

PRIMADONNA

**Primadonna 2022: Friday 29 July – Sunday 31 July
at the Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, Suffolk**



What is Primadonna?

Primadonna is a festival of books, ideas and inspiration. We have something for everyone with film, music, comedy, food, drink, DJs and therapies alongside our main programme of talks, interviews and discussions. Our line-up gives prominence to women, people of colour, LGBTQI+ and working class people, and disabled people: everyone is welcome at Primadonna, especially those that might not think an arts festival is 'for them'.

Last year we moved to a new venue, where we welcomed author and presenter Sandi Toksvig, Bridgerton's Adjoa Andoh, Costa-winner Monique Roffey, singer Self Esteem, foodie Grace Dent, author Nikesh Shukla, the BOSH! chefs and filmmaker Adam Curtis.

As well as familiar names, we also give emerging talent a chance to shine. And if you're a writer – or an avid reader – you can rub shoulders with agents, authors and publishers who offer their insights and expertise (for free) to help get you into the book business.

Designed to be affordable, accessible and welcoming to people of all ages, backgrounds, physical abilities and genders, on stage and off, we place a particular premium on building community, creating a haven in which to take time out and engage with big ideas, new voices, old favourites and other people from all backgrounds. That's why we're Suffolk's best festival* or, as we put it: **'the world as it should be, for one weekend'**.

*As voted by the East Anglian Festival Network, 2022

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Venue: Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 1DL
Primadonna Festival CIC is a Community Interest Company (reg no: 12380198)

Impact and scope

The first Primadonna festival saw almost 1,500 attendees take part in three days of programming. Many more followed Primadonna on social media and via our website and newsletter. The festival featured in all the major broadsheets and many magazines; and local press coverage across Suffolk and East Anglia was substantial. With Radio 4 recording 4Thought live at the festival, the broadcast audience was an estimated 1.5million. The feedback we received convinced us of the need for a festival like ours:

'I took part in Primadonna and loved it. It's a wonderfully inclusive festival for women writers, open to everyone, based in a beautiful countryside setting. Very special.'

Bernardine Evaristo, author, and Primadonna speaker 2019

The coronavirus pandemic forced us to cancel our 2020 festival in its physical format, but we programmed a full weekend of content from 31 July – 2 August. We had more than 1,000 unique user visits to the Virtual Primadonna webpage over the course of the festival's weekend. By the close of the weekend we'd amassed more than 1,000 views on YouTube, and 5,000 views on Facebook.

'The mission of the festival is one that is dear to my heart and also crucial for the publishing industry and society at large. Without gender equality in literature so many important stories go untold and so many vital voices go unheard. Primadonna aims to plug this gap whilst also unleashing a powerful wave of untapped female talent in the process.'

June Sarpong, writer, campaigner and broadcaster, and the BBC's first Director of Creative Diversity, and Primadonna speaker 2020

In 2021 we staged our third festival at a new venue, the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket. In spite of the unprecedented challenges we faced in staging a live festival during a pandemic, we hosted more than 1200 people and partnered with a range of local venues and arts organisations to grow our audience and begin the work of embedding the festival in the heart of mid-Suffolk, an area currently under-served by the culture and the arts. A Primadonna themed 4Thought episode featuring one of our speakers, Laura Dockrill, was broadcast 'as live' on BBC Radio 4.

'Thank you very much for inviting me to the glorious festival. I had a wonderful time. You have created something shining like a beacon!'

Michele Roberts, bestselling author and Primadonna speaker 2021

We know we are having an impact: to date, we have launched the professional careers of five writers, created mentoring opportunities for many more, and innovated with new ways of opening up access to publishing and the arts.

We are helping to diversify the literary and publishing establishments, providing a platform for different voices and challenging the structural inequalities in publishing and the arts that prevent BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, working class and disabled writers from

attaining their fair share of exposure. When programming, we commit to a roughly 50/50 split of 'big names' and lesser-known talent. In 2021 we were proud to present a line-up which was mostly female, 45% BIPOC and 19% LGBTQIA+.

We know from the incredible feedback we have now gathered after three successful festivals that there is a real appetite for Primadonna, particularly among aspiring writers. This year, 89% of attendees rated the festival at 7/10 or above, and 97% said they would come again.

We are not resting on our laurels, and have ambitious plans to grow the festival in size and scale. We are focused on diversifying our audience for 2022 and beyond as we continue to increase numbers, and will develop our outreach programme to ensure we reach further into underserved communities and create opportunities for these to feed into the programme and production of the 2022 event. We are proud of the connections we have already developed and are focused on maintaining Primadonna as a world-class literary festival that attracts marquee names, curates relevant and inspiring content, and offers a memorable – even life-changing – experience for those who attend.

Partnership opportunities:

We are keen to work with business and organisations who are aligned with our mission to create arts and culture for all, and who share our values of inclusivity, diversity and equality.

We are open to curating bespoke partnership packages, which can include any / all of the following:

- Branding across the festival site (headline partnership)
- Branding for a festival stage
- Sponsorship of the Primadonna Prize for unsigned writers
- In-person or online 'masterclass' or talk, unique to your organisation, delivered by one of the Primadonnas (Athena Stevens, Catherine Mayer, Catherine Riley, Kit de Waal, Sabeena Akhtar, Shola Mos-Shogbamimu, Sonia Purnell)
- Guests festival passes and a private hospitality area on site
- A stall within the central festival 'marketplace' for promotional activities/performances/readings
- Branding on front page of the festival programme
- Other suitable opportunities that work for your brand, and ours.

For any questions or to request further information please contact the Festival Director.

Catherine Riley, Director, Primadonna Festival CIC

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