



UNIVERSITY
of York

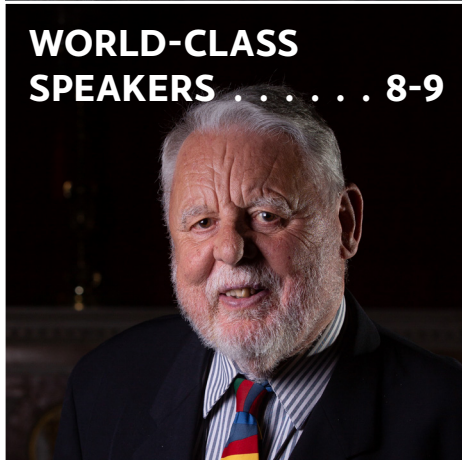


**Educating, entertaining
and inspiring *through*
*public engagement***

R E P O R T

2 0 1 9

Festival *highlights*



Welcome

A passionate belief in the power of ideas and education to change the world for the better is the driving ethos of York Festival of Ideas. This year's Festival held true to that belief by delivering an inspiring, eclectic programme of over 200 mostly free events. Held over 13 days in nearly 50 venues, the Festival brought world-class speakers, exhibitions, theatre, music, films, guided walks and family friendly activities to the amazing city of York.

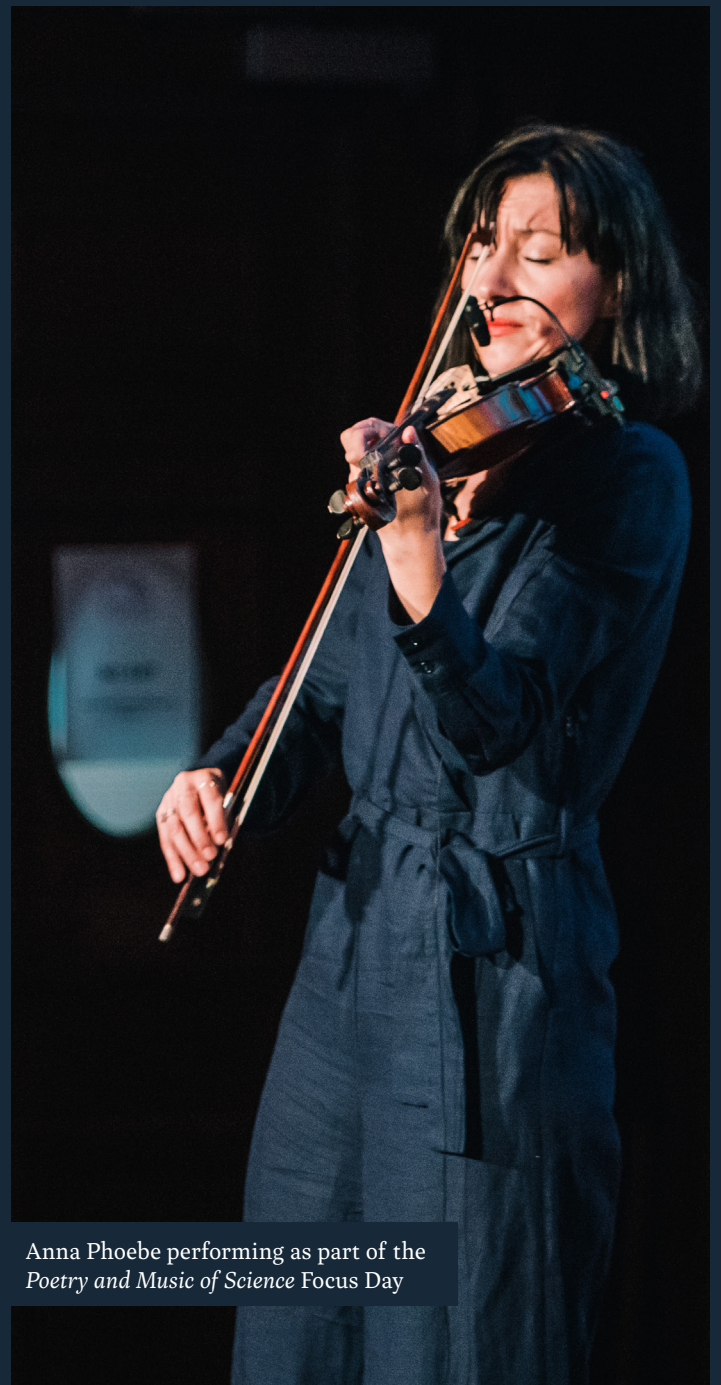
Presented under the banner of A World of Wonder, highlights of the Festival included a live broadcast by BBC Radio 4's Today programme from the University of York campus; an incredible launch event at York Minster with speakers including humanitarian Terry Waite; and thought-provoking Focus Days exploring global issues such as toleration, poverty, inclusive economies, cultural identities in France and the UK, artificial intelligence and the interface between science and creativity.

The huge success of the Festival is in large part due to the 111 partners who work with the University of York through a pioneering collaborative 'programme partnership' model. This partnership anticipated the recent findings of the UPP Foundation Civic University Commission report, by working with partners and communities to understand their requirements, interests and passions, and co-designing interventions and encounters that are both engaging and appealing to diverse audiences.

A further vital element that contributes to the Festival's on-going success is the generosity of our supporters and donors who make it possible for us to deliver so many inspiring events free of charge. Read on and discover why this year's Festival was enjoyed by an audience of more than 33,000!

Joan Concannon,
Director of York Festival of Ideas

Photo credits: Ian Martindale,
Mark Woodward, Duncan Lomax,
Rosie Reed Gold



Anna Phoebe performing as part of the
Poetry and Music of Science Focus Day

KEY FACTS

33,354
audience

220
events

111
Festival partners

242,639
website views

10,000
followers across three
social media channels



Almost 1,000 Festival attendees responded to a survey circulated to ticket-holders. Of these:

- **57.8% had not attended the Festival before**
- **99.3% would recommend the Festival**
- **92.4% rated the Festival as excellent or very good**

“

It's great that there are a variety of ideas that are explored all round the city. The whole point of knowledge is that it should be inclusive – not exclusive – and the Festival very much says that.”

SURVEY FEEDBACK



Kim Leadbeater speaking at *Toleration: An outdated concept?*



A Date With History: Fashion, food and feminism



Beats Bus

Inspiring change with Festival Focus Days



*A Fair Economy.
A Better World*

This year seven Festival Focus Days illuminated important and topical issues by bringing together different voices and opinions at a series of themed events.

Supported by a range of donors, our Focus Days offer audiences an opportunity to be involved in debates exploring often complex issues in greater depth. From toleration to poverty, and artificial intelligence to the creativity of science, this year's Festival provided people with plenty to ponder. National and international experts joined in the conversation through panel discussions, while supporting exhibitions and community activities took these discussions to a wider audience.

included Kim Leadbeater, the sister of murdered MP Jo Cox; social geographer Danny Dorling, and Director General of Amnesty International Italy, Gianni Rufini.

Another day of lively debate supported by the Friends Provident Foundation looked at how we ensure the economy benefits everyone, not just the few. Meanwhile, the challenge universities face in redefining their purpose, value and relevance in today's world came under scrutiny at a day of talks supported by the UPP Foundation.

Hands-on activities and self-parking cars brought the issues of artificial intelligence ethics and safety to a wide public, alongside talks on the benefits and concerns that might come with these new technologies. And a major city-centre art exhibition *The Weight of Light* enabled Focus Day discussions on creativity and imagination in science to reach a diverse audience.

Our continuing collaboration with the French Embassy in the UK saw top experts from France and the UK, including Oriole Cullen, curator of the V&A Christian Dior exhibition, explore how the iconic symbols of French and British culture – fashion, food and feminism – define our national identities.

Writers and performers who empower people to tell their own stories about poverty in a meaningful way took centre stage at a Focus Day presented in collaboration with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The day also featured the inspirational Beats Bus which parked up in York city centre to explain how this trailblazing project is encouraging young people to express their hopes and aspirations through music.

At a time when divisions in society often seem greater than ever, toleration and the rise of the so-called 'uncivil' society were discussed at a Focus Day which

“
What a brilliant and inspirational day!”
ANNA PHOEBE, VIOLINIST AND COMPOSER



“
Thank you, once again, for your warm welcome and wonderful organisation. Everyone was delighted, and let me tell you York has gained a few enthusiastic ambassadors in France!”
ALICE BÉJA, DEPUTY HEAD AND HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ATTACHÉ, UK FRENCH EMBASSY



Noga Levy-Rapoport



Paul Muldoon



Mike Leigh

World-class speakers take to the Festival stage

World-class speakers and performers brought their magic to the Festival, captivating audiences with their insights, knowledge and good humour.



The *Today* programme with Justin Webb

As ever, this year's Festival brought a stellar line-up of world-class speakers to York. At the very dawn (quite literally) of the 2019 Festival, the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme broadcast live from the University of York with an incredible line-up of guests.

That evening our Festival launch event in the magnificent York Minster provided a powerful and moving climax to our opening day, with mesmerising performances by journalist Anne McElvoy of *The Economist*; Astronomer Royal Martin Rees; broadcaster Misha Glenny, and former Beirut hostage and humanitarian Terry Waite.

Other high-profile speakers inspiring audiences at this year's Festival included Paul Muldoon, one of Ireland and America's leading contemporary poets; teenage climate activist, Noga Levy-Rapoport; Michelin-starred chef, Frances Atkins; internationally acclaimed and Oscar-nominated filmmaker, Mike Leigh; the co-author of a Nobel Peace Prize winning report on climate change, Anil Markandya; and *Poldark* scriptwriter Debbie Horsfield.

“
I am very proud to live in a city in which ideas are discussed, explained & debated.”
JONATHAN, VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

Bringing research to life

The Festival provides an incredible opportunity to showcase some of the inspirational and life-changing research taking place at the University of York.

York Festival of Ideas aims to educate, entertain and inspire – an aspiration which colleagues throughout the University of York have taken to heart in their commitment to share their research with the public. They have – literally in some cases – taken to the streets of York to share the excitement of ideas, contributing to the educational, social and cultural development of the city and the region, and promoting the value that universities and researchers contribute to society.

Participating in panel debates; chairing visiting speakers; inspiring thousands of young people and families with hands-on activities; delivering talks and walks; and standing on a soap box to take science to the streets, over 220 University staff demonstrated their passion for their work, and their understanding of the importance of communicating what they do.

The Festival provides a plethora of opportunities for postgraduate students to get involved, and this year saw another successful *Festival Fringe Family Fun Afternoon*. Students were able to demonstrate their creativity as they inspired young children with energetic, crafty, puzzling, scientific and historical activities.

Postgraduate researchers also joined University staff at the now well-established *Discovery Zone* in a large marquee in York city centre, where over 5,000 members of the public enjoyed hands-on activities for all ages.

“

It's not raining here but raining ideas!”

TOM MCLEISH, PROFESSOR OF NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF YORK AND CURATOR OF FOCUS DAY THE POETRY AND MUSIC OF SCIENCE



Professor Callum Roberts and Professor Sue Hartley





“

It's so cool that York has a festival committed to bringing academic work to the general public. I think this is something really special that I've never heard of at any other university.”

SURVEY FEEDBACK



229

University staff members took part in the Festival

A Festival for all

This year York Festival of Ideas extended its reach in the local community, attracting new and diverse audiences.

Built on a passionate belief in the power of education and ideas to transform lives, the Festival delivers as many events as possible free-of-charge, allowing everyone to enjoy and benefit from its exciting programme.

Year on year, the Festival continues to diversify its appeal through a wide array of interactive activities and exhibitions suitable for all ages. This year such events included *Discovery Zone*, *Adventures into the Unknown*, *The Weight of Light*, *Mission to the Moon*, and *Fun with Artificial Intelligence*.

In addition, this year's programme included hugely successful bespoke events presented in two areas of York which have the highest proportion of residents in the lowest socioeconomic category. The initiative involved fun, interactive assemblies delivered in schools, followed up by 'mini Discovery Zones' - events featuring hands-on activities - at nearby libraries. Free library café vouchers given out at participating schools allowed us to track the success of the initiative.

Survey data shows that at least 57% of the 'mini Discovery Zone' attendees who gave feedback lived in areas with low participation in higher education.

The Festival also continued its work with a local community centre in one of the 'hard-to-reach' areas of the city. Supported by targeted marketing materials, *Project Happiness* involved an afternoon of fun activities designed to help everyone live a more active and healthy life.

In another new initiative, the Festival worked with a recently-established local pop-up bookshop to provide book sales at events.



“

Thank you to everyone working on @YorkFestofIdeas for especially the last two weekends full of fun for families. We all loved it and learned lots."

AGNIESZKA, VIA SOCIAL MEDIA



“
Your logo
'To educate,
entertain
and inspire'
certainly
lived up to its
expectation.
Thank you.”
ACOMB LIBRARY FEEDBACK



Thank you

Thanks to the generosity of our Festival sponsors we continue to be able to make the majority of the Festival free to our audience.



Dr Kenneth and Mrs Patricia Dixon

Jane Moody Fund

Dr Richard Shephard

C & JB Morrell Trust and the Morrell Centre for Toleration

Festival partners

All Saints, Pavement

Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

Arts Council England

Athena SWAN

Aylmer Lecture

BBC History Magazine

BBC Radio 3

BBC Radio 4

Best Western York Pavilion

Bloomsbury Publishing

Bootham School

C and JB Morrell Trust

Café Scientifique

Cantor Lecture

Centre for Eighteenth Century Studies

Centre for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies

Cycle Heaven

Dr Kenneth and Mrs Patricia Dixon

Dr Richard Shephard

Duke of York Pub

Eagle & Child Pub

English Heritage

Explore York Libraries and Archives

Faber & Faber

Fairfax House

Fishergate, Fulford and Heslington Local History Society

Found Fiction

Fox Lane Books

French Embassy in the UK

- Friends Provident Trust
- Granta
- HE for Research Professional
- Holgate Windmill
- Hotel du Vin
- How to Do Good Tour
- Humanities Research Centre
- Infinite Opera
- Institution of Engineering and Technology
- Institute of Physics
- Jane Moody Fund
- John Templeton Foundation
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Kohima Educational Trust
- Leeds Brewery
- Lloyd's Register Foundation
- LNER
- LUMA
- Make It York
- Message House
- National Centre for Atmospheric Chemistry
- National Centre for Early Music
- NHS: The York General Practice Vocational Training Scheme
- One Foot Theatre Company
- One Planet York
- Orillo Productions
- Orion Publishing Group
- Out of Character Theatre Company
- Penguin Random House
- Quantum Shorts
- Rendez-vous de l'histoire de Blois
- Rowntree Society
- St Helen Stonegate
- St Leonard's Hospice
- St Peter's School
- Shepherd Group
- Society for the Study of French History
- South Asian Arts UK
- Tang Hall Big Local
- Tang Hall Community Centre
- Tang Hall Food Coop
- Thames & Hudson
- The Arts Society Ebor
- The Assuring Autonomy International Programme
- The Company of Merchant Adventurers of the City of York
- The Holbeck Charitable Trust
- The Jorvik Group
- The Mansion House
- The Morrell Centre for Toleration
- The Mount School
- The Royal Society
- Theatre of Science
- Three Minute Thesis
- University of York
- UK National Quantum Technologies Programme
- UPP Foundation
- Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A)
- Visit York
- Wolfson Atmospheric Chemistry Laboratories
- Woodmeadow Trust
- York Archaeological Trust
- York Army Museum
- York Art Gallery
- York Centre for Writing
- York Civic Trust
- York Concerts
- York CVS
- York Cycle Campaign
- York Design Awards
- York Environmental Sustainability Institute
- York Human Rights City
- York Independent State School Partnership (ISSP)
- York Islamic Art Circle
- York Minster
- York Museums Trust
- York Musical Society
- York St John University
- Yorkshire Philosophical Society
- Yorkshire Water



“

It's been brilliant to be honest, so I'm looking forward to working with you guys again next year too!"

LAURA YEOMAN, EXPLORE YORK



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