

## Speaker Biographies (in order of appearance)

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### Communities + Culture

#### **Carl Austin-Behan OBE DL**

Carl currently serves as LGBT Adviser to the Mayor of Greater Manchester. Former Labour Councillor for Burnage, he was Lord Mayor of Manchester from May 2016 to May 2017, being its first openly gay Lord Mayor. In December 2019 Carl was appointed to be a Deputy Lieutenant of The County of Greater Manchester. [@CarlAustinBehan](#)

### Drag Race Won't Save Us

#### **Scottee**

Scottee is an artist and show off. You may have seen one of his award-winning theatre shows, heard him on the radio as one of BBC Radio 4's token working class voices or seen one of his thirsty posts on Instagram. His work is often about the stuff we tend to avoid talking about at dinner parties. Some people think he's alright, others think he's a bit of a prick. [@scotteeisfat](#) | [scottee.co.uk](#)

### Where Are We Now?

#### **Afshan D'souza-Lodhi**

Afshan was born in Dubai and is of Indian/Pakistani descent. She writes plays, prose, performance pieces and occasionally passive aggressive tweets. She has worked with Manchester Lit Festival, The Royal Exchange Theatre Manchester, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Eclipse Theatre, Paul Burston's Polari and one day hopes to take over the world. [@afshandl](#)

#### **Kate O'Donnell**

Kate O'Donnell is an award winning transgender performer, activist and theatre maker. In 2016 she founded Trans Creative a trans led arts company with the tagline "telling our own stories" Her theatre work is autobiographical, entertaining and political showing pride and strength in being transgender. [@transcreativeuk](#) | [transcreative.uk](#)

#### **Rico Johnson-Sinclair,**

Founder, CineQ and Campaign Manager for Ageing with Pride (Birmingham), Rico is an advocate of inclusion and diversity in the creative arts industry and has created safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people in Birmingham with inclusive cinema programming and a wealth of arts and third sector marketing and campaigning experience.

[@RicoRKLJ](#) | [cineqbirmingham.co.uk](#)

#### **Tammy Reynolds**

Tammy refuses to write in third person. I go on a stage and sing/dance/speak/scream/shout/eat my trauma. I sometimes make money from it. I'm sometimes Midgitte Bardot. I sometimes wear clothes. I'm always disabled. I sometimes enjoy it. I make my money from Access Consultation and event production. [@midgittebardot](#)

#### **Toni-Dee Paul**

Toni-Dee is a theatre maker, collaborator, facilitator, writer, performance artist and occasional thinker-in-the-room. Her current body of work is a series of performances & installations exploring identity politics living in body. Toni-Dee is currently working for Selina Thompson Ltd, and is making performance & live art for children and young people in and around Manchester. [@tonidee\\_p](#)

### LGBTQ+ Voices

#### **Travis Alabanza**

Travis Alabanza is an award-winning theatre maker and writer. Their recent show *Burgerz* won the Total Theatre award in Edinburgh, and has had sold out success in venues including Manchester Royal Exchange, Traverse and Southbank Centre, and was voted one of the Guardian readers top shows of 2018. Their writing has appeared in publications such as the Guardian, BBC, Dazed and ID - and they were recently listed by Evening Standard as one of the 25 most influential under 25 year olds in the UK. [@travisalabanza](#) | [travisalabanza.com](#)

#### **Cheddar Gorgeous**

Cheddar Gorgeous can't even settle on a gender pronoun let alone figure out what he wants to do with his life. Sometimes people call them a performance artist, other times a drag queen, academic and activist. Cheddar just likes being looked at. [@cheddargawjus](#)

**Nathaniel Hall**

Nathaniel is a theatre-maker and HIV activist from Manchester. He writes, directs, inspires and produces bold and provocative, socially minded work. [@nathanieljhall](#) | [nathanieljhall.co.uk/first-time](#)

**Suriya Aisha**

Suriya Aisha is a writer, activist, and producer. Passionate about marginalised communities, she is the founder of Unmuted, a two time TEDx speaker, and is always seeking to shine a light on underrepresented stories. In the past she has written plays and poetry for the Royal Court Theatre, Birmingham Rep and Apples and Snakes. [@suriyaaisha](#)

**Jackie Hagan**

Jackie Hagan is a queer council-estate crip and multi award-winning theatre maker and activist who drinks cut-price lager from her false leg. She sings the gritty praises of people who have been vilified. [@jackiehagan](#) | [jackiehagan.org](#)

**House Of Ghetto**

House of Ghetto is a dance and visual arts company that grew from the Northern UK Vogue Ball scene. The House aims to excite, entertain and have fun with the projects it embarks on, inspired by fashion, music, film, photography and the ever-changing world. Not afraid to explore the political and the personal, House of Ghetto is a unique voice in the UK arts landscape.

**Golden Years?****Rachel Morris (Chair)**

Rachel is a psychotherapist with 23 years of experience working in private and NHS practice. She is an author and a regular guest expert on TV and radio. [@therachelmorris](#) | [rachelmorristherapy.com](#)

**Andrew Westle**

Andrew's work defies boundaries and includes socially engaged arts practice and research with a specific focus on sexual and LGBTIQ+ health. Andrew is an associate artist with All The Queens Men, and has worked as a key creative on the Coming Back Out Ball and LGBTI Elders Dance Club. [@andrewestle](#) | [andrewestle.com](#)

**Cynthia Chika Franklin**

Cynthia is a freelance creative who specializes in events & marketing, focusing on productions that celebrate those out of the mainstream. Her main passion is her audience development and stage management work as part of The Cocoa Butter Club - A performance showcase focused on centering bodies and stories of colour. [@CynthChika](#) | [cynthiachikafranklin.com](#)

**Harvey Kennedy**

Founding Director of Black Beetle Health, Harvey is a scientist by education, a public health and science educator by trade as well as a community health advocate. As an active member on the House of Noir, his participation in the northern vogue scene explores ways in which art and personal expression can bring communities of colour together and be a positive representation of people of colour in the UK and around the world.

**Jamie Fletcher**

Jamie is a theatre and film director and musician, and currently an associate director at Leeds Playhouse. Her experiences as a northern, working-class, queer, trans woman absolutely informs the work she makes and how she creates it. Jamie also leads a range of bespoke trans and non-binary training with churches, charities, universities, theatres and primary and secondary health care establishments. [@jamie\\_fletcher](#) | [jamiefletcher.co.uk](#)

**Julie McCarthy**

Julie is currently Great Place programme manager at GMCA, working to embed arts and culture into delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy. She previously established and managed The Horsfall; the only arts and heritage space and programme for young people experiencing mental health difficulties in the UK, working with an ethos of co-production and socially engaged practice. [@artymccarthy](#)

## Performer Biographies (in order of appearance)

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### As British As A Watermelon

#### **Mandla Rae**

Mandla Rae is a Zimbabwean writer and performer. They are queer and nonbinary (pronouns they/her). Mandla was a member of Young Identity, Contact's Re:Con Young Programmers and Producers and they regularly perform across the North West. Mandla's writing is poignant and succinct, exploring themes of power and her intersectional identity. [@mandla\\_rae](#)

### LOB

#### **Roma Havers**

Roma is a queer writer and performer. She's been commissioned by Young Identity, HOME (*Imprint*-2018/19) Manchester Histories (*From The Crowd*-2019) and MIF (*Breathe*-2018/19), and has performed for radio, television, nationally and internationally. Her first solo *Bolted* debuted with UK Young Artists in 2019. [@amorbackwards](#)

### Audio Honey

#### **Jamaal Monarch**

Jamaal has a vibrant sound combining a fresh narrative, neo-soul, 90s hip-hop and electronic production. Jamaal's unique perspective stems from his Manchester upbringing that included Pakistani, Bajan and British cultures with the music of Prince, Q-Tip and Pharrell Williams. A vocalist, producer, and engineer, Jamaal recently supported New York rapper Le1f and has played high-profile gigs with Manchester and Birmingham Pride. [@jamaalmonarch](#)  
[I jamaalmonarch.com](#)