

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New site-specific performance to mark the 70th anniversary of Malcolm Lowry's 'Under the Volcano'.

Reconnecting Malcolm Lowry to his New Brighton birthplace, each side of the Mersey will play host to a new commission marking the seventieth anniversary of his seminal novel, and the sixtieth anniversary of his death.

The performance *The Lighthouse Invites the Storm* will encompass live music, film, spoken word and songs. Drawing on the stories of merchant seamen, Lowry's sea-voyages, his journeys through the Liverpool night and the rise and fall of Mersey tides, this experimental cross art form composition will be performed at Mariners' Park Care Home in New Brighton and the Bluecoat over two nights alongside an exciting programme of events.

Commissioned by the Bluecoat and Liverpool John Moores University, artist Alan Dunn, composer Martin Heslop and writer Jeff Young have been working with retired seafarers at Mariners' Park over the past six months, uncovering hidden stories and adventures which have inspired the work. Alan Dunn: "We wanted to better understand what it was like to leave Liverpool by sea at a young age. We spent time with former merchant seamen at Mariners' Park, a retirement facility overlooking the Mersey for those with at least twenty years at sea. We met men who had set sail at the age of 14 or 15 and made their own leaps into the void. We were interested in how their memories were as hyper-real as Lowry's writing, with very specific details of particular bars or ports and of how everyday life passed them by in a sense. They were at sea when man landed on the moon or cultural revolutions occurred and they relied on each port or the BBC World Service to catch up with land-based life. We would sit and listen to adventures and fantastic tales, of how there are fewer than 10,000 Brits working at sea now rather than nearly 100,000, of how they view our planet and their take on class, tolerance, pirates, language, war, graft and coming of age."

Dunn, Heslop and Young will be joined by Liverpool's musical maverick Jack Roberts, multi-instrumentalist Vidar Norheim and singer-songwriter Mersey Wylie to perform a suite of musical stormscaapes and lyrical poems. This will also include projections including some unseen Super 8 footage taken by one of the seafarers around Vietnam in the late 1960s.

See and hear the Wirral with Lowryesque eyes and ears through the full programme of events detailed below including artworks inspired by his radical modernist style, a chance to meet

retired seafarers in New Brighton, specially commissioned artwork in Lime Street Station and a two-day international conference exploring the legacy of Lowry's work international conference.

BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Alan Dunn studied at Glasgow School of Art and The Art Institute of Chicago. He was curator of *The Bellgrove Station Billboard Project* (Glasgow 1990-91), lead artist on the *tenantspin* project (FACT, Liverpool 2001-7) and between 2008-14 completed a PhD on sound art based on the 10xCD opus *The sounds of ideas forming*, featured in the 2012 Liverpool Art Prize exhibition. Through these projects Dunn has developed collaborative content with Bill Drummond, Douglas Gordon, Chris Watson, Yoko Ono, Philip Jeck, Pauline Oliveros and Brian Eno. He currently lives and works in Liverpool and is a Senior Lecturer at Leeds Beckett University where he co-runs the MA Art & Design course. Dunn is the joint Arts Editor of the online journal *Stimulus Respond*, a co-founder of Alternator Studio in Birkenhead and is on the Board of East Street Arts. He is currently part of the advisory team at the National Science & Media Museum, Bradford.

Jeff Young has spent 30 years writing for theatre, radio, TV, film, spoken word and in collaborative mediums. He has made theatre in derelict houses, industrial ruins, landing stages, a power station and a submarine dock. His sound art and installation work – much of it collaboration with Alan Dunn and Martin Heslop – has been exhibited and broadcast worldwide. His most recent projects are 'Bright Phoenix' for Liverpool Everyman; 'Invisible Trains' for Immix Ensemble/ METAL Edge Hill, 'The Ballad of Ray and Julie', and 'A552 Hex', a word and sound installation for Frank Cavanagh's Shoe Repairs commissioned by Alternator Studios. Currently Young is researching five Essays for BBC Radio 3. He has collaborated with Kneehigh, Philip Jeck, Pete Townshend, Skyray and many other artists and musicians and he is Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at Liverpool John Moores University.

Martin Heslop is a composer and writer. He has written scores for short and full-length theatre shows and film, poems for publication and performance, short stories, spoken word pieces with music, and music for cross-art form collaborations with poets, playwrights and visual artists. His work for theatre has included text and music for Bright Phoenix (Liverpool Everyman), Narvik (Box of Tricks, Liverpool Playhouse/national tour), Cartographers (Theatre By The Lake, Keswick), Stories in the Walls (UnConvention Tyneside). He has also written for site-specific shows in places such as a 13th Century tower in Newcastle's city walls, Metal at Edge Hill Station, Chester Castle and St Georges Hall. He composed the soundtrack to Spider-Web City, a short film which premiered at Uncharted Festival, Albania.

Info on Malcolm Lowry

Arguably the Wirral's most significant writer is overlooked. To address this, the artists are delivering an ambitious programme that increases awareness of Malcolm Lowry's work and to reconnect him to his New Brighton birthplace in an innovative way that engages local people. His 'Under the Volcano' (1947), listed in The Guardian's Top 100 Novels, is heavily influenced by his Wirral upbringing and described by Anthony Burgess as "a Faustian masterpiece."

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