*, have been acquired by a major Hollywood studio. *The Devil Aspect* is in development with Sony/Columbia Pictures. *The Lennox* series has been acquired by BAFTA award-winning Synchronicity Films for adaptation into a returning TV series. The first television adaptation in Germany, by Tivoli Films, of a Jan Fabel novel attracted an audience of six million viewers. Four further novels have been made into films (in one of which Craig Russell makes a cameo appearance as a German detective). Ian Rankin chose *Hyde* as his Best Mystery Novel of 2021 for PBS in the US, and for Best Books of the Year for the New Statesman in the UK

Tue 15 Feb: 7-8pm – Arusa Qureshi: *Flip the Script: How Women Came to Rule Hip Hop*

Arusa Qureshi is a writer and editor based in Edinburgh, and an enthusiastic advocate for diversity and accessibility within arts and culture. She is the former Editor of The List and writes mostly about music, most recently *Flip the Script* – a book about women in UK hip hop, published by 404 Ink. Her work has appeared in The Scotsman, Clash, The Guardian, GoldFlakePaint, Time Out, NME and more. In 2017, she was shortlisted for PPA Scotland's Young Journalist of the Year Award and was also the winner of the Allen Wright Award for quality writing in arts journalism. She is on the board of the Scottish Music Centre and is a Trustee of the Saltire Society.

Wed 16 Feb: 1-2pm Eilidh Muldoon - Illustration

Eilidh Muldoon studied Art History and gained an MFA in Illustration from Edinburgh College of Art in June 2013, where she is currently a tutor. She is also a freelance artist and illustrator whose work has appeared in prints, greetings cards and giftware.

Thu 17 Feb 7-8pm: James Crawford: *Scotland from the Sky*

James Crawford is a writer, publisher, and broadcaster. His first major work of non-fiction, the critically acclaimed *Fallen Glory: The Lives and Deaths of the World's Greatest Lost Buildings*, was Sunday Times 'Must Read,' The Scotsman, Independent and New Statesman 'Book of the Year' and was shortlisted as 'Best Non-Fiction Book' at the 2016 Saltire Literary Awards. In 2018 he scripted and presented the three-part BBC One documentary series *Scotland from the Sky*. Shortlisted as 'Best Factual Series' at the 2019 Royal Television Society Awards Scotland, a second series was broadcast in Summer 2019, and a third series was broadcast in winter 2021.

He has also written several other books including *Who Built Scotland: A History of the Nation in 25 Buildings*, *Above Scotland*, *Scotland's Landscapes*, and *Aero films: A History of Britain from Above*.

Fri 18 Feb 7.30-8.30pm: Alexander McCall Smith: *Love in the Time of Bertie and other stories*

Alexander McCall Smith is one of the world's most prolific and most popular authors. His career has been a varied one: for many years he was a professor of Medical Law and worked in universities in the United Kingdom and abroad. He has served as Vice-Chairman of the Human Genetics Commission of the UK; a member of the International Bioethics Commission of UNESCO; Chairman of the Ethics Committee of the British Medical Journal and Chairman of the Ethics Committee of the Roslin Institute. Then, after the publication of his phenomenally successful No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series, which has sold over twenty million copies in the English language, he devoted his time to the writing of fiction and has seen his various series of books translated into over forty-six languages and become bestsellers through the world. These include the 44 Scotland Street novels, first published as a serial novel in *The Scotsman*, the Isabel Dalhousie novels, the Von Igelfeld series, the Corduroy Mansions series—and the newest series, the Detective Varg novels—Scandi Blanc—in which there are three books so far, *The Department of Sensitive Crimes*, *The Talented Mr Vargand the Man with the Silver Saab*.

Five new novels will be published over the course of 2021. An audiobook of Alexander's poetry collection, in a *Time of Distance*, read by the author himself, will also be released to the UK in late summer.

Sat 19 Feb: 12.30pm-1.30pm – *What Are You Reading?*

Come and join Pitlochry Festival Theatre's Associate Director **Amy Liptrott** (the other one!) in the virtual book shop café. There would be tea and cake if the virtual world allowed. There *will* be lively conversation! Stories take us on journeys, help us see the world from a different point of view and help us understand what it is to be human. They also bring us a lot of joy. So, what better way to start your literary year than by recommending a book to others. Come ready to add some brilliant new books to your reading pile. Attending the session is free. You can come and listen or come and share or come and do both

Sat 19 Feb: 2-3pm – Denise Welch: *The Unwelcome Visitor: Depression and How I Survive It*.

The Unwelcome Visitor: Depression and How I Survive It is a bracing and yet accessible account of living with depression by actor, presenter, and mental health advocate Denise Welch. It went into the Sunday Times Bestseller List at number 3 when published in hardback in June 2020 and remained there for seven weeks.

Back in September 2019 Denise was inundated with supportive messages after sharing a heartfelt video of herself on social media during a mild episode of clinical depression – explaining to her followers in a series of clips both the physical and emotional effects she experiences. In *The Unwelcome Visitor* Denise opens up further about her journey with depression over the past 30 years and sets out to show readers how they too can manage and live a full life alongside their own 'visitor'. Typically candid, Denise brings her trademark humour and honesty to a conversation that we must continue to have and reassures readers it is brave and courageous to be open and vulnerable, and they too can take back control.

Denise Welch is an actor and television personality. Among her TV drama credits are *Coronation Street* and *Waterloo Road*, alongside being a regular panellist on the ITV lunchtime chat show *Loose Women*. Denise has authored four previous books, both fiction and non-fiction.

Sat 19 Feb: 3.30pm-4.30pm – Arifa Akbar: *Consumed: A Sisters Story*

Arifa Akbar is chief theatre critic for *The Guardian*. A journalist of over 20 years, she was previously the literary editor of *The Independent* where she also worked as a news reporter and arts correspondent. She was head of content at the publisher Unbound and contributed to *The Observer* and *FT*. Her first book, *Consumed: A Sister's Story*, was shortlisted for the Costa Book Awards and longlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize in 2021. Her work has appeared in several anthologies. She is on the board of trustees at English PEN and the Orwell Foundation.

Sat 19 Feb: 7-8pm – Kathleen Jamie: *Poetry at the heat of our Culture*

Kathleen Jamie, poet, and essayist was born in Renfrewshire in 1962. Her work concerns nature, travel, and culture. Her poetry collections to date include *The Overhaul*, which won the 2012 Costa Poetry Prize, and *The*



Tree House, which won the Forward Prize. Her non-fiction includes the highly regarded books *Findings and Sightlines*, both regarded as important contributions to the 'new nature writing'. Her most recent poetry collection, *The Bonniest Companie* appeared in 2015, and won the Saltire Scottish Book of the Year Award. She is presently serving as the Scottish Makar, or National Poet. <http://www.kathleenjamie.com>

Sat 19 Feb: 8.30-9.30pm – Denise Mina: *Rizzio*

Denise Mina was born in East Kilbride in 1966. Her novels include *The End of the Wasp Season* and *Gods and Beasts*, both of which won the prestigious Theakstons Old Peculiar Crime Novel of the Year Award in consecutive years. Her novel *Conviction* was a Reese Witherspoon Book Club Pick and a Sunday Times, Observer and Telegraph 'Book of the Year.' Denise also writes short stories, and in 2006 wrote her first play. She is a regular contributor to TV and radio.

Sun 20 Feb: 12.30-1.30pm – Colin Liddell: *The History of Pitlochry Festival Theatre*

Colin Liddle was educated at Balliol College, Oxford, and Edinburgh University, Colin was the first Accredited Specialist in Charity Law in Scotland. He retired as a solicitor, after more than 40 years in the profession, based in Pitlochry, in 2021. Colin has been a Trustee of THE THEATRE since 2002 and was Chair between 2011 and 2020. Each of Colin's father and mother were THE THEATRE Trustees (collectively between 1962 - 1992). Colin remains involved in several charities, local and national, as Trustee or Chair, and as a mentor to both Chairs and CEOs of charities. He is a local historian, lecturer and author, and was a commentator at Pitlochry Highland Games for 35 years. His hobbies include backcountry skiing, hill-walking and photography.

Sun 20 Feb: 2-3pm – Kenny Boyle: *The Tick and Tock of the Crocodile*

Kenny Boyle was born on the Isle of Lewis. He trained as an actor at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and holds an honours degree from the University of Strathclyde. He is the star of the multi-award-winning short film *Perfect Strangers* (2015) and of the feature-film follow up, *Lost at Christmas* (2020). His plays include *Playthrough* and *An Isolated Incident*, and in 2021 he received a New Playwrights Award from the Playwrights' Studio, Scotland. *The Tick and the Tock of the Crocodile Clock* is his debut novel.

Sun 20 Feb: 3-4pm – Ewan Morrison: *How To Survive Everything*

Ewan Morrison is an award-winning Scottish author. His novels have won the Saltire Fiction Prize, the Glenfiddich Scottish Writer of the Year Prize, and the Creative Scotland/SMIT Fiction Book of the Year Prize. His latest novel *How to Survive Everything* is being developed as a TV series. His novel *Nina X* is being adapted as a feature film.

Sun 20 Feb: 5-6pm – Andrew Painting and Merryn Glover: *Inspired by landscape*

Andrew Painting and Merryn Glover in conversation about how landscape, specifically the Cairngorms, has inspired their writing. Both authors feature on the Highland Book Prize 2021 longlist.

Andrew Painting: *Regeneration: The Rescue of a Wild Land*

Andrew grew up in the south of England and studied English at King's College, London, and Environmental Anthropology at Aberdeen University. He moved to Scotland to volunteer with the RSPB and since 2016 has been Assistant Ecologist at the Mar Lodge Estate.

Merryn Glover: *Of Stone and Sky*

Merryn was born in a former Rana palace in Kathmandu and grew up in Nepal, India, and Pakistan. Her first major work was a stage play, *The Long Way Home*, which was broadcast on Radio Scotland. She has written three further radio plays for Radio 4 and Radio Scotland. Merryn's first novel, *A House Called Askival* (2014), was published by Freight. In 2019, she was appointed the first Writer in Residence for the Cairngorms National Park.

Andrew Painting in conversation with **Merryn Glover** is sponsored by:



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