

# **NEWS: Leeds International Festival of Ideas announces full 2021 festival programme - Sir Lenny Henry, Katherine Ryan, Evan Davis, Gina Martin, Grace Dent, Deborah Frances-White & more**

Submitted by: Chapter 81 Limited

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September 2021 will see a stellar line-up in the city as Leeds International Festival of Ideas presents its ambitious programme as a platform for exploring new ideas and innovation.

The festival, formerly Leeds International Festival, presents five thought-provoking panel debates running alongside four inspirational keynote speeches exploring and challenging key issues and viewpoints - all impacted on during the last extraordinary 18 months.

Announcing the panels along with nearly 30 speakers, the festival will discuss and debate the questions; Can we ever be who we want to be? Does the future have enough food? Are we more lonely? Is the UK media broken and finally Green or Growth? It will run across three landmark venues in Leeds. The historic Leeds Corn Exchange, legendary City Varieties Music Hall and the centrepiece Leeds Town Hall.

Names for the panels include; BBC Media Editor Amol Rajan, the award-winning author, queer performer and script writer of big and small screens Amrou Al-Kadhi, "Romcomoiseur" Bolu Babalola is a writer for TV and film, and TV & Culture columnist for Dazed. Caroline Criado Perez is the author behind Invisible Women and campaigned to feature the first woman on British bank notes, the stand-up comedian, writer, presenter and coach Deborah Frances-White, the sought-after Scandi TedX keynote speaker, cultural sociologist and bestselling author Emilia Van Hauen, and on the media panel is multi-award winning Parliamentary sketch writer Matthew Parris who writes on politics for renowned national publications such as The Times. Also joining is popular wildlife TV presenter Michaela Strachan, a key presenter of the BBC Springwatch series, who has been gracing our screens for 30 years.

Leading the line-up are four famous figures – actor, comedian and campaigner Sir Lenny Henry CBE, comedian and presenter Katherine Ryan, architect and campaigner George Clarke and founder of the MOBO organisation Kanya King CBE - alongside economic expert and BBC presenter Evan Davis, award-winning writer and broadcaster Alix Fox, Tony Blair's former Communications Strategist and Chief Spokesman Alastair Campbell, campaigner, speaker and writer Gina Martin, Masterchef Judge, Guardian food critic and Author Grace Dent.

Leeds International Festival of Ideas runs over a two-week period from Monday 13th until Monday 27th September. The aims of the festival are to provide a platform for the exploration of new ideas and innovation while confronting the challenges of our time and discussing the world of tomorrow.

Andrew Cooper LeedsBID (Leeds Business Improvement District), which brings the festival to the city, said:

"We are delighted to be bringing Leeds International Festival of Ideas to the city this year, presenting a programme which promises to be innovative in its exploring of new ideas while reflecting how thinking has been affected during recent times."

"After a challenging year for everyone, it is exciting for LeedsBID to be collaborating with city

centre partners and it is great to be working together in planning events in the city once again.”

Martin Dickson, Leeds International Festival of Ideas Lead said:

“After a long time planning we are so pleased to reveal the plans. From Sir Lenny Henry headlining and talking at Leeds’ premier venue to chatting over why the UK media is broken with some of its best journalists, to the important chats around businesses growing whilst being sustainable after a pandemic with hot topics in Leeds around the airport, to what does the future of food hold for us. Imagine, in just 6 of the days sitting in the Corn Exchange watching such a calibre of acts like George Clarke, Kanya King, Katherine Ryan and culminating with Sir Lenny Henry.”

Tickets for Leeds International Festival of Ideas and the full programme will go live and on sale at 9am on Friday 2nd July 2021 - [www.leedsintfest.com](http://www.leedsintfest.com)

LeedsBID is working alongside key partners including Leeds Corn Exchange, Leeds Heritage Theatre, Leeds City Council, Weightmans, Dakota and Bruntwood - to bring Leeds International Festival of Ideas to the city.

Events:

Are we more Lonely?

13th September - 19:00

City Varieties Music Hall

Featuring Deborah Frances-White, Dr Melrose Stewart, Alix Fox, Emilia Van Hauen, Bolu Babolula

The MOBOS and Me with Kanya King CBE

Leeds Corn Exchange

September 19th - 16:30

Does the Future have enough food?

City Varieties Music Hall

September 20th - 19:00

Featuring: Grace Dent, Dr Morgaine Gaye, Mike Lee, Ben Davy (Meatless Farm), Ness Knight

Living in a Future City with George Clarke

Leeds Corn Exchange

September 21st - 19:00

In Conversation with Katherine Ryan

Leeds Corn Exchange

September 22nd - 19:00

Can we ever be who we want to be?

Leeds Town Hall

September 23rd - 19:00

Featuring: Amrou Al-Kadhi, Hashi Mohamed, Caroline Criado Perez, Anne-Marie Imafidon, Gina Martin

Is the UK media Broken?

Leeds Town Hall

September 24th - 19:00

Featuring: Evan Davis, Amol Rajan, Alastair Campbell, Matthew Parris, Robyn Vinter

Who am I, again? With Sir Lenny Henry CBE

Leeds Corn Exchange

September 25th - 19:00

Green or Growth?

City Varieties Music Hall

September 27th - 19:00

Featuring: Michaela Strachan, Henri Murison, Paul Chatterton, Noga Levy-Rapoport

Full Names:

Keynotes:

Sir Lenny Henry CBE

Katherine Ryan

Kanya King CBE

George Clarke

Panel Debates: (in order of appearance at the festival)

Deborah Frances-White

Dr Melrose Stewart

Alix Fox

Emilia Van Hauen

Bolu Babolula

Grace Dent

Dr Morgaine Gaye

Mike Lee

Ben Davy

Ness Knight

Amrou Al-Kadhi

Hashi Mohamed

Caroline Criado Perez

Anne-Marie Imafidon

Gina Martin

Evan Davis

Amol Rajan

Alastair Campbell

Matthew Parris

Robyn Vinter

Michaela Strachan

Henri Murison

Prof. Paul Chatterton  
Noga Levy-Rapoport

END

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