



BAFTA-winning Sir Tom Courtenay returns to Hull
with lauded one-man-show

Larkin Revisited

Sir Tom Courtenay

Saturday 19th June, 7pm

Middleton Hall, University of Hull

Larkin25 is delighted to bring to Hull Larkin Revisited, an exclusive revisited version of Tom Courtenay's acclaimed *Pretending to be Me*. The original play was a moving, acerbic and highly personal portrait of Philip Larkin, based on his letters and poems. It was premiered to great acclaim at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in 2002 before transferring to the Comedy Theatre in the West End.

Based on a day in Larkin's life, the action takes place in one room with the poet playing his favourite jazz LPs and making himself tea whilst wryly reflecting on his life and work.

Devised and performed by Hull born Sir Tom Courtenay, the revisited version will offer new insights and retain the original's ability to capture the humour, pathos and wit of what it was to be Larkin. This performance promises to be a special experience.

All proceeds of the ticket sales will be donated to the Philip Larkin Statue Appeal.

Praise for *Pretending to be Me*:

'Shrewd, unpredictable and funny' - *Observer*

'A rare, rich pleasure' - *Daily Telegraph*

'Courtenay is simply masterful' - *Sunday Times*

'A performance to treasure - a tour de force' - *Mail on Sunday*

'One of the funniest things I've ever seen - terrific' - *The Times*

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NOTES TO EDITORS

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

For further information please contact Jessica Gulliver or Julia Walker at Midas Public Relations on 020 7361 7860/jessica.gulliver@midaspr.co.uk or julia.walker@midaspr.co.uk

PHILIP LARKIN STATUE

Three sculptors were shortlisted for the brief – Graham Ibbeson, Martin Jennings and Jemma Pearson – with each asked to present their ideas and maquette to an invited audience in Hull's Royal Hotel.

All of the submitted sculptures were marked in four key criteria: artistic quality, likeness to Larkin (including capturing of spirit), uniqueness and the fit with the location. Each sculptor was also interviewed. The Commissioning Group reassembled in late February to consider all the evidence and along with the Philip Larkin Society's Chairman Professor Eddie Dawes, decided to award the commission to Martin Jennings, who has already created the much-loved statue of Sir John Betjeman which is situated in St Pancras Station, London.

Details of the Philip Larkin Statue Appeal Fund can be found at www.justgiving.com/philiplarkinstatue

HULL

The 10th largest city in England, Hull is one of 14 UK cities vying to become the first 'UK City of Culture' in 2013. In addition to Philip Larkin, the city has long had a dramatic influence on artists, writers and poets. The former Poet Laureate Andrew Motion was a lecturer at the University of Hull, and other poets with strong connections with the city include Stevie Smith, Roger McGough, Douglas Dunn and Sean O'Brien. John Godber's plays are regularly performed at the Hull Truck Theatre, and Alan Ayckbourn centres his activities at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough, where the University has its second campus. Further back in history, the political satirist and most polished of seventeenth-century poets, Andrew Marvell, was MP for Hull, while the novelist Winifred Holtby based the bustling, corrupt city of 'Kingsport' in her novel *South Riding* (1936) on the Hull of her day. Hull was also home to William Wilberforce, the British politician and philanthropist who led the movement to abolish the slave trade.

THE PHILIP LARKIN SOCIETY

The Philip Larkin Society was founded in 1995 on the 10th anniversary of the poet's death. It has charitable status and aims to promote public knowledge and appreciation of the works of Larkin and his contemporaries. Its President is Anthony Thwaite, and its Vice-Presidents include Melvyn Bragg, Douglas Dunn, Seamus Heaney, Andrew Motion, Alan Plater and Tom Stoppard. Its Committee which is chaired by Professor Eddie Dawes includes Jean Hartley (co-publisher of *The Less Deceived* in 1955) and Professor James Booth (author of several seminal works on Larkin's poetry).

The Philip Larkin Society has taken the initiative in launching the idea of commemorating the 25th anniversary of Larkin's death. It has entered into a partnership with the University of Hull, Hull City Council and Visit Hull and East Yorkshire to mark this significant anniversary in a way that celebrates the artistic and professional achievements of Larkin and makes a national and international impact.

The Philip Larkin Society will lead on the erection of a Larkin statue on Hull Paragon Station. It has already been instrumental in securing the production of a boxed CD set of Larkin's *Jazz* to be released by Proper Records in 2010, and is supporting the publication of a new anthology of Hull-connected poets. The expertise of its members will inform many of the other events in the Larkin25 programme, particularly the exhibitions. Learn more about the Philip Larkin Society on its website: www.philiplarkin.com

PHILIP LARKIN

Philip Arthur Larkin, CH, CBE, FRSL 1922 – 1985 was a poet, novelist and jazz critic first coming to prominence in 1955 with the publication of his second volume of poems, *The Less Deceived*, which was followed by *The Whitsun Weddings* in 1964 and *High Windows* in 1974. He was offered but declined the Poet Laureateship following the death of John Betjeman in 1984.

Larkin was born in the city of Coventry. From 1930 to 1940 he was educated at the King Henry VIII School in Coventry from which he went up to St John's College, Oxford to read English Language and Literature. While

at Oxford he met Kingsley Amis, who became a lifelong friend and frequent correspondent. Shortly after graduating from Oxford, Larkin was appointed municipal librarian at Wellington, Shropshire. In 1946 he became assistant librarian at University College, Leicester and, in 1950, sub-librarian at Queen's University, Belfast. By this time he had published two novels and his first collection of poetry. In March 1955, Larkin was appointed librarian at the University of Hull, a position he retained until his death.

During the thirty years he spent in Hull, Larkin produced a significant body of poetry. He never married; his companion and confidante of over thirty years was Monica Jones whose letters from Larkin are to be published in 2010 in a volume edited by Anthony Thwaite.

A significant collection of papers and other archive material relating to Philip Larkin is now held by the £10.3m Hull History Centre - the new home for Hull City Archives, Hull Local Studies Library and Hull University Archives. The centre is working with other Larkin25 partners to curate a major exhibition based on the archives.

For a select bibliography of Larkin's work please visit: www.larkin25.co.uk/philiplarkin.htm

LARKIN 25

Larkin25 is a celebration of the life and work of the poet, novelist, librarian and jazz critic Philip Larkin, marking the 25th anniversary of his death. Using Larkin's artistic achievements as a catalyst, Larkin25 will seek to engage and involve visitors to Hull and local residents through participatory creative events, spectacular city centre celebrations and a high quality programme of performances, publications and exhibitions. The official programme of events begins on 12 June 2010 and culminates on 2 December, the 25th anniversary of Larkin's death in 1985.

For complete details, please go to: www.larkin25.co.uk

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