

PRESS RELEASE

WW1 ARMISTICE FESTIVAL

RUGBY & DAVENTRY

NOVEMBER 2018



**A collection of world-class performances and
community events inspired by The Great War.**

Funded by

Heritage Lottery First World War: then and now

Arts Council England

Daventry District Council

Produced by www.thewheelsondebussy.com

Summary of Events:

Black Dog: The Dreams of Paul Nash

A compelling live graphic novel/ performed exhibition by International artist and illustrator Dave McKean. Based on the life of WW1 artist Paul Nash.

Pre-show events include exhibition of Dave McKean's art work (Lewis Gallery, Rugby School) and original artefacts from WW1 (The Memorial Chapel, Rugby School).

9th & 10th November @ The Macready Theatre

Be Brave and Come Home Safe

A powerful story of love, hope and the deep scars of war told in drama, song and dance. Written by BAFTA-nominated writer Martin Riley. Come in costume and travel back in time. A unique musical, immersive and interactive community event. Performed by professional actors, musicians and the local community.

8th November @ Temple Speech Room

11th November @ Daventry Community Centre

Children's WW1 Art Exhibition

Local school children will work with professional artists to make art inspired by the WW1 artist Paul Nash. Their work will be exhibited in November.

The Foundry, Daventry

The Barn, Houlton

Poetry Performances

The Wheels on Debussy is working with Poet Laureates and professional wordsmiths in local secondary schools to inspire young people with WW1 poetry by Rupert Brooke and ignite their own writing. A series of poetry performances will take place in Rugby and Daventry.

Inside The CV22, Rugby

The Foundry, Daventry

A Soldier's Tale - WW1 Concert

Local school children will work with professional composer Kirsty Devaney www.kirstydevaney.com on the writing of Fanfares. The music will be performed by The Harborough Collective in Rugby.

Inside The CV22, Rugby

Who is behind it?

The Armistice Festival had been put together by Fiona Sharp, co-director of The Wheels on Debussy. www.thewheelsondebussy.com.

“The idea to create a festival of work commemorating 100 years since the end of WW1 began last August 2017 at A Coruna Comic Arts Festival in Spain.

I saw *Black Dog - The Dreams of Paul Nash* by Dave McKean.

I found the piece deeply moving, hugely powerful and totally innovative. I described it to others as a performed exhibition where the art is put into context using narrative and song. It was the first time I have been so moved by two-dimensional art.

After a few glasses of delicious and persuasive Rioja, Dave agreed to perform the piece in Rugby for the WW1 Armistice Centenary.

With much excitement, I told my children (8, 5 and 5) about my triumph. Their reply left me surprised and a bit sad. “Eh? What war? When can I be a soldier?”

With Dave booked, the next part of my mission was now clear - how do I make WW1 accessible to younger generations?

So, I set about pulling together a series of outstanding live experiences for children, young people and adults that would, I hope, get under the skin, inside the history and beyond the memorabilia of WW1, opening up the epic and intimate dimensions of this seismic episode in our history to the communities of Rugby and Daventry in 2018.” – Fiona Sharp.

The Wheels on Debussy

The Wheels on Debussy devises, curates and presents concerts and theatrical performances, fosters creative communities, trains musicians and commissions writers to make and tour exceptional work to non-traditional spaces.

The Wheels on Debussy aims:

1. Produce outstanding live music and theatre experiences for children, young people and adults on their doorstep so they don't have to travel to cities.
2. Create intergenerational communities whereby the young and old can enjoy activities together.
3. Respond to issues raised by the local community to create uplifting events and exciting creative opportunities which will lead to safer villages/towns and community cohesion.

People can find out more at facebook.com/TheWheelsonDebussy www.thewheelsondebussy.com

NOTE TO EDITOR:

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Black Dog: The Dreams of Paul Nash

by Dave McKean

The Macready Theatre, Rugby

9 – 10th November @ 7.30pm

Tickets: www.ticketsource.co.uk

£5 - £15

Pre-Show Events Included in Ticket

Exhibition by Dave McKean

6.00-7.30pm

The Lewis Gallery, Rugby School

WW1 original artefacts

6.00-7.30pm

Memorial Chapel, Rugby School

The painter **Paul Nash** joined the British army when he was 25 years old, signing up six weeks after the start of the First World War. The appalling experiences he endured, first as a soldier and later as an official war artist, prompted him to create paintings of disturbing, lasting power. Nash's paintings inspired major new work by **Dave McKean**, the highly acclaimed illustrator, filmmaker and musician.

Dave McKean has previously collaborated with figures as diverse as **Neil Gaiman**, **Richard Dawkins** and **Heston Blumenthal**. In May 2016, McKean's response to Nash's work was issued as a special limited-edition book before being published as a graphic novel in October at the **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**. *Black Dog* launched with a series of multimedia performances, with text, images and music performed by McKean and friends.

"I am no longer an artist. I am a messenger who will bring back word... to those who want the war to go on forever. It will have a bitter truth, and may it burn their lousy souls." Paul Nash, writing home from the front line

"I'd like to explore Paul Nash's role in the birth of modernism and surrealism, and how those movements were actually witnessed by Nash in the dream-/nightmare-like battlefields of the war. He used the landscape that he loved to try to deal with what he'd been through, and to try and find calm and solace beyond." Dave McKean



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Be Brave and Come Home Safe

Written by Martin Riley

Directed by Matthew Sharp

Temple Speech Room Rugby
8th November @ 6.00pm

Daventry Community Centre, Daventry
11th November @ 3pm

Tickets: www.eventbrite.co.uk

£2 - £8

A story of love and hope told in drama, song and dance.

Come in costume and travel back in time.

A unique musical, immersive and interactive community event.

Put on your frocks and your feathers, your plus fours and khaki shirts and help us bring November 1918 to life!

The event starts prompt and will finish in time for the troops to catch the last train.

It's November 1918. Families in a remote village are gathering in their school hall to give an emotional send-off to their fathers, husbands and sons returning from leave to the Western Front.

There'll be popular songs from the Village Band with a chance for everyone to join in, a Tea Dance, a Children's Choir who have written a special anthem for the occasion and a thrilling choral rendition of Jerusalem.

To begin the evening, Danny Scarriot, a renowned local musician, wounded at the Battle of Ypres, will play an excerpt from a cello concerto by Edward Elgar, a work still in progress, as well as sharing some of his experiences of life on The Western front.

Written by BAFTA-nominated dramatist and librettist Martin Riley. Based on real-life experiences of soldiers from Daventry and Rugby during WW1, it combines the talents of international musician and "virtuoso of the arts" – The Times, Matthew Sharp www.matthewsharp.net - with actors, singers and dancers from local community groups, NMPAT www.nmpat.co.uk, The Grange School, Rugby School, St. Gabriel's Church of England Academy, Lawrence Sheriff School.

"NMPAT Daventry Music Centre are thrilled to be part of this project. We are really excited about the prospect of performing this work at such an important historic time." – Rachel Cliffe, NMPAT.



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Children's WW1 Art Exhibition

The Foundry, Daventry

Open Daily from 9.00am (not Mon)

The Barn, Houlton

Dolman Farm, Houlton, Rugby

Open Daily from 9.00am

(see website for details)

Local school children will have the opportunity to work with professional artist Kate Morris creating 2D paintings inspired by the WW1 artist and soldier Paul Nash. Come and see their work exhibited in Rugby and Daventry this November.

"We feel honoured to be involved in such an important project, helping new generations remember the great sacrifices of our forebears. We believe The Armistice festival is a wonderful opportunity for individual reflection and both personal and collective expression so are delighted our pupils can take part." – Andrew Taylor, Headteacher St. Gabriel's CofE Academy, Houlton

"It is great for Houlton to work in partnership with The Wheels on Debussy on the Armistice Festival this year, engaging the very youngest in our new community through the work of St Gabriel's Academy, as well as offering the rest of Rugby an opportunity to see the exhibition in our community venue, The Barn." - Johanne Thomas, Communities and Partnerships for Houlton developers, Urban & Civic.

WW1 Poetry Performances

Inside The CV22, Rugby

17th November @ 5pm

The Foundry, Daventry, TBC

FREE ENTRY

The Wheels on Debussy is working with Poet Laureate, Brenda Reed Brown in local secondary schools to inspire young people with WW1 poetry by local Rugby poet and WW1 soldier, Rupert Brooke. A series of poetry performances will take place in Rugby and Daventry.



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A Soldier's Tale - WW1 Concert

Inside The CV22, Rugby

Friday 16th November @ 7.30pm

Tickets: www.eventbrite.co.uk, £10

An evening of the most intimate, desperate and uplifting music to be created in and about The Great War. Elgar, Stravinsky, Ravel, Jake Thackray, Irving Berlin and more, reveal how music railed against, soothed and overcame this seismic event. Brought to you by four of the UK's most compelling and creative musicians in collaboration with The Harborough Collective www.harboroughconcerts.co.uk.

The programme also includes music by up and coming composer Kirsty Devaney, www.kirstydevaney.com, founder of The Young Composers Project and students from Lawrence Sheriff School.

Matthew Sharp – Cello and Voice

Dave LePage – Violin

Jack McNeill – Clarinet

Eleanor Turner – Harp

"The area's most interesting and adventurous musical enterprises lead by the UK's most sought-after violinist Dave Le Page. Thrilling performances; Ingenious Programme" – Leicester Mercury on The Harborough Collective.

"Wonderfully gurgly, beautifully scored for gestural strings and buzzing harpsichord, three-minute "short", Submerge by Birmingham Conservatoire student Kirsty Devaney – Birmingham Post



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