

Speaking the Activism of Black Feminism

March 26th 2015

Programme

09.00	Registration and coffee
09.30	Introduction from TRC - Manju and Nina
09.45	Shirley Tate
10.30	Coffee
11.00	Imkaan and The Pacific Island Safety and Prevention Project (The Project)
11:30	Ann Phoenix
12.15	Women Asylum Seekers Together Performance
12.45	Lunch
13.45	Aderonke Apata
14.30	Amrit Wilson
15.15	Coffee
15.45	Jackie Kay
16.15	Gayatri Spivak in conversation with Surya Nayak
17.15	Panel Discussion
17.55	Closing Remarks from TRC - Manju and Nina

Evening Programme

19.30	Shazia Mirza (Opening and Compere)
19.45	Cheryl Martin
20.15	Shamshad Khan
21.00	Yusra Warsama
21.30	Elva Parinaud



Trafford Rape Crisis is a feminist collective run by women for women.

The collective was formed in January 2010 to provide a service for women who have experienced rape, sexual abuse or any other form of unwanted sexual violation, no matter when or where. Since then we have run our free helpline and drop-ins and have provided support to local women via email. We try to support women survivors of all forms of sexual violation so they may maintain control over their lives. We also raise awareness about rape and sexual abuse committed against women and girls, regardless of their background or circumstances. We have a dedicated service for Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic (BAME) women, provided by BAME women.

Our mission is twofold:

1. to be **RESPONSIVE** to the needs of survivors through our services which are all underpinned by our core value of **listening and believing without judging for the 'transformation of silence into language and action'** (Lorde, 1977:40); and
2. to be **PROACTIVE** in campaigning and consciousness raising against the societal culture of patriarchy which facilitates rape, underpinned by our core belief that **sexual violence is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality within a racist homophobic patriarchy.**

www.traffordrapecrisis.com

Speakers and Speeches

Dr Shirley Anne Tate

Title of Speech: Mi vex: silencing, anger and institutional pain

Abstract

I am a 'wounded body stranger' (Tate and Wahidin, 2014) removed from myself so I do not feel psychic pain. However, pain emerges and I use it here drawing from Audre Lorde's *The Cancer Journals* as an analytic frame to explore how as Black women we cope with an imposed silencing from within white feminism whilst maintaining subjective and Black feminist community cohesiveness. I look at psychic institutional pain in UK universities as locations of body and knowledge estrangement drawing on Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* and such pain is seen as both repressive and productive of Black feminist critique. Institutional pain can also be agentic, productive, when we notice that it is rooted in Lorde's anger. 'Mi vex' recognizes the source of vexation, of Black feminist anger-pain, while repeating it as complaint and need for intersectional political action in order to continue to build Black feminist community.

Biographical Details

Shirley Anne Tate is Associate Professor in Race and Culture and Director of the Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies in the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds. She is also a Visiting Professor and Research Fellow in the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice at the University of the Free State. She writes on racism in organizations, 'mixed race', Black women's bodies and post/de-colonial studies. Her monographs are 'Black Skins, Black Masks: Hybridity, Dialogism, Performativity' and 'Black Beauty: Aesthetics, Stylization, Politics'. She has another monograph 'Black Women's Bodies and the Nation: Race, Gender and Culture' which is out in April 2015. She has worked within the BME community sector on HIV/AIDS, supplementary education, housing, women's refugees, Black sections in Trade Unions, youth and community work provision and art.

Betty Sio and Marai Larasi

Title of Speech: 'Imkaan' and 'The Project': A transnational Black feminist conversation

Abstract

Over the last 18 months, The Project (Pacific Islands Safety and Prevention Project) from Aotearoa in New Zealand and Imkaan have come together in a partnership that is perhaps best described as a Black feminist '*conversation*'; one which moves across geographical distance, diverse cultural narratives and different time zones. Rather than seeking to transcend difference this relationship exists within the space of the differences as well as the similarities. Betty Sio (The project) and Marai Larasi (Imkaan) will share reflections on connections, sharing strengths, mobilisation, disrupting colonial legacies and [re]claiming notions of 'community'.

Biographical Details

The Project: The Pacific Island Safety and Prevention Project (the Project) was established in 1995 in Aotearoa (New Zealand). The Project delivers a range of support services to Pacific Island families. They serve the Greater Auckland Region (GAR) from two locations in west and south Auckland providing services such as counselling, family violence programmes, relationship counselling, LGBT support services, young people's services and community education programmes, however their priority focus area is the prevention of violence in Pacific families. The organisation is proudly Pacific staffed with people from Pacific Island nations who represent and support the islands of Samoa, Tonga and Niue and in future hope to include other Pacific nations within their workforce and programmes. The Project values Pacific knowledge and customs within their practice and is uniquely Pacific for Pacific. The Project's intended Whānau Ora outcomes for all family and individuals are that they have:

- A Voice
- A Choice
- Safe Prospects and,
- Self Determination.

Usufonoimanū Pesetā Betty Siō is the CEO and founding member of the Pacific Islands Safety and Prevention Project. Betty, as she is known, has had a long history of involvement with Pacific community development processes that were first initiated by her Father the late Reverend Leuatea Iusitini Siō in New Zealand in the early 1950's. Betty established the Pacific Island Women's Project in 1983. This group became instrumental in the development of programmes for Pacific women at a national level and at 13 different locations around the country. She is a leader in the Samoan Community. As an advocate for Pacific women and their families she represents this group on many national committees as well as working locally for Pacific and women's' groups. Alongside her vast grass-roots experience, Betty holds two Matai/High Chief Titles, a Bachelor of Social Work, is a Professional Supervisor, a well-known activist on Te Tiriti O Waitangi Issues, and is a Proud Samoan Leader. In 2010, Betty was made a Companion of the Queen's Service Order for services to the Pacific Islands Communities. She is a member of a number of organisations, including the Grey Lynn Women's Refuge, the Auckland Association of Women's Refuges, and the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families. She is Chairperson of Family Life Education Pasefika, the Grey Lynn Community Trust, and the Care and Protection Resource Panel.

Imkaan: Imkaan is a UK-based, black feminist organisation dedicated to addressing violence against women and girls. As a second-tier, human rights organisation, with national membership, Imkaan represents the expertise and perspectives of frontline specialist women's services that work to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. Imkaan's work is focussed on the needs and aspirations of black and minority ethnic women and girls. Imkaan uses the term *black* in the political sense, to encompass all women whose herstories originate from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America, including the indigenous peoples of Australasia, the Americas and the islands of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. Our approach is rooted in an understanding not only of the gendered nature of violence against women and girls, but also the way intersecting factors such as age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability can affect girls and women's journeys and experiences. As such we actively promote the leadership, autonomy and self-determination of black and minority ethnic women and girls. At Imkaan, we recognise that violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a fundamental violation of our human rights and one that has implications within a range of human rights frameworks. We are committed to utilising (and expanding) existing human rights approaches in our work to end violence against women and girls. Imkaan aims to create safe spaces for black and minority ethnic

women and girls, to define our perception of human rights, identify our own priorities and to strengthen our voices at national and international levels.

Marai Larasi is the Director of Imkaan. She has worked in the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) field for almost 20 years and has developed and led innovative programmes which address gender violence within marginalised groups. Marai is committed to ensuring that services are developed, delivered and sustained within a strong gendered framework. Marai has delivered presentations to a range of audiences in the UK and internationally, covering a variety of themes including VAWG, women's homelessness, and equality. She is the co-chair of EAW (the End Violence Against Women Coalition). Marai also contributes to a number of working groups at regional, national and international level. Marai has been awarded an MBE for her work with Black and Minority Ethnic women.

Ann Phoenix

Title of Speech: Intersectionality and Black Feminism in Theory, Practice and Contestation

Abstract

In recent years, intersectionality (the recognition that social categories never operate in isolation) has come to be accepted by many activists and academics as a theory that fits with everyday life and practices. At the same time, some white feminists have attempted to trivialize the concept on the grounds that they are insulted by being told to 'check their privilege' as white. The picture is further complicated by sometimes heated debates about how to theorise intersectionality. In this talk, I will discuss the reasons that intersectionality continues to be crucial to considerations of 'Speaking the Activism of Black Feminism'.

Biographical Details

Ann Phoenix is a black feminist who was one of the founder members of the Manchester Rape Crisis Collective. She is Professor of Psychosocial Studies at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London where, from 2007-October 2013, she was the Co-Director. She co-directs the Childhood Wellbeing Research Centre funded by the Department for Education and is the Principal Investigator on NOVELLA (Narratives of Varied Everyday Lives and Linked Approaches), an ESRC National Centre for Research Methods node. Her research is mainly about social identities and the ways in which psychological experiences and social processes are linked. It includes work on racialised and gendered identities and experiences; mixed-parentage, masculinities, consumption, young people and their parents and the transition to motherhood.

WOMEN ASYLUM SEEKERS TOGETHER (WAST) & MANCHESTER MIGRANT SOLIDARITY (MISOL), supported by SAFETY4SISTERS NW

Title of Performance “Still We Rise”

Abstract

Through dance, song, drama, poetry and spoken word “Still We Rise” communicates the stark realities of life, and the injustices faced, by women seeking sanctuary in the UK. The women express their resilience and resistance to the ultimate inhumanity experienced within the asylum system at Yarls Wood Detention Centre.

SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN TO SHUT DOWN YARLS WOOD

Sign petition: www.change.org/p/theresa-may-british-home-secretary-end-the-detention-of-women-who-seek-asylum

Biographical Details

WAST is a support group for women asylum seekers in Greater Manchester who come together to share experiences, empower and support each other, fight for their rights, and to raise awareness about the issues that force women to seek international protection and the effects of the injustices of the UK immigration system.

www.wast.org.uk

Aderonke Apata

Title of Speech: Black Feminism Amidst Fear

Abstract

In Britain, an increasingly documented 'Black Renaissance' is upon us and young, middle-aged and elderly Black people are reclaiming their heritage, reclaiming their roots, and demanding to be heard. We are subverting the status quo and working at grassroots levels to organise. It is therefore vital that we have more safe spaces in which to share our experiences and organise for feminist actions. Use of social media and coalition of black feminist groups would continue to play a big part in this revolution, bringing the Diaspora closer. I am of the opinion that the most powerful thing marginalised groups can do is organise together, unite their resources, and congregate in discussion.

Biographical Details

Aderonke Apata is a feminist and human rights activist campaigner for asylum-seekers', women's and LGBT rights. Winner of the Positive Role Model Award for LGBT in the National Diversity Awards 2014, she was described as "an unstoppable force in fighting for justice" and became trustee of Broken Rainbow UK LGBT domestic violence advice line. She is one of the Independent RainbowList 2014's 1-101 Most Influential LGBT people in the UK. She is the founder of AfricanRainbowFamily that supports LGBT Asylum Seekers and Manchester Migrant Solidarity group that supports asylum seekers and immigrants. Aderonke is a patron of the LGBT Proud2Be Project. She is also the current Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Officer, National LGBT Labour. Aderonke sits on the LGBT & HIV Advisory Group in Liverpool and is a member of the Lesbian Immigration Support Group and Women Asylum Seekers Together.

[Winner Positive Role Model for LGBT Nationaldiversityawards.2014](#)

[#41 of 1-101 Rainbow List2014 of Most Influential LGBTs in UK](#)

<https://www.causes.com/asylum-for-aderonke>

<http://asylumforaderonke.tumblr.com/>

Campaign email: asylumforaderonke@gmail.com

Facebook: #AsylumforAderonke

Twitter: rock4_ronnie

Amrit Wilson

Title of Speech: *'The Mercy and Wisdom of a Government' - Race, violence against women and the British state*

'rejoice in the mercy and wisdom of a government which blends humanity with justice, and consults at once the interests and prejudices of its subjects, by recalling them from practices revolting' (Parliamentary Papers on Hindoo widows 1830)

Abstract

I will examine the Black, South Asian, and Minority Ethnic women's movement against violence against women and its relationship with the British state - tracing its changing politics of race and gender. I will touch briefly on its beginnings in the multicultural era and then focus on its interactions with the British state in the last decade and a half. In this context I will reflect on how the movement has reacted to the neoliberal shift from preventative to punitive action in the context of combating violence against women. Against these developments I would also look at the movement's changing political identity and its increasing shift to liberal feminism in response to the demands of the state, and on the multiple interpretations of 'activism' and 'intersectionality'

Biographical Details

Amrit Wilson is a writer and activist on issues of race and gender in Britain and South Asian politics. She was a founder member of Awaz an Asian women's collective which campaigned against the notorious 'virginity tests' ; supported South Asian women's workplace struggles; campaigned against population control and for reproductive rights and set up the first refuge run by and for Asian women in London. She was also an active member of Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD). Between 2000 and 2014, Amrit was chair of Imkaan, a national network of BAMER refuges and services for women facing violence.

Currently she is a member of South Asia Solidarity Group and part of the Freedom Without Fear Platform set up in solidarity with the anti-rape movement in India by Black and Asian women's groups in UK. <http://freedomwithoutfearplatformuk.blogspot.co.uk/>

Her books include *Finding a Voice: Asian Women in Britain* (London: Virago, 1978) which won the Martin Luther King Award, *Dreams Questions Struggles: South Asian Women in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 2006) and *The Challenge Road, Women and the Eritrean Revolution* (Red Sea Press, 1991).

Her recent publications include 'The Forced Marriage Debate and the British State' in *Race Class* July 2007 vol. 49 no. 1 25-38; in *Open Democracy*: 'Racism, Surveillance and Managing Gender Violence'

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/amrit-wilson/racism-surveillance-and-managing-gender-violence-in-uk>; 'Criminalising forced marriage in the UK: why it will not help women' <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/amrit-wilson/criminalising-forced-marriage-in-uk-why-it-will-not-help-women>; 'Black deaths: still fighting for justice in the UK'

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/amrit-wilson/black-deaths-still-fighting-for-justice-in-uk> , in *Ceasefire Magazine* 'A Fine Bromance, the

Corporates and The Hindu Right: On Narendra Modi's First Six Months in Power' <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/fine-bromance-corporates-hindu-right-narendra-modis-months-power/> and in the *Guardian* 'Narendra Modi as prime minister would roll back women's rights in India'

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/04/narendra-modi-as-prime-minister-womens-rights-india> and 'When will the Kashmiri nightmare

end?' <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jul/03/kashmiri-nightmare-narendra-modi-pandits-jammu-human-rights>

Jackie Kay

Jackie will be reading from her latest book of short stories “Reality, Reality”.

Biographical Details

Jackie Kay is an award-winning writer of fiction, poetry and plays, whose subtle investigation into the complexities of identity have been informed by her own life. Born in Edinburgh to a Scottish mother and Nigerian father, she was adopted as a baby by a white couple. Jackie’s awareness of her different heritages inspired her first book of poetry, *The Adoption Papers*, which dramatises her experience through the creation of three contrasting narrators: an adoptive mother, a birth mother and a daughter. The book was a great success, winning the Scottish Arts Council Book of the Year and a commendation from the Forward Poetry Prize judges. Subsequent collections such as *Why Don't You Stop Talking* and *Wish I Was Here*, and her celebrated first novel, *Trumpet*, have continued to explore issues of racial and sexual identity as well as the intimacies and upheavals of love. In 2010 she published *Red Dust Road*, an account of her search for her birth parents which won the Scottish Book of the Year award as well as The London Award. Jackie has also written poetry for children and her first children's novel, *Strawgirl*, was published in 2002. She lives in Manchester and has recently been appointed as the Chancellor of the University of Salford.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in conversation with Suryaia Nayak

Title: 'Black feminism is not white feminism in blackface': The Question of Black-Women-Only Services and Spaces

Abstract

The statement that 'Black feminism is not white feminism in blackface' incorporates key themes, debates and issues central to the 'particular and legitimate issues which affect our lives as Black women' (Lorde, 1979: 60). The challenge within the activism of Black feminist theory is one of advocating the power of collective action whilst insisting on the recognition of difference because 'in a patriarchal power system where whiteness privilege is a major prop, the entrapments used to neutralize Black women and white women are not the same' (Lorde, 1980:118). This conversation grapples with questions such as:

- ***At what point, and in what ways, for example, does the specificity of a particular social experience become an expression of essentialism? (Brah, 1996:95) How do the tensions, complexity and implications of this question sit with the question of Black-Women-Only Services and Spaces?***
- ***Is there a possibility of 'the transformation of silence into language and action' (Lorde, 1977:40) in the condition of the impossibility of language? Is it possible to re-read the question, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in terms of, 'Can the activism of Black feminist theory speak?' If the reply is 'yes, the Subaltern/Black feminist theory can speak,' then the questions become: what code, language and condition is this contingent upon? What discursive practices permit the reply of 'yes'? Who/what confers this agency of speaking? On the other hand, if the reply is 'no, the Subaltern/ Black feminist theory cannot speak,' then the questions become: what code, language and condition is silence contingent upon? What discursive practices permit the reply of 'no'? Who/what forecloses this agency of speaking?***
- ***How do we sustain ourselves as Black women mind troublers considering the fact that 'The psychological toll of being a Black woman and the difficulties this presents in reaching political consciousness and doing political work can never be underestimated' (The Combahee River Collective, 1977: 266)?***

- *How do we as Black women move to action when the power to act becomes experienced as a violence? How do Black women in the collective assert representation, recognition, voice when this becomes symbolically equated with an act of violence and silencing?*

Biographical Details

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is University Professor, the institution's highest faculty honor, and a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University. B.A. English (First Class Honors), Presidency College, Calcutta, 1959. Ph.D. Comparative Literature, Cornell University, 1967. D. Litt, University of Toronto, 1999; D. Litt, University of London, 2003; D. Hum, Oberlin College, 2008; D. Honoris Causa, Universitat Roveri I Virgili, 2011; D. Honoris Causa, Rabindra Bharati, 2012; Kyoto Prize in Thought and Ethics, 2012; Padma Bhushan 2013; D.Honoris Causa, Universidad Nacional de San Martin, 2013; D. Litt, University of St. Andrews, 2014; D. Honoris Causa, La Sorbonne, 2014, D. Honoris Causa, Presidency University, 2014).

Fields: 19th- and 20th-century literature; politics of culture; feminism; Marx, Derrida; globalization. Books: *Myself Must I Remake: The Life and Poetry of W. B. Yeats* (1974), *Of Grammatology* (translation with critical introduction of Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, 1976; revised ed. forthcoming), *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987; Routledge Classic 2002), *Selected Subaltern Studies* (ed., 1988), *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (1990), *Thinking Academic Freedom in Gendered Post-Coloniality* (1993; 2d ed forthcoming), *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (1993; Routledge classic 2003), *Imaginary Maps* (translation with critical introduction of three stories by Mahasweta Devi, 1994), *The Spivak Reader* (1995), *Breast Stories* (translation with critical introduction of three stories by Mahasweta Devi, 1997), *Old Women* (translation with critical introduction of two stories by Mahasweta Devi, 1999), *Imperatives to Re-Imagine the Planet / Imperative zur Neuerfindung des Planeten* (ed. Willi Goetschel, 1999; 2d ed. forthcoming), *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999), *Song for Kali: A Cycle* (translation with introduction of Ramprasad Sen, 2000), *Chotti Munda and His Arrow* (translation with critical introduction of a novel by Mahasweta Devi, 2002), *Death of a Discipline* (2003), *Other Asias* (2005), *An Aesthetic Education in the Age of Globalization* (2012), *Readings* (2014), *Du Bois and the General Strike* (forthcoming). Significant articles: "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" (1985), "Three Women's

Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1985), "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), "The Politics of Translation" (1992), "Moving Devi" (1999), "Righting Wrongs" (2003), "Ethics and Politics in Tagore, Coetzee, and Certain Scenes of Teaching" (2004), "Translating into English" (2005), "Rethinking Comparativism" (2010), "A Borderless World" (2011), "General Strike" (2012). Activist in rural education and feminist and ecological social movements since 1986.

Suryia Nayak is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work at the University of Salford, UK. She has 30 years' experience of working in the Rape Crisis Movement, community engagement across a diverse range of peoples positioned as alienated using models of education as liberation and the activism of Black feminism to raise consciousness about the psychological and political impact of oppressive social constructions. Recent publications include: Nayak, S. (2012) 'Testimony, Tolerance and Hospitality: The limitations of The Human Rights Act in Relation to Asylum Seekers' in Kang-Riou, N., Milner, J and S. Nayak (Eds.) *Confronting the Human Rights Act 1998: contemporary themes and perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge. Nayak, S. (2012) 'Equality and Diversity' in Aidan Worsley and Tim Mann (Eds.) *Key Concepts in Social Work* London and Thousand Oaks: Sage. Hesk, G. and Nayak. (2013) 'communication problems in a couple' in Bettmann, J.E., Jacques, G., & Frost, C. (Eds.) *International social work practice: Case studies from a global context*. London, England: Routledge. Nayak, S. (2013) 'The Activism of Black Feminist theory in Confronting Violence Against Women: interconnections, Politics and Practice' in Ines Testoni, Angelika Groterath, Maria Silvia Guglielmin, Michael Wieser (Eds.) *Teaching against Violence reassessing the toolbox: Teaching with Gender. European Women's Studies in International and Interdisciplinary Classrooms*. Budapest–New York: The European Association for Gender Research, Education and Documentation, Utrecht & Central European University Press. Nayak, S. (2015) 'The activism of *Black Feminist Theory: Race, Gender and Social Change*. Abingdon: Routledge. Nayak, S. (2015) 'Social Work: Oppression and Resistance', in I. Parker (ed.) *Handbook of Critical Psychology*. Abingdon/New York Routledge [ISBN: 978-1-84872-218-7]. Link:<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9781848722187/>. Nayak, S. (2015) 'Lorde', in I Parker and D. Pavón-Cuéllar (eds) *Marxismo, psicología y psicoanálisis*. Mexico DF: Ideas y Letras.

Shazia Mirza

Revered, applauded, loved and reviled Shazia Mirza is an award-winning comedian and columnist, as much recognised for her literary prowess as she is for her unique comedic talents.

Shazia was born and educated in Birmingham. Shazia reluctantly pursued a career as a science teacher whilst secretly honing her writing, acting & comedy skills part-time at drama school and with late-night gigs across the country. Oblivious to Shazia's determined but clandestine commitment to her art, it took an appearance on *Have I Got News For You* for friends and family to realise the extent of Shazia's ambitions. "Although it remained the 'c' word in the family house for years", she remarks. Fusing contemporary issues with her own personal experiences, Shazia pressed a lot of buttons with her taboo-breaking, deadpan, confident style. This was the year she won her first award - at the London Comedy Festival.

In 2003, she was listed in *The Observer* as one of the 50 funniest acts in British comedy and won the GG2 Young Achiever of the Year Award. She also trod the boards in *The Vagina Monologues* at The Royal Albert Hall.

TV work soon followed both in the UK and in the States and in 2007, she presented a documentary on BBC 3 called *F*** Off, I'm a Hairy Woman* – for which she spent seven months in the service of hirsutism. She was also a semi-finalist on NBC's *Last Comic Standing* (2008) and other TV credits include: *Muslim Driving School* (Voiceover BBC2 2010), *Beautiful People* (BBC2 2009) *Richard and Judy* (Channel 4 roving reporter 2007) *28 Acts in 28 Minutes* (BBC3 2005) *The World Stands Up* (Paramount Comedy 2004) and *60 Minutes* (CBS 2004). She is currently acting in a new sitcom called *The Vessel*.

Shazia has performed her stand-up shows across the world – from the Edinburgh Fringe to Texas, USA to Dubai and Kosovo. She has particularly travelled extensively across Europe, where she is in great demand. Her hit shows have included *The Last Temptation of Shazia Mirza* and *Portrait Of Shazia Mirza*. Radio appearances include a regular slot on BBC Radio Scotland and *The Now Show* on BBC Radio 4.

As a writer Shazia formerly penned a fortnightly column for The New Statesman for which she won 'Columnist of the Year 2008' at the prestigious PPA Awards. She has written for the Guardian for many years and currently has a new weekly column in their Weekend magazine entitled 'Dairy of a Disappointing Daughter'.

Shazia is currently touring India, Singapore, Norway, Sweden & UK and we are very lucky to have her!

<http://www.shazia-mirza.com/>

Twitter: @shaziamirza1

Cheryl Martin

Cheryl's worked as a poet, playwright and director. A Manchester Evening News Theatre Award winner as both writer [musical **Heart and Soul**, Oldham Coliseum Theatre] and director [**Iron** by Rona Munro, Contact Theatre], she co-produced and directed an Edinburgh Fringe First winner for Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre [**The World Is Too Much**]. Not to mention directing and devising CAN shows **Another Country** [Z-Arts/Decibel] and **Heart's Core** [Z-arts], and **Rule35** [Z-arts].]. She's just published her first solo collection of poetry, **Alaska** [Crocus Books], and her one-woman stage show **Alaska** will be in Contact's Flying Solo Festival this May before travelling to London's Albany theatre. And, for the Scottish referendum, she directed award-winning writer Alan Bissett's **Jock: Scotland on Trial**, at Glasgow's Tron Mayfest and at London's Finborough Theatre.

She's written operas – for the Buxton Opera Festival and the BBC Philharmonic. Cheryl's also written over 25 productions for stage and BBC Radio 4, the World Service, and for African radio networks, as well as stints as Artist-in-Residence for the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games, Writer-in-Residence for Contact, Oldham Coliseum Theatre and Bolton Institute, and Poet-in-Residence for Ilkley Literature Festival and Birmingham Readers and Writers Festival.

www.cherylmartin.co.uk

Shamshad Khan

Shamshad works with organisations to develop communities through creative writing projects. She pioneered and runs 'Hard Rain Poetry', a monthly local community creative writing and performance forum.

Shamshad's poetry collection "Megalomaniac" is published by Salt Publishing (2007) and has been the set text on the English degree at Lancaster University. She has co-edited two anthologies of poetry, written and presented for BBC radio. She has featured on The Verb and at Ledbury, Ilkley and international Literature Festivals. Her work explores themes including human rights, love, power and identity. She has collaborated with directors, musicians, deaf signers and beatboxers. Shamshad has run workshops for academics, survivors of domestic violence, Asian women, men and women in prisons and young people.

<http://shamshadkhan27.wordpress.com/>

Yusra Warsama

Yusra Warsama is a performance poet, actor, writer and theatre practitioner, her passions lie in creating work through play and exploration of life experiences in world we live in. Past, present and future work takes many forms, from her developing a one woman show which uses spoken word, storytelling, live art and physical expression, to 'Grace' (2005) and 'Make – Believe' (2009) with Quarantine, which looks at exploring theatre without focus on characters but the one to one relationship between performer and audience.

Yusra began her theater career at The Contact Theatre, Manchester, whilst studying (BA HONS) Criminology & Sociology, from there she worked alongside national and international artists and companies such as Morganics, Sista Native, Lemn Sissay, Victoria- Belgium, Afro-Reggae – Brazil, and a host more through the many art projects.

Major collaborative work includes Don Lett's 'Speakers Corner' this was a spoken word theatre piece alongside artists such as rapper Skinnyman and Mad Flow, to commemorate the abolition of slavery.

Yusra is currently writing a play for the Birmingham Repertory Theatre with two other writers, and filming her first international feature.

www.yusrawarsama.com

Elva Parinaud

Elva Parinaud is a professional Singer, Songwriter and Vocal Coach. Her academic path of music and linguistics, her career as a Vocalist and Vocal Coach, together with her studies and experience in the field of Holistic Nutrition and Well-being have been combined to bring you The Robin's Voice Holistic Vocal Academy. Elva Parinaud created 'The Robin's Voice' vocal Coaching and Singing Therapy programmes aim to work in partnership with you on your journey to finding your voice. Our voices are a reflection of our inner being, personal and important to each and every one of us. The Robin's Voice Vocal training programme will allow you to achieve vocal excellence through understanding all of the aspects of your voice, vocal anatomy and vocal hygiene. You will gain confidence in your own voice, increase power and conviction. Singer, Teacher, Public Speaker? Follow a tailor made programme to suit your profession and your vocal needs. The Robin's Voice Singing Therapy sessions will assist in all of your personal development needs. Reconnect to your breath and to your voice while removing hindrances, releasing tension and having fun.

<http://www.therobinsvoice.com/>



Friday, 27th March 2015

10am

'Continuing the conversation'

An informal post-conference gathering –
a space to digest and reflect on the day

At the Nip & Tipple café
197 Upper Chorlton Road, Manchester M16 0BH

Breakfast/ brunch buffet £7