



## LIFT MOVES INTO ITS NEXT PHASE AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MARK BALL JOINS MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL AS ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TO LEAD THE ARTISTIC PROGRAMME FOR FACTORY

*'The dizzyingly far reaching LIFT festival has re-established itself as the biennial highlight of the London theatre calendar'* Time Out

*'LIFT is brilliant and essential, I feel like I've travelled the world through these stories, moments and experiences - intimate, moving, mad, and totally unique.'*

LIFT 2016 audience member

LIFT CEO and Artistic Director Mark Ball will become the Associate Artistic Director at Manchester International Festival, focusing on the creation and delivery of the artistic programme for Factory, Manchester's new flagship venue for large-scale performance and different art forms, on the former site of Granada TV Studios. Mark will work closely with Manchester International Festival's Artistic Director/CEO John McGrath to create a unified artistic vision for both the venue and the festival. Mark will start full time at MIF in June.

Mark Ball's departure will open up the position of Artistic Director at LIFT. The next LIFT festival will be in June 2018 and LIFT will begin the recruitment of a new Artistic Director in February this year.

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photos are  
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[www.keanlanyon.smugmug.com](http://www.keanlanyon.smugmug.com)

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Since he joined in 2009, curating the subsequent 4 biennial festivals, Mark has re-established LIFT as one of the world's leading international arts festivals, bringing critically acclaimed and highly innovative artists to the capital to share the stories of the world with Londoners. He has placed collaboration and partnership at the heart of his artistic programme and delivered projects that have fostered links between internationally significant artists from around the world and London's inherently international communities.

Bernard Donoghue, Chair, Board of Directors, LIFT said:

*"Mark Ball has been a dynamic, creative and inspiring CEO and Artistic Director of LIFT and whilst we are delighted for him and his new, exciting role at Factory, we are sorry to see him go. There has never been a more important time to celebrate London's internationalism - the world's place in London and our place in the world - and Mark has been a champion of using theatre to make us think, and feel and act. All of us in the LIFT family thank him for all he has achieved and wish him the very best in his new role. He leaves LIFT as a major force in UK and international theatre, and we look forward to an exciting future in which we continue to bring outstanding theatre to London and the UK."*

Mark has presided over 133 shows and events, including 57 new commissions seen by over 200,000 people in over 50 venues and unusual spaces across London, from the West End to gothic East London cemeteries to car park rooftops and ancient oak trees.

He said: *"I have had the time of my life at LIFT, working to help some of the world's most exceptional artists make passionate, joyful, provocative, life affirming theatre happen right here in London - and all with the support of a wonderful team and a generous, supportive and amazing board. LIFT is an organisation I love dearly and its art, its values and its people I cherish. I will miss it enormously, but after 8 years leave confident that it's in great shape, and I look forward to seeing LIFT evolve under new artistic leadership."*

*Factory provides exhilarating new opportunities and is undoubtedly the most exciting and*

*ambitious new cultural space in the country, committed to a pioneering arts programme. I am thrilled that I'll be working alongside John McGrath and the team at Manchester International Festival (who will operate Factory) to help make more unforgettable and exceptional art for Factory's incredible spaces."*

John McGrath, Artistic Director and CEO of MIF said:

*'I have been a huge admirer of Mark's vision as a producer and programmer since his early days at Fierce Festival, and it has been inspiring to see his extraordinary achievements at LIFT. I can't imagine a better person to join MIF at this key moment in its history, and to ensure an inspiring, international programme of work at Factory.'*

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Photos can be downloaded from [keanlanyon.smugmug.com/LIFT/LIFT2016](http://keanlanyon.smugmug.com/LIFT/LIFT2016)

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Notes

### **About LIFT**

LIFT travels the world to bring global stories to London, bringing spectacular performances and moments of magic to every corner of the capital. For over 35 years LIFT has presented shows in partnership with London's major arts venues, theatres and galleries, but also in countless hidden spaces and places across the city. It works with world-class artists, whose radical imaginations create exceptional work that questions the nature of theatre, engages with the big ideas of our time, and reveals the stories and communities of our incredibly diverse Capital. The next LIFT is in June 2018.

### **About MIF and Factory**

Manchester International Festival (MIF) is the world's first festival of original, new work and special events. The Festival is staged every two years in Manchester, UK – the next edition will take place from 29 June to 16 July 2017. MIF brings together artists from different art forms and backgrounds to create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work, staged in venues across Greater Manchester. It works closely with festivals, other cultural organisations round the world and communities around Manchester including My Festival, a diverse network of creative people who are forging closer connections with MIF – taking part in public projects, connecting MIF to their communities, and joining a new programme of training activities, workshops and other special events.

Factory will be run by Manchester International Festival (MIF) who will also continue to deliver the festival every two years. The new venue will offer audiences the opportunity to enjoy year round, in a new world-class facility, the broadest range of art forms and cultural experiences - including dance, theatre, music, opera, visual arts, spoken word, popular culture and innovative contemporary work incorporating multiple media and technologies. Artists from across the world will be invited to create new work in the building's extraordinary spaces.