



IT'S BACK FOR YEAR 3!

Cre8 Theatre are very pleased to announce the launch of Deaf Arts Festival NI 2025 at host venue MAC, Belfast, from 21 – 23 March 2025.

Developed to connect with d/Deaf communities across Northern Ireland and beyond, the boundary breaking festival creates opportunity, access, and inclusion to arts activity for integrated audiences. The returning festival sees an even BIGGER focus on its ethos of placing Deaf artists in central roles, showcasing the Deaf community who are leading creative work, and integrating deaf and hearing communities in diverse shared creative experiences.

This year the festival platforms gloriously in its 3rd year building on existing relationships and partnering with new people, artists and organisations. Highlighting new connections with BSL Zone (soon to be Lumo TV) and Solar Bear, the bustling festival is bursting with carefully curated events for diverse audiences. From sign language workshops (Sign Source Learning) to family friendly workshops, to tours from local tour guides, to sign song performances from local artists to the headline programming of stand-up comedian, Ray Bradshaw, hot off a tour supporting John Bishop.

Building on the success of 2024, the 2025 programme offers even more enriched events for young and old, and even more accessibility with sign language interpreters across every festival event making it easier for hearing and deaf communities to come together in shared experiences.

2024 festival saw over 350 people book festival events, with a further 300 coming for other events and to mingle in the venue. This March MAC, Belfast will once again be populated with people from across NI, deaf and hearing, coming together for joyous access and integration.

Artistic Director (Cre8 Theatre) Sarah Lyle said,

“It has been an amazing experience collaborating with the Deaf community over the last 4 years. We are uniquely progressing NI and the arts sector here, showcasing how to innovatively incorporate accessible strategies into creativity. We’re inspiring young people from the d/Deaf community by providing access, inclusion, and integration across all events. Offering shared high-quality, equal arts access for deaf and hearing communities. Year on year we collaborate with more and more people from the d/Deaf community and think creatively about how to reach further into the



Deaf community here and beyond. We also pride ourselves on programming international acts alongside local artists, showcasing how deaf people can thrive”.

Julie Stewart, Creative Programmes Manager at the MAC said,

“Following the tremendous success of last year’s Deaf Arts Festival, we are delighted and honoured to once again host this vibrant, inclusive, and inspiring event. The collaborative spirit between Cre8 Theatre and both d/Deaf and hearing artists beautifully aligns with our vision of fostering creativity and connection. This year, the festival has expanded even further into the city, offering not only theatre but also comedy, workshops, crafts, tours and a wide range of engaging activities for all ages. We’re thrilled to invite everyone—d/Deaf and hearing audiences alike—to join us this March at the MAC Belfast for an unforgettable weekend filled with creativity, conversation, and inclusive fun!”

Paula Clarke, artist, activist and performer said,

“This project is such an important one. For deaf artists and performers, it can be difficult to break through into mainstream arts as our language and culture are different. Deaf artists being given lead roles in this project enables our community to showcase not only our wonderful language, culture, and stories but also how integrated theatre can be done in a way that welcomes and includes everyone. And this is our belief – everyone regardless of language, background and culture has a place within the arts and a right to enjoy theatre fully. This is about sending a message to the deaf community to remind them that they too can achieve their dreams, and to aim high. It’s also a way of showing the arts world the unique perspective and value that deaf artists can bring to any production.”

Building on the success of the 2023 and 2024 Deaf Arts Festival NI, MAC, Belfast, Cre8 Theatre have engaged partners once again and are delighted to launch The Deaf Arts Festival NI in its 3rd year 2025.

DATES: Friday 21 March – Sunday 23 March 2025

TIMES: Various

VENUE: MAC, Belfast and other venues

The Deaf Arts NI Festival has been made possible by the kind support of the following funders:

Belfast City Council, Sign Video by Sorenson, Cre8 Theatre and Carbrothers NI.



Thanks also goes out to the festival's kind supporter and host venue, MAC, Belfast, and all the artists from the wider d/Deaf community who contributed throughout the year, helping programme the events.

Tickets to all events at the MAC are available now via <https://themaclive.com/your-visit/deaf-arts-festival-25>



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