

Leading figures from the arts including Lord Lloyd Webber and Zoë Wanamaker urge families to take part in the first ever UK-wide Family Arts Festival, launching today.

- Over 800 organisations will host over 1,600 events as part of the festival, keeping families entertained during the autumn half-term break.
- Musical theatre impresario **Lord Lloyd Webber** joins actress **Zoë Wanamaker**, Culture Minister **Ed Vaizey** and others in urging families across the UK to take part in an event near them.

Family Arts Festival, 18th Oct – 3rd Nov, UK wide, www.familyartsfestival.com.

The first ever UK-wide **Family Arts Festival** launched today, 18th October 2013, with leading figures from the arts including **Lord Lloyd Webber** and **Zoë Wanamaker** announcing their support for the festival and urging families across the UK to take part. The festival runs until 3rd November 2013 and, with over 1,600 events hosted by over 800 organisations, provides a wealth of options to keep the family entertained and active over the autumn half-term break.

There's life drawing with sheep at the Royal Academy, London, and theatre for babies at Birmingham Rep. In Newcastle, families can learn trapeze skills from the experts at Dance City, or get dressed up in their spookiest attire for Halloween pumpkin carving at BALTIC. Family friendly stand-up will keep smiles on faces in Oxford, whilst aspiring dancers can bust out their moves in an array of dance workshops across the UK.

Those that fancy testing their lyrical skills should head down to the hip hop rap workshop in Louth. Others can take the opportunity to find out untold stories from their parents, grandparents and other family members to contribute to the *Growing Exhibition* at the Natural World Centre in Wisby. Over 25% of the festival's events are free, with many more events less than £10, and lots of special offers, including reduced-price and family tickets.

NI Opera will present an operatic version of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in Derry / Londonderry, Northern Ireland, whilst in Cardiff, Wales families can head to *Out of The Shadow*, a dance and acrobatic extravaganza. West End favourite *Stomp* will take the stage in Cornwall, and Inverness, Scotland will host the world premiere of *Dragon*, a Scottish / Chinese theatrical co-production.

Musical theatre impresario **Lord Lloyd Webber** said:

"The Family Arts Festival is a wonderful new initiative to encourage more families to sample the huge variety of arts activities on offer all over the UK. Going to the theatre, concert hall or gallery is a really rewarding way to spend time together as a family. Many things in the festival are completely free, so this is a great opportunity for families to go out and try something new."

Actress of stage and screen **Zoë Wanamaker CBE** said:

"I am delighted to be supporting the Family Arts Festival, it has such a wonderful range of ways for families to see and do exciting things together. Coming from a family where both my parents were actors, I know what fun and enrichment it brought to me when growing up, and now that I have a family of my own, I realise just how important it is to spend time doing things with all the family together."

Culture Minister **Ed Vaizey** also praised the festival, commenting:

"With over 1,600 events set to entertain families across the UK, the Family Arts Festival will truly have something for everyone. The UK's cultural offerings are world renowned, and the festival is a brilliant way to get young children and families engaging with theatre, dance, comedy, painting and all the other aspects of the arts that are out there."

[Click here to download images for the Family Arts Festival.] There are images from an event this morning to mark the festival's launch at The Lowry, Manchester in partnership with Manchester United, where *The Matchday Kiosk*, an installation artwork that will be created by families during the Family Arts Festival, was unveiled. There is also a wide selection of images from events within the festival's programme.

Much-loved illustrator **Posy Simmonds** also gave her support for the festival, saying:

"The Family Arts Festival is a great family occasion. All ages can enjoy sharing ideas and creative skills – drawing, making things, performing together and, maybe, surprising each other too."

Simmonds is also a Patron of The Big Draw, which is presenting hundreds of events across the UK for the festival.

Actress and TV presenter **Carrie Burnell**, as seen on **Cbeebies**, who is hosting a story-telling event in Manchester for the festival, added:

"I'm excited to be involved in such a fantastic festival, one that is unique in its family friendly focus, and ambitious in its scope and breadth. The arts can be inspiring at any age and area wonderful thing to share together. I hope that the Family Arts Festival will encourage families of all types to get together and take part in the wealth of events on offer."

The Family Arts Festival is part of a wider programme, the Family Arts Campaign, which is working to ensure there are more opportunities for families to engage with the arts and to help arts organisations attract more and a wider range of families. Two further main strands of the Campaign are the Family Arts Festival Awards, which will recognise organisations that have produced exceptional family experiences during the festival, and the Family Arts Standards, which, produced in collaboration with the Family and Childcare Trust, have developed a common, recognisable standard for organisations in delivering family friendly programming.

Kathryn McDowell CBE, Family Arts Campaign Chair and Managing Director of the London Symphony Orchestra, said:

"It is so important for families to spend quality time together away from the chores and routines of everyday life. The Family Arts Festival provides a fantastic opportunity for all families to get together, finding and sharing interests, creating lasting memories and building stronger relationships with each other along the way."

Althea Efunshile, Deputy Chief Executive, Arts Council England commented:

"We recognise and champion the enormous value of beginning to engage with the arts from a young age; children are our artists and audiences of the future. Part of that value is the fun of spending time with family, leaning new things about ourselves and each other, and building a stronger sense of community. The Family Arts Festival is something special: it epitomises many of our hopes and goals in our work at Arts Council England, and above all, will give enormous shared pleasure to both grown-ups and children and bring generations together."

David Brownlee, Family Arts Campaign Director, said:

"As a single dad, when my daughter was growing up we had some of my most memorable times together at arts events. Many arts organisations were wonderfully welcoming, but some didn't take the simple steps that would have greatly improved our visit and let us know clearly what events were appropriate. Our research shows these are still issues in 2013, but I hope this Festival and the Campaign more broadly will help all arts organisations focus on giving more families great experiences."

The Family Arts Campaign and Family Arts Festival are initiatives of The Association of British Orchestras, The Theatrical Management Association, The Society of London Theatre, The Independent Theatre Council, The Visual Arts & Galleries Association and Dance UK, supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Visit www.familyartsfestival.com for full details of all confirmed events.



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Notes to Editors

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The Family Arts Campaign

The Family Arts Campaign aims to support organisations in providing high-quality family events. It has been devised in consultation with over 1,000 arts professionals and 2,000 families. It is an initiative of The Association of British Orchestras, The Theatrical Management Association, The Society of London Theatre, The Independent Theatre Council, The Visual Arts & Galleries Association and Dance UK, and is funded by Arts Council England.

www.familyarts.co.uk

Family Arts Standards

The Family Arts Standards are designed to help families know what they should expect from an arts organisation that displays the Family Arts Standards logo. They cover the basic considerations for families, whether it's going to an art gallery, a play, a dance performance or anything else. We ask that across their work, organisations try to appeal to a wide range of family audiences. Not every show or activity held by the Standard Holder will be suitable for families, but organisations that sign up to the Family Arts Standards should provide clear information to enable audiences to decide what is/isn't suitable for families with children and young people of different ages. The standards have been developed to be tested during the 2013 Family Arts Festival.

www.familyartsstandards.com

The Campaign for Drawing and The Big Draw

The Campaign for Drawing aims to get everyone drawing. It promotes drawing as a powerful tool for thinking, creating and communicating. The Campaign's annual flagship, The Big Draw, proves that drawing can be a public activity as well as a private passion. Every year, The Big Draw season includes hundreds of drawing activities in schools, museums, galleries and heritage sites UK-wide, and now in 20 other countries. Launched in 2000, The Big Draw has encouraged an estimated million people back to the drawing board.

The original inspiration came from visionary Victorian artist and writer John Ruskin, whose mission was to teach people to see through drawing. The Campaign shows how drawing can support learning, and connect generations and cultures. 2013 is the first year of a two-year partnership between The Big Draw and the Family Arts Festival.

www.campaignfordrawing.org

Mumsnet and Mumsnet Academy

Mumsnet, the UK's biggest website for parents is the digital partner of the Family Arts Festival. Mumsnet is the UK's largest network for parents, with over 50 million page views and over 9 million visits per month. It has 200 local sites, as well as a network of over 3,300 bloggers. It regularly campaigns on issues such as support for families of children with Special Educational Needs, improvements in miscarriage care and freedom of speech on the Internet.

Mumsnet Academy was established in May 2012 to bring together Mumsnet users offline by offering a series of thought-provoking masterclasses, workshops, courses and events. Users were asked what they wanted from the courses, and the programme is a reflection of their responses - creative writing, history and scholarship, entrepreneurship and social media to name a few. The courses have been run by some of the biggest names in the business including: Kate Mosse, David Nicholls, Mary Beard, Lynne Franks, and Alain de Botton. The Mumsnet Academy is now offering online courses too, including on Starting Your Own Business and Photography.

www.mumsnet.com

Ends