



PRESS RELEASE

14 September 2020

Unsung Heroes

Queen's Hall Arts have commissioned international multimedia artists Davy & Kristin McGuire and North East musician Bridie Jackson to create *Unsung Heroes* - a brand new augmented reality gig co-created with the local community.

Songwriter Bridie Jackson will work with communities in and around Hexham to collect stories about the everyday people who have inspired them. Whether it's the neighbour who brought their shopping during lockdown, someone who has made a difference in their village or a figure from local history who did something incredible but never got the recognition they deserve, Bridie will create songs celebrating these unsung heroes to be performed by North East musicians.

Audiences will then be able to experience a 'mini gig' wherever they are simply by pointing their camera phone at a postcard which will make the musicians pop up to perform the songs on a 'postcard stage'.

The McGuires said, *"In this time of isolation where people can't go to gigs, we thought it would be a good idea to transport the gigs to the people. Tabletop Rock will be an augmented reality app where musicians will be shrunk down to the size of a coffee cup and perform to people directly from their kitchen table. We are really excited to be working with Bridie and Queen's Hall Arts on this first of a kind project."*

Davy & Kristin McGuire's work combines mesmerising theatricality with technical wizardry and exquisite craftsmanship. Renowned for their digital projection and storytelling, combining physical installations and virtual experiences, the McGuires create delicate and exquisitely crafted worlds full of visual wonders. Crossing genres of theatre, film, live performance and installations they have been commissioned by organisations such as The Royal Shakespeare Company, Hull UK City of Culture and Museums at Night, and the couple's work includes the world's first projection mapped pop-up book *The Icebook*. Their renowned projection mapping installations have been exhibited, sold, published and screened internationally and their critically acclaimed theatrical projects have been invited to tour to more than 60 different countries. For *Unsung Heroes*, the McGuires will combine augmented reality technology with original music composition to create an immersive multimedia experience that can be accessed anywhere.

Bridie Jackson is a musician based in North East England, well known within the region and beyond for her work as a song writer and performer. As a songwriter, Bridie's expertise is in socially engaged projects, and she enjoys working collaboratively on community focused projects, having written for a range of organisations including Streetwise Opera, Curious Monkey Theatre Company, Sage Gateshead and Summer Streets Festival.

Bridie said, *“I think the concept behind *Unsung* is particularly resonant right now. At this moment in time, I feel we are viewing the notion of heroes through a much wider lens, and rightfully wondering how we can honour those who perhaps have not always had the recognition they deserve in our society. Folk songs have always been a fantastic medium for revealing untold stories and sharing different lived experiences in a way that’s relatable. I feel very honoured to have been trusted with this project, and telling other people’s stories through songs in an authentic and sensitive way is not something I’m entering into lightly.”*

Unsung Heroes is part of Here and Now, a national and local celebration of culture within communities. 40 brand new projects will take place in and around 40 arts centres across the country, led by artists and co-created with local people. The project is supported by Arts Council England and Future Arts Centres, marking The National Lottery’s 25th birthday.

As well as a smartphone app, there will also be an interactive exhibition at the Queen’s Hall in Hexham and *Unsung Heroes* will tour in early 2021. Details will be announced later in the year.

For more information or to nominate your *Unsung Hero*, go to www.queenshall.co.uk/events/unsung-heroes

ENDS

Contact

For more information or interviews please contact [Helen Fussell](mailto:Helen.Fussell@queenshall.co.uk) / 07801 369 778
Images are available [here](#)

Queen’s Hall Arts Centre, Beaumont Street, Hexham, NE46 3LS
E: boxoffice@queenshall.co.uk
Online booking at www.queenshall.co.uk

Notes to Editors

Davy & Kristin McGuire are British multidisciplinary artists, renowned for their idiosyncratic experiments in digital projection and storytelling, combining physical installations and virtual experiences they create delicate and exquisitely crafted worlds full of visual wonders. Their projection mapping installations have been exhibited, sold, published and screened internationally, and their critically acclaimed theatrical projects have been invited to tour to more than 100 venues in 23 different countries over 4 continents. Drawing on Davy’s background in theatre and Kristin’s training as a dancer, the couple have an eclectic, award winning portfolio.

“What follows makes the jaw drop and the head whirl.” The Times

“Magical and exquisitely crafted, Davy and Kristin McGuire’s universe is full of visual wonders.”
The Guardian

Impeccably crafted and expertly executed, the couple’s work has included the world’s first projection mapped pop-up book *The Icebook*; an atmospheric stage adaptation of popular fantasy novel, *Howl’s Moving Castle*; and *The Paper Architect* which won the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award 2013 and received the Helpmann Award for Best Visual Theatre Production after touring Australia in 2015.

Crossing genres of theatre, film, live performance and installations the McGuires have been commissioned by organisations such as The Royal Shakespeare Company, Hull UK City of Culture 2017, Canal+, Museums at Night, the Swedish Museum of Performing Arts and the Projection Mapping Association of Japan.

Their commercial installations include Floating City for Barneys' Madison Avenue Christmas windows; Alchimie de Courvoisier, an animated diorama displayed at Harrods; and an installation for Mikimoto in Tokyo which won the Japan Space Design Association Award and the Ginza Association Division Excellence Award. The couple has also created commercial films for ELLE China and Courvoisier, and music videos for international music labels such as Polydor and Epitaph Records. Based in Hull, Davy and Kristin export their work all over the world. Their video sculptures are regularly for sale at international art fairs and exhibitions through Woolff Gallery London, Wanrooij Gallery Amsterdam and Muriel Guepin Gallery New York. www.studiomcguire.com

Bridie Jackson is a musician based in North East England, well known within the region and beyond for her work as a song writer and performer. For many years, Bridie toured with and wrote for Bridie Jackson and The Arbour, a multiple award winning folk band, who gained national recognition when they were chosen from 8,000 other bands across the country to win the Glastonbury Emerging Talent Contest.

"The remarkable voice of Bridie Jackson is beautiful yet haunting..." The Guardian, Emily Brinnand

As a songwriter, Bridie's expertise is now in socially engaged projects, and she enjoys working collaboratively on community focused projects, having written for a range of organisations, including Streetwise Opera, Curious Monkey Theatre Company, Sage Gateshead and Summer Streets Festival. *"Bridie Jackson is one of the most exciting young composers working in Britain today. It was a privilege to work with her."* Matt Peacock, CEO of Streetwise Opera Company www.bridiejackson.com

Queen's Hall Arts (QHA) is a registered charity and multipurpose arts centre based in the heart of Hexham. We develop and deliver a vibrant arts programme offering a wide range of shows, exhibitions, concerts and special events, support professional and aspiring artists, provide opportunities for our community to take part in the arts and offer a valuable creative resource to our local area. Through the arts we make life better, having positive impacts on our community and the individuals who live and work within it. Queen's Hall Arts (QHA) is the company that manages the Queen's Hall Arts Centre venue within the Queen's Hall, Hexham. The Queen's Hall building is a magnificent early Victorian building which faces Hexham Abbey (dating from 647AD). From its christening as an arts centre in 1983 until the hand over to the charitable organisation, Queens Hall Arts, in 2001 the building was under local authority control. Queen's Hall Arts Centre boasts a 350-seat theatre and two galleries managed by Queen's Hall Arts. Queen's Hall has established itself as a strong base for an extensive range of artistic activity, attracting the best international and national artists from music, drama, dance and national touring comedy to non professional shows put on by local community groups. In addition to activity in the building, QHA delivers an extensive outreach programme bringing workshops and performances to communities throughout Northumberland. www.queenshall.co.uk