

Press Release

For immediate release



Pitlochry Festival Theatre announces 2023 Winter Words line up

Pitlochry Festival Theatre is thrilled to announce the line-up for its nineteenth *Winter Words Festival*, featuring an exciting line up of well-known, and well-loved authors, playwrights, poets, adventurers, broadcasters, and TV personalities from around Scotland and further afield for a celebration of all things artistic and literary.

From 9-12 February, Pitlochry Festival Theatre will host, in its Auditorium and newly opened Studio performance space, an exciting programme of events including stimulating and entertaining conversations, presentations and performances from: Scottish poet, playwright, translator and broadcaster **Liz Lochhead** in conversation with actor and writer **Nicola Roy**; crime writer and broadcaster **Denise Mina** talking to playwright **David Greig** about her new novel *Confidence*, an exhilarating thriller revolving around vanished filmmakers, international art smuggling and religious fanaticism; and celebrated Scottish singer and frontman of Deacon Blue **Ricky Ross** will talk to Pitlochry Festival Theatre's Artistic Director **Elizabeth Newman** about his acclaimed memoir, *Walking Back Home*, which charts his path from a rollercoaster childhood to playing at Wembley Arena and beyond.

Also featuring at this year's festival is BBC Scotland documentary filmmaker **Paul Murton** who will be talking about his new book *The Highlands* which explores his fascinating journey across the length and breadth of this beautiful Scottish region; and award-winning journalist and author **Chitra Ramaswamy** will be talking about her Saltire Non-Fiction Book of the Year, *Homelands: The History of a Friendship*, which tells the story of the journalists' friendship with a 98-year-old German Jewish refugee.

The theme of the arts will be explored in this year's line-up when brothers **Alan and Colin McCredie** talk about their lives as a photographer and actor respectively. Ahead of its return to the Theatre's Amphitheatre in the summer, *River City* actor and writer **Lesley Hart** talks about her stage adaptation - *Sherlock: A Lesson in Lipstick, Ketchup and Blood* - of Arthur Conan Doyle's novel *A Study in Scarlet*, the origin story for Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. Lesley Hart will be joined onstage by actor **Deirdre Davis** who will perform extracts from the acclaimed production. Writer,

critic, broadcaster, and stand-up comedian **Viv Groskop** also hosts a lively conversation about Chekhov and why his writing is still relevant today. She will be joined by actor **Ali Watt** who will perform *About Love*, and **Elizabeth Newman**, Pitlochry Festival Theatre's Artistic Director, who adapted this short story by Chekhov for the stage.

In partnership with the Highland Book Prize 2022 Longlist, Pitlochry Festival Theatre is delighted to be featuring two of the twelve long-listed authors in conversation: **Amanda Thomson** on *Belonging: Natural histories of place, identity, home*, and **Jim Crumley**, *Seasons of Storm and Wonder*. Both books are inspired by the nature and landscape of Scotland. Presented by the Highland Society of London and facilitated by Moniack Mhor, Scotland's Creative Writing Centre, the Highland Book Prize seeks to recognise the rich talent, landscape, and cultural diversity of Scotland's Highlands and Islands. And the William Grant Foundation provides funding to encourage public engagement with the Highland Book Prize.

Poetry will also feature strongly in this year's festival as five Perthshire poets will read extracts from *Perthshire 101* a poetic tour around Perth & Kinross inspired by the geography, history, people, and cultural icons of the region, in a fast-moving poetry show. There will be the opportunity to see a live reading by actors **Sophia McLean** and **David Rankine** of *A Journey with Nan Shepherd* by the award-winning **Firebrand Theatre Company**. The play dramatises the much-loved poet and writer Nan Shepherd's fascinating life and literary times based on Dr Kerri Andrews' *The Correspondence of Nan Shepherd, 1920-1980*.

Other authors attending this year's festival include: **Ben Aitken** talking about his warm, candid and funny books *The Gran Tour: Travel with my Elders* and *The Marmalade Stories*; **Rosemary Goring** on *Homecoming The Scottish Years of Mary, Queen of Scots*; broadcaster, journalist and lecturer **Ian Bradley** on *The Coffin Roads*; **Louise Welsh** on her McIlvanney Prize 2022 nominated book *The Second Cut*; **Alastair McIntosh** on the new edition of his book *Poacher's Pilgrimage: An Island Journey*, **Nick Evans** and **Gordon Noble** on their new book *The Picts: Scourge of Rome, Rulers of the North*; **Dr Kerri Andrews** on her fascinating book *Wanderers - A History of Women Walking*, **Alistair Moffat** on *Islands of the Evening: Journeys to the Edge of the World* and finally a welcome return for **Colin Liddell** who will take audiences on a jaunt through 70 years of Pitlochry Festival Theatre.

As well as this impressive line-up of authors, this year's *Winter Words Festival* will include two very exciting events. The extremely popular **Banff Mountain Film Festival**, which features some of the world's best adventure filmmakers and explorers as they push themselves to the limits in the most remote and stunning corners of the globe. And, for all true crime fans, and those of a curious mind, *The Makings of a Murderer*, an evening with the Scottish Detective **David Swindle** exploring the cases behind some of the UK's most notorious serial killers.

The *Winter Words Festival* runs from 9-12 February. Individual and multi-buy package tickets options for **Winter Words** are on sale now. For tickets and further information call the Box Office team on **01796 484626** or visit www.pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com/winterwords

-Ends-

For all press interviews please contact:

Deborah Dickinson, deborah.dickinson@pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com **01796 484625**

NOTES TO EDITORS

TICKET DETAILS

Box office details

Ticket prices: £12 per event and £10 for members

Become a member and save even more with multibuy – 4 events for the price of 3*

*Excluding *The Banff Mountain Film Festival* and *Makings of a Murderer*

Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour and *The Makings of a Murderer*

£17.50 & £15.50 for under 16s / £31 for both screenings

The Makings of a Murderer

All tickets £29

Tickets on sale on Tuesday 10 January

Box Office and group bookings: 01796 484626

email boxoffice@pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com

Website: www.pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com

Address: Pitlochry Festival Theatre, Port-Na-Craig, Pitlochry, Perthshire PH16 5DR

WINTER WORDS SCHEDULE

THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY

11am – 12pm - Liz Lochhead and Nicola Roy in conversation

For over 50 years playwright and poet Liz Lochhead has been ‘a writer of voices’. From her own honest and heartfelt lyric poetry to dramatised characters like *Mary Queen of Scots* (who famously *Got Her Head Chopped Off*) to Frankenstein’s creator, Mary Shelley, to the 1970’s *schoolgirl Sharon*, to 1990’s *celebrity hairdresser Barbs Marshall*, to the iconic Rabbin Burns’ Mouse talking back! And many more. Her searing version of Euripides’s *Medea*, revived by the National Theatre of Scotland, was universally five-stars critically acclaimed at the Edinburgh International Festival just last year.

Nicola Roy is one of Scotland’s leading comic actresses. She works extensively in Scottish Theatre, TV and radio. Recent theatre credits include *An Edinburgh Christmas Carol* (Lyceum Theatre), and *Tartuffe*, and she has appeared in BBC TV’s *River City* and *Scot Squad*.

12.30pm to 1.30pm - Ben Aitken -The Marmalade Diaries and The Gran Tour

Ben Aitken’s books are warm, witty and candid. *The Gran Tour: Travels with my Elders* is about when he went on six package coach holidays including Pitlochry, Scarborough, Llandudno and Lake Como with people twice or thrice his age to see what they had to say for themselves and to narrow the generation gap.

The Marmalade Diaries tells the story of an unlikely friendship during an unlikely time. Imagine an intergenerational version of *Big Brother*, but with only two contestants. One of the pair a grieving and inflexible former aristocrat in her mid-eighties. The other a working-class millennial snowflake. What could possibly go wrong? What could possibly go right?

2pm to 3pm -Paul Murton - The Highlands

Paul Murton is a well-known documentary film maker whose work includes *Grand Tours of Scotland* and *Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands* (four series) for BBC Scotland.

Paul describes his journey across the length and breadth of the spectacularly beautiful Scottish Highlands. He brings a fresh eye to popular destinations such as Glencoe, Ben Nevis, Loch Ness and the Cairngorms and to some remote and little-known locations hidden off the beaten track.

With an instinct for the unusual, he uncovers some strange tales, myths and legends: stories of Jacobites, clan warfare, murder and cattle rustling, as well as some hilarious anecdotes based on his encounters with a host of modern Highlanders from caber-tossers and gamekeepers to lairds and pipers.

3.30pm to 4.30pm - Rosemary Goring -Homecoming: The Scottish Years of Mary, Queen of Scots
Rosemary Goring is a journalist, editor and writer, and currently a columnist with The Herald.

Join Rosemary to hear about her new book which tells the story of Mary's Scottish years through the often dramatic and atmospheric locations and settings where the events that shaped her life took place and examines the part Scotland, and its tumultuous court and culture, played in her downfall. Whether or not Mary Stuart emerges blameless or guilty, in this evocative retelling she can be seen for who she really was.

5pm to 6pm - Ian Bradley -The Coffin Roads

Ian Bradley has written over 40 books and is well-known as a broadcaster, journalist and lecturer. He is also a Church of Scotland minister and a respected academic.

Ian takes us on an intriguing journey along some of the 'coffin roads' along which bodies were carried for burial to discover and explore the distinctive traditions, beliefs and practices around dying, death and mourning in the communities which created and used them. Ian argues that aspects of the distinctive West Highland and Hebridean way of death may have something helpful and important to offer to us today.

7pm – 8.15pm - Viv Groskop—Celebrating Chekhov

Viv Groskop hosts a lively conversation about Chekhov and why his writing is still relevant today, including a performance by Ali Watt of *About Love*, a play adapted from Chekhov's short story by Elizabeth Newman.

Viv is a writer, critic, broadcaster and stand-up comedian and the author of *The Anna Karenina Fix: Life Lessons from Russian Literature*. She is a fluent Russian speaker who has lived in Russia and Ukraine and was Contributing Editor at Russian Vogue for ten years. She appears regularly on BBC Radio 4 as a guest presenter of *Saturday Review*, *Saturday Live* and *Front Row*.

Viv will be joined by Elizabeth Newman, Artistic Director of Pitlochry Festival Theatre, and Ali Watt, acclaimed Scottish TV and theatre actor.

FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY

11am to 12pm

Colin Liddell - A jaunt through the first 70 years of Pitlochry Festival Theatre.

Colin Liddell, former Trustee and Chair of Pitlochry Festival Theatre and now its Honorary President, talks about the Theatre's history from being a dream, scribbled on a piece of paper during the turbulent times of the Second World War, to becoming a thriving centre of artistic excellence.

The Theatre's history has had its ups and downs but, through the vision of John Stewart, and the support of a dedicated group of enthusiasts, it has grown from staging performances in a tent to becoming a cultural destination for theatregoers from Scotland and abroad.

12.30pm to 1.30pm

Alan McCredie and Colin McCredie in conversation -Brothers in arts

Alan McCredie is a freelance photographer working with major agencies in Scotland and beyond. He has specialised in theatre and television but is best known for his documentary and travel photography. His books include *This is Scotland* and *Val McDermid: My Scotland*.

Colin McCredie is a Scottish actor, best known for his role as DC Fraser in *Taggart* for STV, Nick Morrison in BBC Scotland's *River City* and in the films *Shallow Grave* and *The Missing Postman*. He has recently been in the BBC's adaptation of Andrew O'Hagan's novel *Mayflies*. He has also worked in many Scottish theatres, including at Pitlochry Festival Theatre.

2pm to 3pm

Denise Mina in conversation with David Greig

Denise Mina is a prize-winning author of fifteen crime novels, including the MacIlvanney Prize for Scottish Crime 2019 for *Conviction*, a New York Times Bestseller, and two of her novels won the Theakstons' Old Peculiar Crime Novel of the Year Award in consecutive years.

Denise will be talking about her latest novel, *Confidence*, an escapist thriller, described by Ann Cleeves as "*a delight: playful, fast-paced, and entirely compulsive*".

Her writing talents extend to plays for theatre, including *Ida Tamson* and the Edinburgh Lyceum's acclaimed adaptation of Brecht's *Mr Puntila and his Man Matti*. She also writes graphic novels and is a regular contributor to print media, TV and radio and regularly appears at literary festivals in the UK and abroad.

David Greig is a playwright and theatre director and Artistic Director at the Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh.

3.30pm to 4.30pm

Alastair McIntosh -*Poacher's Pilgrimage: a Journey into Land and Soul*

Alastair McIntosh is a writer and thinker who explores our times through the lenses of history, politics, psychology and religion. He is also a frequent BBC broadcaster and an honorary professor at the University of Glasgow.

Poachers Pilgrimage is both a meditation and a walk through one of the most difficult, beautiful and remote landscapes in Europe— the West Side of Lewis and Harris. In its foreword, Alastair calls it his most beautiful book, and Madeleine Bunting, formerly of *The Guardian*, reviewed it as, "*as much a journey into an unusual mind as it is about the Island.*"

5pm to 6pm

Chitra Ramaswamy - *Homelands: The History of a Friendship*

Join Chitra to hear about her latest book, *Homelands: The History of a Friendship*, a work of creative non-fiction exploring her friendship with a 98-year-old German Jewish refugee called Henry Wuga. It won the Saltire Non-Fiction Book of the Year and was included in *The Guardian's* top memoirs and biographies of 2022.

This book is about two unlikely friends. One born in 1970s Britain to Indian immigrant parents, the other arrived from Nazi Germany in 1939, fleeing persecution. A story of migration, anti-Semitism, racism, family, belonging, grief and resilience.

It is about the past and the present and it is about homelands.

6.30pm to 7.30pm

Louise Welsh in conversation

Louise Welsh is an award-winning author of eight novels and Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow.

The Cutting Room, her debut novel, won the Crime Writers' Association John Creasey (New Blood) Dagger Award and the Saltire First Book of The Year Award. In 2018, she was named the Most Inspiring Saltire First Book Award winner by public vote. Her latest book *The Second Cut* is a stylish, atmospheric detective story with shades of the Gothic and was Shortlisted for the McIlvanney Prize 2022.

She is also a regular radio broadcaster and has published many short stories.

8pm to 9pm

Perthshire 101 – a fast - moving poetry show

Join five local poets as they read extracts from *Perthshire 101* - a poetic tour around Perthshire and Kinross-shire taking in the geography, history, people and cultural icons of Scotland's grandest region. From Schiehallion to Castle Huntly, from Pontius Pilate to Ewan MacGregor, from the Pitlochry Fish Ladder to the Murrays Pie, it is all covered in grand, sweet, serious and occasionally silly poems.

The book's editor Andy Jackson hosts alongside poets Patricia Ace, Morag Anderson, Jon Plunkett and Tim Turnbull.

Andy is a Salford-born poet and serial editor of poetry anthologies. His latest solo collection is *The Saints Are Coming*.

SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY

11am to 12pm

Dr Kerri Andrews -Wanderers A History of Women Walking

Kerri Andrews writes about women and walking. Her fascinating book *Wanderers* offers a beguiling view of the history of walking and guides us through the different ways of seeing – of being – articulated by ten pathfinding women.

From eighteenth-century parson's daughter Elizabeth Carter – who desired nothing more than to be taken for a vagabond in the wilds of southern England – to modern walker-writers such as Cheryl Strayed. For each, walking was integral, whether it was rambling for miles across the Highlands, like Sarah Stoddart Hazlitt, or pacing novels into being, as Virginia Woolf did around Bloomsbury.

2pm & 7pm

Banff Mountain Film Festival UK & Ireland 2023 Tour (Blue Screening 2pm & Red Screening 7pm)

Featuring two collections of the best films from the world's most prestigious mountain film festival.

Witness epic human-powered feats, life-affirming challenges, and mind-blowing cinematography – all on the big screen! Each show has an entirely different selection of films – the Blue Film Programme (matinee) and the Red Film Programme (evening show).

An adrenaline-fuelled, not-to be-missed event with free prize giveaways that is guaranteed to ignite your passion for adventure, action and travel!

Double the adventure by coming to both with a two-show discount.
Certificate: 12A

3pm to 4.30pm

Firebrand Theatre Company - A Journey with Nan Shepherd

Award-winning Firebrand Theatre Company celebrates the 2023 publication of Dr Kerri Andrews' *The Correspondence of Nan Shepherd, 1920-1980*, with a live performed reading which, drawing on Kerri's research, and dramatises *The Living Mountain* author's fascinating life and literary times.

Directed by Richard Baron and featuring Sophia McLean as Nan and Pitlochry Festival Theatre favourite David Rankine as Neil Gunn (and a host of other roles), this richly entertaining event coincides with the author's 130th anniversary and will be followed by a Q&A with Kerri Andrews hosted by Firebrand's Ellie Zeegen.

5pm to 6pm

Highland Book Prize Authors – Two Highland Book Prize Longlist 2022 authors in conversation

Amanda Thomson and Jim Crumley talk about the ways in which Scotland's' landscape and natural beauty has inspired their writing.

Amanda Thomson is a writer and visual artist who lives and works in Strathspey and Glasgow, where she teaches at the Glasgow School of Art. Her latest book *Belonging, Natural Histories of Place, Identity and Home* is a mixture of nature writing and memoir about what it is to have and make a home. It is a love letter to nature, especially the northern landscapes of Scotland and the Scots pinewoods of Abernethy.

Jim Crumley was born in Dundee where he trained as a newspaper journalist. His first book *St Kilda*, published in 1988, was the beginning of a new life as a full-time 'pre-eminent Scottish nature writer' (Guardian) and he has now written more than 40 books. His book *Seasons of Storm and Wonder* documents the extraordinary natural life of the Scottish Highlands and bears witness to the toll climate chaos is already taking on our wildlife, habitats and biodiversity.

This event is brought to you in partnership with the Highland Book Prize 2022 Longlist and is part of a series of events celebrating each of the 12 titles on the list. Presented by the Highland Society of London and facilitated by Moniac Mhor, Scotland's Creative Writing Centre, the Highland Book Prize seeks to recognise the rich talent, landscape, and cultural diversity of Scotland's Highlands and Islands. The William Grant Foundation provides funding to encourage public engagement with the Highland Book Prize. For more information visit www.highlandbookprize.org.uk

SUNDAY 12 FEBRUARY

11am to 12pm

Nick Evans & Gordon Noble - The Picts – the first major new history since the 1950s

The Picts have fascinated for centuries. They emerged c. ad 300 to defy the might of Rome only to disappear by 1000 ad, yet they left major legacies. They laid the foundations for the medieval Scottish kingdom and carved some of Europe's most eye-catching yet enigmatic stone monuments.

Join Gordon Noble and Nick Evans to hear about the Picts in detail - their archaeology and history, their kingdoms, culture, beliefs, and everyday lives from origins to end. They include fascinating innovative research and new perspectives that will transform our understanding of this highly sophisticated society that was central to Scotland's early history.

12.30pm to 1.30pm

Alistair Moffat - Islands of the Evening: Journeys to the Edge of the World

Fourteen centuries ago, Irish saints brought the Word of God to the Hebrides and Scotland's Atlantic shore. They sought solitude in remote places where they could move closer to an understanding of God. Columba was the most famous of these pioneers who rowed their currachs towards danger and uncertainty in a pagan land, but the many others are now largely forgotten.

In his book Alistair Moffat travels by foot, boat, and ferry in search of these elusive men; from the barren Garvellachs and the 'great garden' of Lismore to the haunting calm of Iona and the grandeur of Applecross.

2.30pm to 4.45pm including an interval

Detective David Swindle - The Makings of a Murderer

Join The Scottish Detective, David Swindle for a chilling, thrilling afternoon discovering what makes serial killers tick. True crime fans and those with a curious mind, can explore the cases, the circumstances and the detective's perspective on what really went on, the early warning signs and the clues behind *The Makings of a Murderer!*

Learn about the biggest British serial killers of all time - including Jack the Ripper, Peter Tobin, Harold Shipman, Peter Sutcliffe and 'Killer Couples' Fred and Rose West and "*The Moors Murderers*" Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. With over 34 years as a senior detective, David shares his unique insight into the minds of the murderers.

5.30pm to 6.30pm

Ricky Ross - Walking Back Home

Ricky Ross is the songwriter and lead singer for Deacon Blue, one of Scotland's best loved and most successful bands. In his memoir, Ross revisits his formative years growing up in Dundee, his early forays into music and the beginning, extraordinary success, fall-out, and re-emergence of Deacon Blue. Ross writes movingly and with great wit about the people and places that mean the most to him, as well as his relationship with faith, politics, and the challenges of being a musician.

7pm to 8.15pm

Lesley Hart and Deirdre Davis - Sherlock - A Lesson in Lipstick, Ketchup and Blood

Lesley Hart talks about her stage adaptation of Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* novel with extracts performed by Deirdre Davis.

Lesley is an award-winning playwright and writer, and her recent credits include *Anna Karenina* (Lyceum/Bristol Old Vic), *Safe Keeping* (Paines Plough), and *World Domination* (A Play, A Pie & A Pint/Sherman Theatre). As an actor, Lesley appears as a regular character in BBC Scotland's long-running soap, *River City*.



Deirdre Davis has worked for many Scottish theatre companies and performs regularly at Pitlochry Festival Theatre. She has appeared in films and TV shows and spent 14 years playing Eileen Donachie in *River City*.

Pitlochry Festival Theatre. A Theatre for Everyone. A Theatre for a Lifetime.

Since 1951, Pitlochry Festival Theatre has been the artistic heart and soul of Highland Perthshire. Attracting over 100,000 visitors every year, we are more than simply a place to come and see a show – we're Scotland's leading producer of musical theatre, a champion of ensemble practice and the country's only rurally-located, major arts organisation. Our vision is to improve lives by sharing Pitlochry with the world and the world with Pitlochry, and our aim is to create life-enhancing experiences in our Theatre its and environment – a glorious eleven-acre campus that encompasses the magical Explorers Garden. In everything we do, we are committed to nurturing an exciting creative and cultural future for Scotland.

Pitlochry Festival Theatre is supported by funding from Creative Scotland and Perth & Kinross Council. It is also grateful to the many individual donors, trusts and foundations who continue to support the Theatre in its vision.

Pitlochry Festival Theatre

Address: Pitlochry Festival Theatre, Port Na Craig, Pitlochry, Perthshire PH16 5DR

Box Office and group bookings: boxoffice@pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com

Amanda Thomson in conversation with **Jim Crumley** is sponsored by:



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