

# Synth star of Heaven 17 to transform Bath's historic abbey into 21st century art with 'sonic mural'

Musician Martyn Ware to create immersive soundscape in Bath Abbey as part of the world heritage city's pop-up contemporary arts event Forest of Imagination, 3-6 June.

25 MAY 2016, BATH, UK

## SUMMARY

*Martyn Ware, a founding member of 1980s bands The Human League and Heaven 17, is to create an immersive 'soundscape' in Bath this summer, as part of a free 4-day participatory arts event called 'Forest of Imagination'.*

**W**are is a member of a collective of artists, creatives and Bath-based businesses that will create a temporary fantastical forest and outdoor gallery in and around Bath Abbey from 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> June 2016. which is returning to Bath for its third year.

Featuring a playful programme of sensory installations, artworks, outdoor theatre and participatory creative activities for visitors of all ages, this will be the third year running that Bath has hosted 'Forest of Imagination'. This year's event is themed around 'Eyes of the Forest', and aims to suggest interesting and imaginative ways of seeing forests and their importance to global ecosystems.

The exact details of Ware's soundscape in and around the Abbey will remain under wraps to retain an element of surprise for visitors to Forest of Imagination. But the musician turned avant garde artist will definitely be offering the kind of immersive, sensory experience that has become his hallmark in recent years.

Ware's 18-year-old son Gabriel will also be composing orchestral music as part of the 3D -immersive composition. This follows the father and son's award winning collaboration last year celebrating the 150th anniversary of Cunard's association with Liverpool entitled 'The Crossing' at Liverpool One shopping destination.

Ware has created a number of large scale 'sonic murals' for the public realm through his company Illustrious, with his audible art installations featuring in projects for The Science Museum, The Royal Ballet and Museum of London.

Finding fame during the 1980s with his pioneering synth sounds, Ware was a member of hit pop group The Human League and went on to co-found the pioneering electro-pop band Heaven 17,

which continues to tour. Ware has also worked as a record producer for artists including the likes of Tina Turner, Terence Trent D'Arby, Chaka Khan, Erasure, Marc Almond and Mavis Staples.

Ware's abbey sonic mural is just one of a number of art installations that will feature at the Forest of Imagination. Other exhibits include a forest of giant, inflatable baobab trees to the front of the Abbey that aim to encourage the imagination to travel to the endangered forests of Madagascar. Close to the abbey at Kingston Parade, an outdoor workshop will see the installation of 1,000 living and made trees across the city over the four-day event.

In addition to an underlying eco message, Forest of Imagination's key aim is to highlight the inherent creativity of Bath and connect people with nature by reinventing spaces in the city to inspire intuitive play, unleash imagination and encourage exploration.

Forest of Imagination is the brainchild of a collaborative team of Bath-based creative organisations, including landscape architects Grant Associates, arts-based charity 5x5x5=creativity, creative consultancy Imaginnovation and architects Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios. Key event partners include Bristol Zoo and Bath Spa University.

Martyn Ware, Director, Illustrious, said: "It is an honour and a thrill to be able to share my 3D immersive soundscape work with the people of Bath, particularly in such beautiful and unique locations. As soon as I entered the Abbey, I was enchanted by the visual beauty of the space, and the opportunity to paint an imaginary forest in sound excited me immediately. I strongly believe in collaborative art, and the chance to create a series of installations with such an important ecological message and with so many talented visual artists, was too good to miss. I'm sure we will together create something that will never be forgotten."

Andrew Grant, Director, Grant Associates, said: "2016's Forest of Imagination aims to transform central spaces in Bath into temporary forests that inspire the imagination, and highlight the interconnectivity of forests across the globe. Revealing the contemporary and artistic side of our historic city, the 'Eyes of the Forest' message is also one of environmental conservation that explores people's deep connection with nature."

Penny Hay, Director, 5x5x5=creativity and Senior Lecturer at Bath Spa University, said: "Creativity and imagination can enhance wellbeing and transform lives. Forest of Imagination offers an immersive experience that is inspired by nature and encourages adults and children to enjoy their own imagination and creativity. The event is a showcase for Bath as a hotbed of innovation and artistic exploration."



## RELEVANT LINKS



### Forest of Imagination

<http://forestofimagination.org.uk/>



### Illustrious

<http://illustriouscompany.co.uk/>

## QUOTES

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— Martyn Ware, Director, Illustrious

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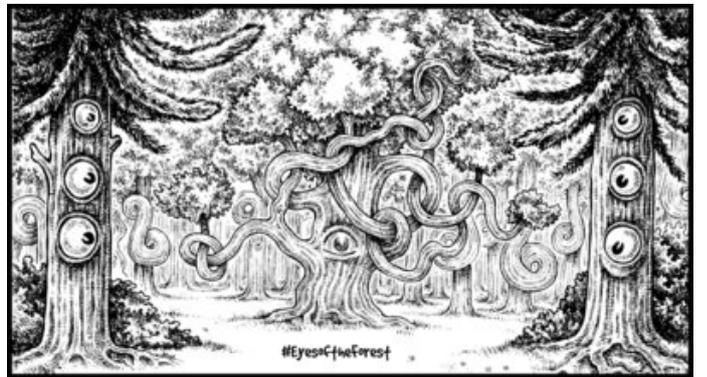
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— Penny Hay, Director, 5x5=creativity and Senior Lecturer at Bath Spa University

## IMAGES







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## ABOUT FOREST OF IMAGINATION

Forest of Imagination is a four-day participatory, contemporary arts event and creative learning programme for all ages. From **Friday 3 June – Monday 6 June 2016** the spaces around Bath Abbey will be radically transformed into an innovative and inspiring place for contemporary creativity and intuitive play, providing an immersive experience for all.

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Forest of Imaginationnewsroom