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Manchester Literature Festival 2026 announces five headline events for October 2026

- **Russell T Davies**
- **Elif Shafak**
- **Sarah Hall: The Faber Lecture 2026**
- **Patrick Radden Keefe**
- **Emily St. John Mandel**

Manchester Literature Festival is delighted to announce five new events, which are now on sale before the main Festival programme is announced in August.

Russell T Davies & Bernadine Evaristo

Sunday 11 October, 7.30pm, Royal Northern College of Music

An evening with one of Britain's most influential television writers as Russell T Davies joins Bernardine Evaristo to discuss his forthcoming memoir and how his extraordinary work has transformed the landscape of modern television.

Passionate, outspoken and deeply entertaining, Russell has spent the last four decades creating brilliant and transgressive television from *Queer as Folk*, *It's a Sin* and *Years and Years* to the triumphant return of *Doctor Who*. In *The Queerest of Folk*, he shares hilarious stories, hard-won insights and revelatory behind-the-scenes moments in his career. A special celebration of storytelling, creativity and the power of television to bring our nation together.

Russell T Davies is the award-winning creator of some of Britain's most groundbreaking dramas including *Queer As Folk*, *Bob & Rose*, *Cucumber*, *The Second Coming*, and in 2018, *A Very English Scandal* for BBC One. His latest drama is the acclaimed thriller *Tip Toe*. Bernardine Evaristo is the author of ten books including *Girl*, *Woman*, *Other*, which won the 2019 Booker Prize, and *Manifesto: On Never Giving Up*. Her novel *Mr Loverman* was adapted into a BBC One television series by Nathaniel Price.

Sarah Hall: Burning Snowflake
The Faber Lecture 2026
Saturday 10 October, 6pm, Manchester Museum

Award-winning author Sarah Hall delivers the 2026 Faber Lecture: *Burning Snowflake* in the atmospheric Manchester Museum.

The natural world is burning. Time is running out. You know the story. So, what possible role could something as flimsy as fiction play? From the pioneering pen of a continually visionary writer, *Burning Snowflake* is a fierce and rallying cry – to shrug off restrictions and imagine radically. It's also a clarion call to other writers, artists and readers for the literary imagination as a vital weapon in the fight for climate survival.

Cumbrian-born Sarah Hall is the award-winning author of seven novels and three short-story collections. Her 2025 novel *Helm* was selected as a Book of the Year by The Observer, New Statesman, Financial Times and BBC.

Presented in partnership with Faber Members, Centre for New Writing, Creative Manchester and Manchester Museum.

Emily St John Mandel
Saturday 10 October, 7pm, Central Library, Manchester

Bestselling Canadian author Emily St. John Mandel discusses her electrifying new novel *Exit Party*, exploring parallel worlds, political unrest and blurred realities.

In a near-future Los Angeles emerging from conflict, Ari Walker and her friend Gloria are going to a party. But the party becomes the site of something inexplicable, drawing Ari into a mystery that will haunt her across decades and continents. Elegant, suspenseful and emotionally charged, *Exit Party* explores memory, freedom, art and the fragile boundaries between realities.

Emily St. John Mandel is the internationally acclaimed author of seven novels, including *The Glass Hotel*, *Sea of Tranquillity* and *Station Eleven*, winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award and adapted into a celebrated television series on HBO Max.

Patrick Radden Keefe
Monday 12 October, 7.30pm, Martin Harris Centre

A gripping evening with Patrick Radden Keefe, bestselling author of *Empire of Pain* and *Say Nothing*. Patrick joins us to discuss his new work *London Falling*, a riveting true story of secrets and lies, wealth and the dark currents running beneath modern London. When teenager Zac Brettler dies after falling from a luxury riverside apartment, his parents uncover a shocking secret life connected to the world of Russian oligarchs and hidden influence.

One of the most acclaimed narrative non-fiction authors working today, Patrick Radden Keefe is a staff writer at *The New Yorker* and an award-winning author of bestsellers *Empire of Pain: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty* (winner of the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction) and *Rogues: True Stories of Grifters, Killers, Rebels and Crooks*.

Presented in partnership with the Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

An Afternoon with Elif Shafak

Sunday 25 October, 3pm, Royal Northern College of Music

Internationally acclaimed novelist Elif Shafak returns to celebrate her extraordinary new novel, *In One Brief Moment All Eternity*. Spanning decades and continents, from revolutionary 19th-century France to Istanbul, Egypt and Beirut, this luminous and deeply moving story explores creativity and resistance in times of political upheaval and war. Reimagining the life of Gustave Flaubert through the real and fictional women who shaped him, Elif Shafak builds a fascinating bridge between Western prose and Eastern poetry and offers a powerful meditation on literature's enduring role in a fractured world.

Elif Shafak is a multi-award-winning British-Turkish novelist and storyteller. She has published 21 books, translated into almost 60 languages, including *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* and *The Island of Missing Trees*. A President of the Royal Society of Literature, she has twice been shortlisted for the Booker Prize and is a strong advocate for women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights and freedom of expression.

Presented in partnership with the Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

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Two pre-festival taster events taking place in the run up to the festival are also on sale now.

Mieko Kawakami, Tuesday 25 August 2026, 7pm, Central Library

One of Japan's most celebrated young novelists, the Booker-shortlisted author of *Heaven* and *Breasts and Eggs*, Mieko Kawakami makes a rare visit to the UK to launch *Sisters in Yellow*, a gripping, stylish noir set in Tokyo's shadowy underbelly.

Marina Hyde, Monday 28 September 2026, RNCM

Co-host of *The Rest is Entertainment* podcast, Marina Hyde is one of Britain's most popular columnists and broadcasters. In her new book, *What a Time To Be Alive!*, she chronicles the strange times we're living in, from Westminster to Silicon Valley, from the Trump presidency to the antics of Nigel Farage, Jeff Bezos and the Beckhams.

Last year's festival attracted more visitors than ever and 2026 already looks set to be another exciting year.

Manchester Literature Festival 2026 will run from 9 – 25 October 2026. The full programme will be announced on 11 August with tickets on general sale from 13 August.

Ends

For press enquiries and review tickets please contact:

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<https://www.manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk/all-events>

Join the conversation: #MLF2026 @McrLitFest

Tickets for the five festival events are on sale on Wednesday 17 June

To buy an MLF Get Closer Membership and book advance tickets visit:

<https://www.quaytickets.com/mlf/screenloader.aspx?page=usercontent/html/manchesterliteraturefestival/memberships.html&type=include>

Listings information

Russell T Davies & Bernadine Evaristo

Sunday 11 October, 7.30pm, Royal Northern College of Music

Tickets: £22 standard ticket / £40 ticket & copy of *The Queerest of Folk* (RRP £25)

[An Evening With Russell T Davies Bernardine Evaristo | Manchester Literature Festival](#)

Sarah Hall: Burning Snowflake

The Faber Lecture 2026

Saturday 10 October, 6pm, Manchester Museum

Tickets: £10

[Sarah Hall Burning Snowflake | Manchester Literature Festival](#)

Emily St John Mandel

Saturday 10 October, 7pm, Central Library, Manchester

Tickets: £12 / £10

[Emily St John Mandel | Manchester Literature Festival](#)

Patrick Radden Keefe

Monday 12 October, 7.30pm, Martin Harris Centre

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[An Evening With Patrick Radden Keefe | Manchester Literature Festival](#)

An Afternoon with Elif Shafak

Sunday 25 October, 3pm, Royal Northern College of Music

Tickets: £22 standard ticket / £37 for ticket and a copy of *In One Brief Moment All Eternity* (RRP £20)

[An Afternoon With Elif Shafak | Manchester Literature Festival](#)

Mieko Kawakami

Tuesday 25 August 2026, 7pm, Central Library

Tickets £12 /£10

[Mieko Kawakami | Manchester Literature Festival](#)

Marina Hyde

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Tickets £22 / £37 ticket and a copy of *What a Time to Be Alive!* (RRP £20)

[Marina Hyde | Manchester Literature Festival](#)

Notes to editors

In 2025 Manchester Literature Festival celebrated its 20th birthday and as well as attracting writers of the highest calibre, looked back over the past two decades with a photographic exhibition, *From Page to Stage* at Manchester Central Library. Over the years, MLF has featured many of the biggest names in literary fiction and spoken word as well as prominent cultural figures from across the globe, including Monica Ali, Martin Amis, Tori Amos, Raymond Antrobus, Simon Armitage, Kate Atkinson, Margaret Atwood, Malorie Blackman, Malika Booker, Joe Boyd, Jung Chang, Neneh Cherry, Gillian Clark, Susanna Clarke, Kit de Waal, Kwame Dawes, Jeremy Deller, Roddy Doyle, Margaret Drabble, Jennifer Egan, Anne Enright, Bernardine Evaristo, Percival Everett, Guy Garvey, Matt Haig, Paula Hawkins, Natalie Haynes, Seamus Heaney, Mick Heron, Lindsay Hilsum, A.M. Homes, Alan Hollinghurst, Jackie Kay, Rebecca F Kuang, Kazuo Ishiguro, Howard Jacobson, Alan Johnson, Daisy Johnson, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Barbara Kingsolver, Karl Ove Knausgaard, Hanif Kureishi, Deborah Levy, Olivia Laing, Valeria Luiselli, Johnny Marr, Paul Mason, Armistead Maupin, Val McDermid, David Mitchell, Paul Morley, Michael Morpurgo, Walter Mosley, Kate Mosse, Andrew Motion, Sayaka Murata, Jo Nesbo, Maggie O'Farrell, Andrew O'Hagan, Ben Okri, David Olusoga, David Peace, Max Porter, Richard Powers, Ian Rankin, Kamila Shamsie, Will Self, Elif Shafak, Lemn Sissay, Zadie Smith, Meera Sodha, Elizabeth Strout, Douglas Stuart, Kae Tempest, Neil Tennant, Colm Toibín, Rose Tremain, Dame Harriet Walter, Sarah Waters, Colson Whitehead, Jeanette Winterson, Xinran and Asako Yuzuki.

The festival has also welcomed prominent activists, campaigners and disruptors including Led By Donkeys, Mary Portas, Patrisse Cullors (co-founder of Black Lives Matter), Angela Davis, Reni Eddo-Lodge, Edward Enniful, Afua Hirsch, Caroline Criado Perez, Caroline Lucas, George Monbiot, Arundhati Roy, Rebecca Solnit, Gloria Steinem, Senator Bernie Sanders, Yanis Varoufakis and Vivienne Westwood.

Manchester Literature Festival gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our main funders **Arts Council England**, **Manchester City Council** and **the Greater Manchester Combined Authority**, our Higher Education Partner, **The University of Manchester**, and our principal hotel partner **The Edwardian Manchester**.