

VERVE POETRY FESTIVAL 2020 FULL PROGRAMME

POETRY

SPOKEN WORD

WORKSHOPS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH

Time	Event	Description	Price	Location
7:30 PM - 10:30 PM	A Verve Spoken Word Super Night feat. Loud Poets, Milk, Verbose and Word Wise with open mic	Opening Verve 2020 is a Spoken Word Night to remember - a night of nights - a Spoken Word SUPER night. We asked four of the best nights around the country right now to bring a poet of their choosing and tell us all about themselves. Word Wise from Derby, hosted by Jamie Thrasivolou, will bring Matthew Clegg. Verbose from Manchester, repped by Zoe Turner, are featuring Reshma Ruia. Milk from Bristol's host Malaika Kegode is bringing Birdspeed. And Edinburgh's Loud Poets and their host Kevin McLean will feature Katie Ailes. With the whole show hosted by our own Sean Colletti and with open mic slots available, you do not want to miss this lively opener to our festival.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST

Time	Event	Description	Price	Location
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM	Rachael Allen, Vidyan Ravinthiran, Jacqueline Saphra	Our regular Friday evening poetry headline event features three incredible contemporary UK poets. Rachael Allen's debut collection <i>Kingdomland</i> (Faber, 2019) was a Poetry Book Society Choice. Vidyan Ravinthiran's second collection <i>The Million-petalled Flower of Being Here</i> (Bloodaxe, 2019) was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best Collection and the TS Eliot Prize. Jacqueline Saphra's latest collection <i>Dad, Remember You Are Dead</i> (Nine Arches Press, 2019) is the companion collection to her TS Eliot Prize Shortlisted <i>All My Mad Mothers</i> . Hosting these three wonderful poets for readings and discussion is Emma Dai'an Wright, publisher and founder of super Birmingham-based indie The Emma Press. This event is supported by Birmingham City University.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome
8:30 PM - 10:30 PM	Azaad Arts presents: Mehfil - an evening of Punjabi influenced poetry and song with open mic	Traditionally a Mehfil is an evening of entertainment in the form of poetry and music. This showcase features five individuals from the South Asian arts scene: musician Vibh Bhatia; award-winning spoken word artist Jaspreet Kaur; wordsmith Hafsa Aneela Bashir - author of <i>The Celox and the Clot</i> (Burning Eye, 2018); Punjabi folk singer Chaman Sandhu and Rupinder Kaur - author of <i>Rooh</i> (Verve Poetry Press, 2018). The evening will explore traditional Punjabi folk music as well as contemporary South Asian poetry, and will be hosted by Rupinder Kaur and Harjap Kaur. This event features open mic slots.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND

Time	Event	Description	Price	Location
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Liz Berry Workshop: Poetry Readings - Make Your Own Kind Of Magic	How can we make our live readings feel joyful and electric, connect with audiences and do our poems justice? Join multi award-winning Birmingham poet Liz Berry for a supportive, practical workshop on how to bring your poems to life and make your own kind of magic on the stage. Suitable for all poets, especially those new to performing.	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room One at Birmingham Hippodrome
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Jo Bell: Straight to the Point	In an intensive, lively two-hour session, poetry dynamo Jo Bell (<i>Kith, How To Be A Poet</i>) presents sure-fire techniques to correct common weaknesses in poetry. Make your poems powerful and clear without losing strength or subtlety; be bold in editing; refine your bag of tricks to hold the reader's interest.	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room Two at Birmingham Hippodrome
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Hippodrome & Barbican Young Poets Showcase	Join Jacob Sam-La Rose, Rachel Long and Jasmine Gardosi as well as two young poets from both the Barbican and Hippodrome Young Poets Collectives as they discuss their aims and achievements, and read some of their incredible poetry. Featuring Kit Finnie, Kibriya Mehrban, Gboyega Odubanjo and Emma Thompson. You will be witnessing some of the poets of the future!	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome
12:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Caroline Bird: The Brightness of a New Page	'The brightness of a new page where everything yet can happen.' - Rainer Maria Rilke. People talk about the fear of the blank page. Turn this thought upside down - the blankness is the best bit. The blankness is vital, it's the 'continuous I don't know' that births the poem. How do we trust nothingness? Unlearn in order to encounter? Come and discover some new poems inside the radiant blankness.	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room One at Birmingham Hippodrome
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Jaspreet Kaur and Rupinder Kaur: Punjabi Poetry Then and Now	Two workshops for the price of one! Jaspreet Kaur will look at how the struggles of modern society inform her contemporary poetry and can inform your own. And Rupinder Kaur will be looking at more traditional Punjabi and South Asian approaches to poetry, and help you to write your own Punjabi poetry! You will spend half the workshop with each poet.	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room Two at Birmingham Hippodrome
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	The Second Annual Verve Poetry Performance Lecture - Yomi Sode in association with Poetry School	Acts of violence permeate our culture, existing on the lower frequencies of our awareness as micro-aggressions and micro-linguistic forms of social control. In this year's Verve Performance Lecture, poet and playwright Yomi Sode explores a new response to the unconscious and unintentional (yet profoundly insidious) biases of our culture, drawing inspiration from art history and how iconicity - conveying a feeling, narrative or idea in the stillness of a visual image or sign - can be better utilised to understand imbalances of power, and tell more compelling stories about them. Yomi will ask what poetry can mean in an age where social media affords poets the opportunity to collect and collate visual material, symbols, and signs like never before; where active hashtags refresh every 5-10 seconds to collate millions of re-imagined responses and connect diverse communities around the world to engage with the subject? And most importantly, in this digital age, can the conventions of publishing loosen up to make some room?	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND (CONTINUED)

Time	Event	Description	Price	Location
2:30 PM - 4:00 PM	Stirchley Speaks Verve Special with open mic	Stirchley Speaks is a small jewel of a night on the Birmingham Scene. We wondered what would happen if we gave them a nice big stage at Verve! They say - 'join us to hear poets Megan Scott and Fathima Zahra and to enjoy musical sounds from Rainy Day Woman. And see what we can do when we are allowed to spread out. There will be a handful of open mics on the door and a lovely audience for you to join.' Hosted as always by the wonderful Jess Davies and Callum Bates.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Vidyan Ravinthiran: Short and Perfectly Formed	A workshop on reading, writing and loving the very short poem. Join Forward and TS Eliot short-listed poet Vidyan sharing his love for and the secrets of crafting these poetry gems. As he says, 'short poems can function as one-off punchlines, or they can be surprisingly deep, with universes to discover in a single grain of sand. Because they've so few words, they often allude to a cultural situation which the reader has to intuit. And this means that writing them can be an exploratory and possibility-filled experience.'	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room One at Birmingham Hippodrome
3:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Salena Godden and Matt Abbott: Find your inner LIVEwire	Join Nymphs & Thugs artists Salena Godden and Matt Abbott for an alternative poetry writing workshop to hone your skills and develop your craft. Using a range of writing prompts, restrictions and tools, you'll be encouraged to write raw, visceral and renegade poetry to find your inner "LIVEwire".	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room Two at Birmingham Hippodrome
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM	From the Margins to the Centre: Black British Poets from the Midlands	Langston Hughes once said, 'art is to be an intensification or enlargement of life, or to give comment on what living is like in the poet's own time'. Here are five poets who, through verse, lyricism and music talk about the Black British experience across generations. A celebration of identity, black affirmation and love, and a reminder that Birmingham is multicultural, a place of many people in search of a common language of unity. Joining event curator Roy McFarlane are Sue Brown, Marcia Calame, Siana Bangura and Adrian B Earle. Come and dance and be uplifted by words and music.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Jay Bernard, Caroline Bird, Mary Jean Chan	Our regular Saturday Evening poetry headline is always a festival highlight. This year we feature three incredible poets who are contributing ground-breaking new work to the contemporary UK poetry scene. Jay Bernard's debut full collection <i>Surge</i> (Chatto & Windus, 2019) has been shortlisted for the Forward Prize First Collection Award and TS Eliot Prize. Caroline Bird's sixth collection <i>The Air Year</i> (Carcenet, 2020) is brand new for Verve 2020. Her previous collection <i>In These Days of Prohibition</i> was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize and Ted Hughes Award. Mary Jean Chan's debut collection <i>Fleche</i> (Faber, 2019) was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation. Her poem, <i>The Window</i> , was shortlisted for The Forward Prize for Best Single Poem. Hosting these three amazing poets for readings and discussion is Jo Bell, renowned poet and co-author of <i>How to be a Poet</i> (Nine Arches Press, 2017). This event is supported by Worcester University.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome
8:00 PM - 10:00 PM	LIVEwire with Salena Godden, Toria Garbutt, Suhaiyrah Manzoorkhan, oakley	The UK's leading spoken word label record present a night of electric spoken word poetry. Part of a string of nationwide 'LIVEwire' events, Nymphs & Thugs are programming some of the country's most exciting poets and presenting them in a lively and dynamic environment. Salena Godden, Toria Garbutt, Suhaiyrah Manzoorkhan and oakley will be hosted by Nymphs & Thugs founder Matt Abbott, at what promises to be one of the stand-out spoken word poetry events of 2020. Don't miss this unique combination of raucous, renegade poets - and find out what 'LIVEwire' is all about.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD

Time	Event	Description	Price	Location
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Liz Berry Workshop: Poetry Readings - Make Your Own Kind Of Magic	How can we make our live readings feel joyful and electric, connect with audiences and do our poems justice? Join Liz Berry for a supportive, practical workshop on how to bring your poems to life and make your own kind of magic on the stage. Suitable for all poets, especially those new to performing.	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room One at Birmingham Hippodrome
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	The Emma Press Presents: Publication and Beyond Workshop	First you get your manuscript ready. Then you try to find a publisher. Then, once you've found a publisher, you get ready to be published. Then when your book is out, there's even more to think about. Editor Emma Dai'an Wright, founder of The Emma Press, will take you on a whistle-stop tour of all the stages of this process and different ways to navigate them. The focus will be on the small press world and poetry, and there will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions.	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room Two at Birmingham Hippodrome
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	The Verve Poetry Festival Competition Event: Diversity	The Verve Competition on the theme of Diversity was open for entries in the summer of 2019, and judged by poetry ace Andrew McMillan. This free-to-attend event will feature all the winners and commended poets, as well as four commissioned poets, who will read their poems on our subject and help launch our annual festival anthology. The event will be hosted by Andrew himself and will be a fun and lively affair with poets both advanced and emerging.	FREE (Book tickets to avoid missing out)	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome
12:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Deryn Rees-Jones: Nature, Climate and the Poet	This workshop will explore ways of writing and thinking about the natural world, particularly in the context of the climate emergency. It will look at a wide range of contemporary poems which offer detailed descriptions of both landscape and animals, and will ask participants to think about the value of the ways in which we might locate ourselves through our relationship with nature. Come prepared to read closely and to focus on experimentation with voice and form.	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room One at Birmingham Hippodrome
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Jonathan Edwards: 'So this is how we love' - Poems About People	'So this is how we love - by these doodles.' So runs the definition of writing poems which appears in Glyn Maxwell's wonderful book <i>On Poetry</i> . From Seamus Heaney's 'Follower' to Carol Ann Duffy's 'Rapture', many of the best and most emotive poems are written for and about those people the writers love. We will begin with a close reading of Simon Armitage's brilliant poem 'Not the Furniture Game', as a way of exploring how metaphor can be used effectively in character sketches. By working through a couple of different writing exercises and strategies, we will work towards writing a poem about someone we love - our parents, children, uncles, spouses - hopefully emerging into the afternoon sunshine, waving our finished doodles above our heads in triumph.	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room Two at Birmingham Hippodrome

TICKET INFORMATION

Festival Weekend Pass £40 / £27.50
Saturday / Sunday Pass £22.50 / £16.50

Workshops £22.50 / £15
Poetry / Spoken Word Events £6.50 / £4.50

Concession tickets are available to senior citizens, school pupils, students, and people registered as disabled or unemployed.

Our festival passes give you access to all events (excluding workshops). Please book on to free events however, to make sure your seat is secured!

All tickets can be purchased at VervePoetryFestival.com

VENUE INFORMATION

2020 sees us take over a large chunk of the Birmingham Hippodrome. We are thrilled to be here - with full accessibility to all, Wi-Fi roof to floor and lovely workshoping rooms. We are still only five minutes from New St and Moor St train stations, and have our own special Verve entrance on Throp Street (look for our BIG pink flags!). With extra space laid on for shmoozing, networking and sipping, our own special bar and the new Verve Poetry Festival Bookshop with more books and poetry mags than ever before, we know you're going to love it there!

@VERVEPOETRYFEST

#VERVE2020

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD (CONTINUED)

Time	Event	Description	Price	Location
1:00 PM - 1:45 PM	Heather Phillipson: Whip-hot & Grippy	Next Generation 2014 poet and artist Heather Phillipson will perform an extended reading of her latest collection, <i>Whip-hot & Grippy</i> (Bloodaxe, 2019) incorporating elements of sound and video in a Verve exclusive performance. You do not want to miss this incredible poet taking her own work to a completely new level.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome
2:15 PM - 3:45 PM	The Emma Press Showcase	Birmingham-based publishing house The Emma Press is one of the UK's leading poetry pamphlet producers. This showcase features four pamphlet poets from 2019-20, giving an overview of the range of styles and voices championed by The Emma Press: Sascha Aurora Akhtar, author of <i>The Whimsy of Dank Ju-Ju</i> ; Conor Cleary, author of <i>priced out</i> ; Kathy Pimlott, author of <i>Goose Fair Night and Elastic Glue</i> ; and Maarja Pärna, author of <i>Vivarium</i> (translated from Estonian by Jayde Will), whose appearance has been made possible by the Traducta programme of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia. The event will be hosted by publisher Emma Dai'an Wright.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Sandeep Parmar: How to be a Poetry Critic	What is the role of the poetry critic? Join Sandeep Parmar, co-founder of the Ledbury Emerging Poetry Critics scheme for BAME reviewers, for a special masterclass workshop on poetry reviewing, the value of poetry in society, and how to be a poetry critic. She will discuss approaches to reviewing, explore questions of style and voice, and modes of critical reading.	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room One at Birmingham Hippodrome
3:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Andrew McMillan: Queering the Page	This workshop invites you to take inspiration from great queer poets of the past to write about the contemporary moment and the contemporary body. Join Verve competition judge Andrew McMillan for a workshop that will open eyes and minds and help you to produce some amazing poetry.	£22.50/ £15.00	Workshop Room Two at Birmingham Hippodrome
4:15 PM - 5:30 PM	A Beautiful Kind of Crazy - Genevieve Carver & The Unsong	Based on interviews with women in the music industry, <i>A Beautiful Way to Be Crazy</i> (Verve Poetry Press, 2020) is a tale of growing up and finding a voice. Weaving together poetry, storytelling, live music, audio clips from the interviews and some genuine teenage diary entries, Genevieve Carver and her multi-instrumental live band explore what it means to be a girl in the business of music.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Jonathan Edwards, Deryn Rees-Jones, Mimi Khalvati	Our final headline event of the weekend brings three vital poets together to read and talk about their work. Jonathan Edwards' latest collection <i>Gen</i> (Seren, 2018) follows his acclaimed and Costa Book Award for Poetry winning <i>My Family and Other Superheroes</i> . Deryn Rees-Jones' latest collection <i>Erato</i> (Seren, 2019), TS Eliot Shortlisted) follows her recent selected poems, <i>What It's Like to be Alive</i> . Mimi Khalvati's new collection <i>Afterwardsness</i> (Carcenet, 2019) follows previous gems such as <i>The Meanest Flower, Child and The Weather Wheel</i> , all with Carcanet. This wonderful line-up, a real treat, will be hosted for us by Jonathan Davidson from Writing West Midlands and founder of Birmingham Literature Festival. This event is supported by University of Birmingham.	£6.50/ £4.50	Patrick Studio Theatre - Birmingham Hippodrome

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PROUD TO BE HOSTED AND PARTNERED BY...



MATT ABBOTT is freshly established on the UK's poetry scene. His debut one-man show 'Two Little Ducks' earned 5* reviews during a full Edinburgh Fringe run in 2017 before embarking on a 22-date UK theatre tour last autumn, which was accompanied by his debut poetry collection of the same name on Verve Poetry Press. His debut poetry collection for children *A Hurricane in my Head* was published by Bloomsbury this summer. Matt founded spoken word record label Nymphs & Thugs in spring 2015.



KATIE AILES is a researcher, artist, and producer focusing on performance-based poetry. As a Producer with I Am Loud Productions, she has co-devised and performed in shows at the Edinburgh, Prague, and Brighton Fringe festivals. She has performed across the UK with organisations including the Scottish Poetry Library, StAnza and Apples & Snakes. Her work has been published in *Gutter* and *Glasgow Women Poets*. Her poem 'Outwith' was chosen as one of the Scottish Poetry Library's Best of the Best Scottish Poems in 2019.



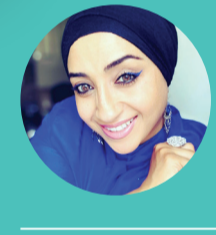
SASCHA AURORA AKHTAR feels deeply connected to her ancestral roots in Lancashire, South Yorkshire and Pakistan. Born into a literary family, with writers of both fiction and poetry represented, Sacha has been naturally drawn towards many kinds of writing. Her first poetry collection was *The Grimoire of Grimalkin* (Salt, 2007). The Emma Press published her pamphlet, *The Whimsy of Dank Ju-Ju*, in 2019.



RACHAEL ALLEN was born in Cornwall and studied at Goldsmiths College. She is the co-author of *Jolene*, a book of poems and photographs with Guy Gormley, and *Nights of Poor Sleep*, a book of poems and paintings with Marie Jacotey. She has received a Northern Writers' Award and an Eric Gregory Award, and was made a Faber New Poet in 2014. She is poetry editor at Granta and co-founder of the poetry press clinic and online journal tender.



SIANA BANGURA is a writer, poet, performer and producer hailing from South East London. She is the author of critically acclaimed debut poetry collection *Elephant* (Haus of Liberated Reading, 2016) and the founder and former editor of No Fly on the WALL, a platform centring the voices and experiences of Black British women and Black women living in the UK. With experience in indie publishing, journalism, and campaigns under her belt, Siana's wide portfolio of work focuses on bringing voices on the margins to the centre.



HAFSA ANEELA BASHIR is a writer, playwright and performance poet based in Manchester. Her work has been published in anthologies *When Sara Met Sarah*, *50 Doubts Above Sound*, *Elevator Fiction* and *Shots in The Dark* by Crocus Books. She is founder and co-director of Outside The Frame Arts (OTFA), a collective platforming marginalised voices. She was recently awarded the prestigious Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowship 2019.



JO BELL was born in Sheffield and grew up on the fringes of the Derbyshire Peak District. A winner of the Charles Causley Prize and the Manchester Cathedral Prize, she was the first Canal Laureate for the UK appointed by the Poetry Society and the Canal & River Trust. She lives on a narrowboat on the English waterways. *Kiss* (Nine Arches Press, 2015) is Jo Bell's second collection of poems and she is also the author of *52: Write a Poem a Week*, *Start Now*, *Keep Going* and co-author of *How to be a Poet* (both Nine Arches Press).



JAY BERNARD is the author of the pamphlets *Your Sign is Cuckoo*, *Girl* (Tall Lighthouse, 2008), *English Breakfast* (Math Paper Press, 2013) and *The Red and Yellow Nothing* (Ink Sweet & Teas Press, 2016), which was shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award 2017. They also participated in 'The Complete Works II' project in 2014 in which they were mentored by Kei Miller. Jay was a Foyle Young Poet of the Year in 2005 and a winner of SIAMBassadors UK spoken word championship.



LIZ BERRY was born in the Black Country and now lives in Birmingham. Her first book of poems *Black Country* (Chatto 2014), described as a 'sooty, soaring hymn to her native West Midlands' (Guardian) was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation, received a Somerset Maugham Award and won the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Award and Forward Prize for Best First Collection 2014. Her pamphlet *The Republic of Motherhood* (Chatto, 2018) was a Poetry Book Society choice and the title poem won the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem 2018.



VIBS BHATA is an upcoming young Brit Indian artist, born and raised in Birmingham. Her love for music began at the age of seven, learning the Indian classical harmonium. She progressed onto guitar, giving her insight into the fusion scene singing in Hindi, Punjabi and English. Whilst creatively pursuing her love for music, she is developing her career in sustainable business, using both as an avenue to join people together and become more environmentally conscious.



CAROLINE BIRD is an award-winning poet. Her first collection *Looking Through Letterboxes* was published in 2002 when she was 15. *Watering Can* (2009) achieved a Poetry Book Society Recommendation and her fourth collection *The Hat-Stand Union* (2013) was described by Simon Armitage as 'spring-loaded, funny, sad and deadly.' She won a major Eric Gregory Award in 2002 and was short-listed for the Geoffrey Dearmer Prize in 2001. She was one of the five official poets at London Olympics 2012.



BIRDSPEED is the Edinburgh Fringe Slam Champion 2019, the 2019 Hammer and Tongue UK National Slam Champion. Birdspeed is published in the following anthologies: *Aller Egos* (Bad Betty Press, 2019), *Use Words First* (Own It, 2019) and *Words on Windrush* (Empowor, 2019). Birdspeed has also self-published her first pamphlet *Bloom* (2019) which is endorsed by Junior Marvin from The Original Wailers.



SUE BROWN is a Birmingham based poet who has collaborated with musicians, theatre directors and radio producers. Her work has taken her across Europe and Africa. Sue is a member of the Birmingham based *Writers without Borders*. Recently Sue presented a 60-minute documentary, *The First Black Brummies*, BBC4, which led to her winning a MIVA (Movie Video & Screen Award) & RTS (Royal Television Society). Her debut poetry collection *Rhythm Chant* (Verve Poetry Press, 2019), was published in October.



MARCIA CALAME is a diverse poet, with poems in anthologies such as *Celebrate Who?*, *Ten Black British poets from the Midlands* (Smokestack, 2011) and *Sense of Touch* including 'Rippled Splendor', which received the Editor's choice Award. She has performed in places such as *Glastonbury* and theatre performances, with Apples and Snakes and helped facilitated young men living with Mental Health. Marcia, currently lives in Birmingham and is involved in various new projects in 2019.



GENEVIEVE CARVER & THE UNSUNG Genevieve Carver is a Sheffield-based poet searching for the humanity amidst the chaos. Her work has been appeared in publications including *Iota*, *Envoi*, and *The North*, and her first collection will be published by Verve Poetry Press in 2020. Genevieve Carver & The Unsung are a multidisciplinary performance project celebrating unsung heroes and marginal voices. They are double winners of Buxton Fringe Spoken Word Award and released their first studio album in 2017.



MURY JEAN CHAN grew up in Hong Kong. Her debut pamphlet *A Hurry of English* was selected as the 2018 Poetry Book Society Summer Pamphlet Choice. In 2017, Chan's poem '//' was shortlisted for the 2017 Forward Prize for Best Single Poem. She is a Leabury Poetry Critic, editor of Oxford Poetry, advisory board member of the Poetry Translation Centre and member of the Folio Prize Academy. She is a Lecturer in Creative Writing (Poetry) at Oxford Brookes University and lives in London.



CONOR CLEARY is from Tralee, Ireland, and lives in Glasgow. He has an MA in Poetry from Queen's University Belfast where he was the recipient of the 2016 Seamus Heaney Centre MA Award. In 2018, he was the winner of the Patrick Kavanagh Award. His work has appeared in *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Tangerine*, *Virginia Quarterly Review* and *The Stinging Fly*. His first poetry pamphlet *priced out* was published by The Emma Press in 2019 and launched at Belfast Book Festival.



MATTHEW CLEGG was born in Leeds & lives in Sheffield. He lectures in Creative Writing at Derby University. From 1999-2001 he was a poet in residence at the Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere, & from 2003-2006 he worked for Arts Council England. His books of poetry include *Lost Between Stations*, *West North East*, *The Navigators*, & *Cazique* (all Longbarrow Press).



ADRIAN EARLE is a research poet & media maker reveling in unfamiliar commissions & experimental verse form. Managing Director at the poetry media company *VersaFirst Productions*, as well as Co-founder and Publishing Manager of the Poetry Birmingham Literary Journal. A 2019 member of the Hippodrome Young Poets, his debut pamphlet *5000HURTS* is published by Burning Eye Books & his 2nd Poetry Film *boyshapedspace* was commissioned by BBC New Creatives in late 2019.



JONATHAN EDWARDS' first collection of poems *My Family and Other Superheroes* (Seren, 2014), received the Costa Poetry Award and the Wales Book of the Year People's Choice Award. It was shortlisted for the Fenton Aldeburgh First Collection Prize. His second collection *Gen* (Seren, 2018), was shortlisted for the Wales Book of the Year Award. He lives in Crosskeys, South Wales. His poem about Newport Bridge was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem 2019.



TORIA GARBUTT is one of UK poetry's rising stars. The release of her debut spoken word album *Hot Plastic Moon* with Nymphs & Thugs in spring 2016 coincided with her joining Dr John Cooper Clarke as a regular tour support; gigging with JCC both at home and in Europe. Her debut poetry collection *The Universe and Me* was published by Wrecking Ball Press last spring. Toria was one of five poets included in a Guardian feature on 'the rise and rise of the new poets' earlier this year and has also featured on BBC Radio 4.



SALENA GODDEN is one of the UK's leading spoken word artists. Her 2016 live compilation album *LiveWire* was shortlisted for The Poetry Society's Ted Hughes Award. She has contributed to literary sensation *The Good Immigrant*. Her debut poetry collection *Fishing In The Aftermath* was published by Burning Eye Books, and her literary memoir *Springfield Road* is available via Unbound.



JASPREET KAUR, better known as Behind the Netra for her poetry, is an award-winning Spoken Word Artist and History teacher from East London. She practices actively with national governments, corporations and charities alike, such as TED, the UN, Westminster Interfaith Council and women's networks across the UK, using her poetry to inspire and drive change. Her TED talk, "How Poetry Saved My Life" is one of many examples of this.



RUPINDER KAUR is a Birmingham born Punjabi poet and biomedical science student with an immense love for South Asian arts. She sees writing and reading poetry as a way to liberate the soul. Rupinder is known for speaking her mind and this is reflected in her poems. In *Rooh*, her debut poetry collection from Verve Poetry Press, she takes us on a poetic journey that transcends borders and arbitrary boundaries.



MIMI KHALVATI was born in Tehran, Iran, and has lived most of her life in London. She has published eight collections with Carcanet Press, including *The Meanest Flower*, shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize 2007 and *The Weather Wheel*, a Poetry Book Society Recommendation and a book of the year in *The Independent*. Her awards include a Cholmondeley Award from the Society of Authors and she is the founder of the Poetry School, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and of the English Society.



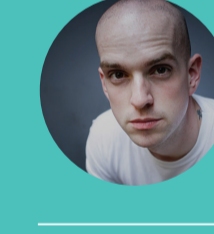
RACHEL LONG is a poet & the founder of Octavia - Poetry Collective for Womxn of Colour, who are housed at Southbank Centre, London. She is co-tour on the Barbican Young Poets programme.



SUHAIIYAH MANZOOR-KHAN is Muslim (someone who surrenders to the will of Allah), an educator, writer and spoken-word poet. She interrogates narratives around race/ism, Islamophobia, gender, feminism, state violence and decoloniality in Britain. She is the founder and author of the critical and educative blog, www.thebrwninkjabi.com, and released her debut poetry collection *Postcolonial Barter* (Verve Poetry Press, 2019) to great acclaim in September.



ROY McFARLANE was born in Birmingham of Jamaican parentage and has spent most of his years living in Wolverhampton. He has held the role of Birmingham's Poet Laureate and Starbuck's Poet in Residence, and is presently the Birmingham & Midland Institute's Poet in Residence. His first full collection of poems *Beginning With Your Last Breath* was published by Nine Arches Press in 2016 and was followed by *The Healing Next Time* (also Nine Arches Press, 2018) which was shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Prize and longlisted for the Jhalak Prize.



ANDREW MCMULLAN is a debut collection *physical* was the first ever poetry collection to win *The Guardian* First Book Award. His second collection *playtime* was published by Jonathan Cape in 2018; it was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation for Autumn 2018, a Poetry Book of the Month in both *The Observer* and *The Telegraph* and a Poetry Book of the Year in *The Sunday Times*. He is senior lecturer at the Manchester Writing School at MMU and lives in Manchester.



OAKLEY is a writer & performer originally from the West Midlands (formerly Worcestershire Young Poet Laureate), currently based in South London. oakley has performed across the UK, a regular poet for Apples & Snakes (The RSC, BAC, 100 Club, Salena Godden's LIVE-Wire Poets). They have been published in *America for #Queer*, an LGBTQIA+ anthology (2017), poems for *Wearari Magazine's* *Queer Worlds* edition (2019), and also in *Verve Poetry Press'* community-themed anthology *Closed Gates or Open Arms?* (ed. Joelle Taylor), with their poem 'HURST STREET & other forms'.



MAARJA PARTNA is an Estonian poet, editor and translator with four poetry collections: *At the Grassroots* (2010), which was shortlisted for the Beth Alver Debut Award, *Thresholds and Pillars* (2013), *[becoming]* (2015) and *Vivarium* (2019). She has won the Juhani Livy Poetry Award and is the co-founder of the poetry press *Elusamus*. Her poems, which have been translated into numerous languages, weave connections between the human and non-human worlds and address issues of identity and belonging.



SANDEEP PARMAR is a poet, critic and Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Liverpool. He has published two collections of poetry, *The Marble Orchard* (Shearsman, 2011) and *Eidolon* (Shearsman, 2015), which won the Leabury Force Prize for Best Second Collection.



HEATHER PHILLIPSON is an award winning poet and has published five volumes of poetry. She was named a Faber New Poet in 2009, a Next Generation Poet in 2014 and received Poetry Magazine's Friends of Literature Prize in 2016. *Whip-hot & Gippy* (Bloodaxe, 2019) is her most recent title. She has been selected as the next artist for the Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square.



KATHY PIMLOTT was born in Nottingham, in the shadow of Player's cigarette factory but has spent her adult life in London, the last 40 or so years in Covent Garden. She has had a rag-bag career in social work, community activism, arts television and artist development and now works on community-led public realm projects. Her first pamphlet *Goose Fair Night* was published by the Emma Press in 2016, and her second *Elastic Glue* in 2019. Her work has been widely published in magazines, on-line and in anthologies.



POETRY MACHINE - BETH CALVERLEY Beth Calverley is a poet, creative coach and founder of The Poetry Machine. Beth's poetry is hopeful and true, finding words for human moments and emotions that are often left unspoken. In 2018, Beth won the Gloucester Roundhouse Slam and was published on *Rite Magazine's* list of the most influential young Bristolians. She has worked with Apples & Snakes and performed at iconic venues such as London Roundhouse and Bristol Old Vic.



RAINY DAY WOMAN Drawing from all-country bluesgrass and the canon of an 'old, weird America', Rainy Day Woman play sparse, unheeled folk music. After releasing *Unlucky Green* last year, the young duo have been playing their unique songs - complete with desire, betrayal, pub lore and feminist rage - to audiences up and down the country.



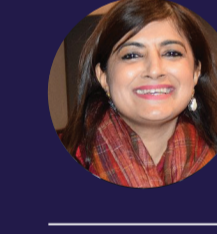
VIDYAN RAVINTHIRAN is the author of *Bloodaxe* titles *Grun-tu-malani* and *The Million-Petalled Flower of Being Here*, shortlisted for the Forward Prize; also *Elizabeth Bishop's Prosaic Winner* of both the University English Prize and the Warren-Brooks Award for Outstanding Literary Criticism. He teaches at Harvard University and is, with Sarah Howe and Dai George, an editor for the online magazine *Prac Crit*, as well as (with Sandeep Parmar) a Poetry Book Society selector.



DERYN REES-JONES is a poet, editor and literary critic. Her selected poems *What it's Like to Be Alive* (Seren) was published in 2016 and was a PBS Special Commendation. *Erato*, a Poetry Book Society Recommendation was published by Seren in June 2019. Her monograph *Paula Rego: The Art of Story* was also recently published by Thames & Hudson. She has received numerous awards for her poems, including shortlistings for the Forward and T S Eliot prizes and is the editor of the *Pavilion Poetry List* (Liverpool University Press).



JACOB SAM-LA ROSE is poetry collection *Breaking Silence* (Bloodaxe) was shortlisted for a Forward Poetry prize and an Aldwych Fenton award, and is a set text for an English Language/Literature A' Level. As an artistic director and educator, he is responsible for the Barbican Young Poets programme, Spoken Word Educators (Goldsmiths University), and is widely recognised as a facilitator and supporter of emerging writers.



RESHMA RUJIA is the author of novel *Something Black in the Lentil Soup*, described in the *Sunday Times* as 'a gem of straight-faced comedy.' Her second novel *A Mouthful of Silence* was shortlisted for the 2014 SI Leeds Literary Prize. Reshma's debut poetry collection, *A Dinner Party in the Home Counties* was published in October 2019 by Skylark Publications. Her short stories and poems have appeared in various international anthologies and magazines and also been commissioned for Radio 4.



JACQUELINE SAPHRA is a poet and playwright. Her collection *All My Mad Mothers* from Nine Arches Press was shortlisted for the 2017 TS Eliot prize. In the same year, *A Bargain with the Light* Poems after Lee Miller was published by Hercules Editions. In 2019, her play, 'The Noises' funded by Arts Council England, was produced at The Old Red Lion Theatre. Her latest collection *Dad, Remember You Are Dead* was out from Nine Arches in September 2019. She teaches and mentors for The Poetry School.



MEGAN SCOTT is an artist, poet, car parts delivery driver and self confessed push brummie. Her most recent work, 'To Touch Peace / Of Floating Things', culminating in an exhibition and accompanying zine, combines self-portraiture with poetry to strike back against the limitations placed on trans people from birth.



CHAMANDEEP SINGH is a Punjabi singer, bhanga dancer and British Army Officer. He was raised in Amritsar - the heart of Punjab - and now resides in London. His love for Punjabi culture and music started at school taking part in cultural competitions. Recently his debut single, 'shoulder to shoulder' was released with Jhinda Music. He has performed across various stages in the UK raising cultural awareness about bhanga.



YOMI SODE is a Nigerian British writer, performer, facilitator and Complete Works Alumni. He has read poems at Lagos International Poetry Festival, Afrika Fest with Speaking Volumes in Finland, the New York Public Library with the British Council and at Edinburgh International Book Festival. In 2019 Yomi was awarded one of three Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowships.



EMMA DAI'AN WRIGHT is a British-Chinese-Vietnamese publisher, designer and illustrator based in the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham. She worked in ebook production at Orion Publishing Group before leaving in 2012 to set up the Emma Press with the support of the Prince's Trust. She has since published over 500 writers across more than 70 books, including poetry anthologies for adults and children, short stories, and translations. In 2016 the Emma Press won the Michael Marks Award for Poetry Pamphlet Publishers.



FATHIMA ZAHRA is an Indian poet based in Essex. She is a Barbican Young Poet and Roundhouse Poetry Collective Alumna. In her work, she explores the lives of the diaspora and what belonging means to her. Her poems have won the Bridport Poetry Prize 2019 and been shortlisted for the Walls Poetry Prize. She has also been featured on BBC World News and has performed across the UK and India at festivals including Latitude and Hay festival. She is currently working on her debut pamphlet *Datapalm Ghazals* (Burning Eye Books, 2020).

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