

Leeds International Festival of Ideas unveils full '22 line-up

Submitted by: Chapter 81 Limited

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Leeds International Festival of Ideas 2022 unveils its full programme of panels and keynotes

September 22nd - 25th September 2022

Christopher Wylie, Gail Porter, David Harewood, Mary Beard, Rosie Jones, Simon Jordan and Gareth Thomas amongst new names announced joining Yotam Ottolenghi, David Olusoga

With a focus on tackling some of the most crucial questions of our time, Leeds International Festival of Ideas (LIFI) is thrilled to launch its full, incredible programme of panels and keynotes for its 2022 edition. This progressive, diverse festival will showcase four keynote talks and six panels between September 22nd-September 25th and will take place in Leeds' new premier venue, Howard Assembly Room and Howard Opera Centre.

The festival is excited to announce that award-winning stand-up, writer and actor, Aisling Bea, and classicist and national treasure Mary Beard have been added to the keynote line-up. They will join the previously announced chef and restaurateur Yotam Ottolenghi and British-Nigerian historian and broadcaster David Olusoga OBE in delivering the festival's keynote addresses.

As well as what are set to be four unique and stellar keynotes, LIFI will play host to six unmissable panels that aim to delve deep into some of the world's most relevant and important topics. From the future of technology, to climate justice and the social duty of sports professionals, a host of household names and industry experts will debate and discuss these fascinating, thought-provoking subjects, and more, at length in these expertly chaired panels.

Further names announced to be joining the panels today include Christopher Wylie. Best known for his role in setting up - and taking down - the cyberwarfare firm Cambridge Analytica, Wylie will join the Sonia Sodha-chaired panel 'Is social media ruling the world?'. Sodha, chief leader writer and columnist at the Observer and Guardian, will also be joined on the panel by Dr Al Baker, editorial director at misinformation-fighting tech start-up Logically and consultant, speaker, writer and podcaster Africa Brooke.

Metaverse seems to be the word of 2022 but do you really know what it means? The 'Is the metaverse our future reality?' panel will delve into IRL, Meta, Web 3.0 and explore what the next phase of the internet really means for us all. Chaired by the previously announced Lara Lewington, the panel's line-up is completed by AI, data and design expert Ahmed Razek, revered technology commentator and strategist Leanne Elliott Young, academic Dr Neil McDonnell and Matthew Wareford, CEO and Founder of Metaverse Brandtech company Dubit.

In a society where so-called 'cancel culture' and 'wokeness' is widespread, rising star on the comedy circuit, Jamali Maddix will chair the controversial panel 'What can you laugh about?'. Maddix will be joined by rare right-wing comic Geoff Norcott, comedian, actress and panel show favourite Rosie Jones and cultural commentator, fashion stylist and photographer Ayishat Akanbi for an event that is set

to be heated, contentious and unmissable.

With sportsmen, particularly footballers, considered to be overpaid and unduly worshipped, recent years have seen the general public expect these role models to give something back to the community. Subsequently dubbed the Marcus Rashford effect, is giving back now integral to the DNA of sport? 'Does sport have a social duty?' will be chaired by respected broadcaster Charlie Webster. Webster will be joined by former professional footballer and anti-racism activist Gary Bennett MBE, olympian Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE, former rugby player Gareth Thomas and businessman and former Crystal Palace FC chairman Simon Jordan.

The topic of looking after our mental health, particularly that of men, has been one that has been rightfully highlighted of late. Award winning journalist, author and mental health campaigner Bryony Gordon will host 'How do we talk about mental health?', where her panel will discuss if there is still more to be added to the conversation, or if it has now been normalised. Joining Gordon on the panel will be fellow mental health campaigner motivational speaker Luke Ambler, television personality Gail Porter, chief executive of the Centre for Mental Health Sarah Hughes and actor David Harewood MBE.

Finally, 'What's wrong with climate activism?' will explore how the mainstream narrative of climate activism may need altering if we are to ever achieve climate justice. Chairing the panel will be environmental activist Judy Ling Wong CBE, who is also honorary president of Black Environment Network. The panel will be completed by policy and advocacy expert Pauline Castres, president of Swedish youth organisation Sáminuorra Sara-Elvira Kuhmunen, climate justice activist Dominique Palmer, Miami-based artist Lee Pivnik and wildlife cameraman and photographer Hamza Yassin.

Andrew Cooper, Chief Executive at LeedsBID, said: "We are delighted to be presenting such a diverse programme for audiences to enjoy as part of Leeds International Festival of Ideas 22, welcoming such a stellar line-up of names from across industries and academia to address an array of ideas and thinking."

"We hope LIFI22 brings something new, exciting and enticing to the city's cultural calendar, providing the opportunity for people to come along to listen, challenge the way they may think about an idea or issue and join in the debates."

David Olusoga, speaking at Leeds International Festival of Ideas says: "The world is in a strange place right now and having festivals like this, bringing people together to discuss topics is exactly what is needed. I will be talking about the history of great inventions and the inventors and can they ever be separated."

Yotam Ottolenghi speaking at Leeds International Festival of Ideas says: "Like any other human activity, cooking is hugely enriched by interaction between cultures. I can't wait to discuss culinary diversity and multiculturalism at Leeds International Festival of Ideas."

Leeds International Festival of Ideas is brought to the city by LeedsBID, working in partnership with Howard Assembly Room, Opera North, Weightmans and Bruntwood, with Yorkshire Evening Post as media partners.

With the full programme now revealed, tickets are on sale now. Explore the full line-up and buy tickets here; <https://leedsinternationalfestival.com/>

Thursday 22 September 2022

Panel: Is the metaverse our future reality?

Thursday 22 September, 7pm to 8.30pm / Mantle Music Studio

£10

Amongst the rhetoric of avatars, Meta and Web 3.0, what could and should this next phase of the internet really look like and mean for us all?

Lara Lewington (host), Technology presenter

Leanne Elliott-Young, CEO and Co-Founder, Institute of Digital Fashion

Dr Neil McDonnell, LKAS Fellow for VR and AR, University of Glasgow

Ahmed Razek, Principal Technology Advisor – AI, Information Commissioner's Office

Matthew Warneford, CEO and Founder, Dubit

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Yotam Ottolenghi: Universal Language of Food

In Conversation

Thursday 22 September, 7.30pm to 8.30pm / Howard Assembly Room

£15

In an increasingly divided world, acclaimed chef, restaurateur and food writer Yotam Ottolenghi explores how food brings people together.

Friday 23 September 2022

Panel: How do we talk about mental health?

Friday 23 September, 7pm to 8.30pm / Mantle Music Studio

£10

Have we now normalised the conversation surrounding mental health or is there still a way to go? Why is it important to talk about mental health and what more needs to be done to empower people to open up?

Bryony Gordon (host), Journalist, Author and Mental Health Campaigner

Luke Ambler, Mental Health Campaigner and Motivational Speaker

David Harewood MBE, Actor and Director

Sarah Hughes, Chief Executive Centre for Mental Health

Gail Porter, Television Personality and Presenter

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Aisling Bea: Contemporary Voice of Screenwriting

In Conversation

Friday 23 September, 7.30pm to 8.30pm / Howard Assembly Room

£15

Aisling Bea discusses what it means to be a 21st century BAFTA-winning screenwriter.

Saturday 24 September 2022

What's wrong with climate activism?

Panel

Saturday 24 September, 3pm to 4.30pm / Howard Assembly Room

£10

How do we platform marginalised communities to alter the mainstream narrative of climate talks? Without equality, can we ever achieve climate justice?

Judy Ling Wong CBE (host), Honorary President, Black Environment Network

Pauline Castres

Sara-Elvira Kuhmunen

Dominique Palmer

Lee Pivnik

Hamza Yassin

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Panel: What can you laugh about?

Saturday 24 September, 7pm to 8.30pm / Howard Assembly Room

£10

In a society where cancel culture is widespread and language censored, where exactly should we draw the line between comedic expression and just downright offensive?

Jamali Maddix (host), Comedian

Ayishat Akanbi, Stylist and Writer

Geoff Norcott

Rosie Jones

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David Olusoga: Britain and the History Ways

Saturday 24 September, 7.30pm to 8.30pm / Mantle Music Studio

£15

History is now front-page news, contested as never before. Statues have fallen and the reputations of great men called into question. In this talk, Professor David Olusoga examines the causes of the

'history wars' and asks where they might lead us.

Sunday 25 September 2022

Panel: Is social media ruling the world?

Sunday 25 September, 3pm to 4.30pm / Howard Assembly Room

£10

The expansion of social media sees us spiralling towards tailored algorithms, fake news and geopolitical influence. Can the power of an instant communications system really be beneficial for humankind?

Sonia Sodha (host)

Dr Al Baker, Editorial Director, Logically

Africa Brooke, Consultant, Speaker and Writer

Christopher Wylie

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Panel: Does sport have a social duty?

Sunday 25 September, 7pm to 8.30pm / Howard Assembly Room

The Marcus Rashford effect has raised questions about the role of sport within society.

Is giving back integral to the DNA of sport? Are sports personalities best placed in highlighting important social issues?

Charlie Webster (host), Broadcaster, Journalist and Campaigner

Gary Bennett MBE, Former Professional Footballer

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE

Simon Jordan, Entrepreneur, Author and Presenter

Gareth Thomas, Former Professional Rugby Player

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Mary Beard: Arts and Culture – A Price Worth Paying?

Sunday 25 September, 7.30pm to 8.30pm / Mantle Music Studio

£15

Classicist and broadcaster Mary Beard looks at how we can best defend, and pay for, arts and culture from the ancient world to now.

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Images from previous years - <http://leedsintfest.chapter81.co.uk>

About Leeds International Festival of Ideas

Leeds International Festival of Ideas is a metropolitan celebration of new ideas and innovation, which aims to introduce the brightest minds to the city and the city to the brightest minds to share new ideas and discuss the world of tomorrow.

2022 is the festival's seventh year in total but it switched to Leeds International Festival of Ideas in 2021. The festival evolved to continue its exploration of new ideas in its own innovative way to present a programme made up of inspiring keynote talks and thought-provoking panel discussions, addressing issues and topics of the day with local, national and international speakers.

The festival brings renowned names, experts in their field and some of the world's most exciting thinkers to Leeds to share thoughts and ideas through a series of compelling talks, with its range of speakers just as diverse as the subject matter.

2021 saw George Clarke, Katherine Ryan, Evan Davis, Alix Fox, Alastair Campbell, Anne-Marie Imafidon, Hashi Mohammed, Gina Martin, Amol Rajan and Deborah-Frances White among those who joined us, while Helen Sharman OBE, Viv Albertine, Dr Sue Black, Daniel Avery, John Cooper Clarke, Professor Alice Roberts, Frank Bruno MBE, Matt Haig, Tommy Cash, Simon Anholt, Dame Sarah Storey and Gelong Thubten have been amongst the world's leaders and innovators to take part in the festival over the years.

<https://leedsinternationalfestival.com/>

About LeedsBID (Leeds Business Improvement District)

A not-for-profit, non-political organisation, LeedsBID works collaboratively to put Leeds on the map, making new things happen in the city centre for the benefit for all who use it.

Representing over 650 businesses, the BID is delivering over £14m investment back into Leeds city centre through its projects, events and activities over the next five years (2020-2025).

As the largest Business Improvement District outside of London, LeedsBID is the driving force behind a number of bold and innovative projects, with its work including investment in headlines events and activities in the city such as the MOBO Awards, the Leeds International Festival and the Leeds Jurassic Trail, raising the profile of Leeds locally, nationally and internationally.

www.leedsbid.co.uk