

9 August 2013 *For immediate release*

SLAMBassadors 2013: looking for the future stars of spoken word...

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The SLAMBassadors UK 2013 competition, presented by the Poetry Society, has launched and we're looking for the new stars of spoken word. There's only one way to make sure you are one of them – and that's by entering!

All you need to do is write an original spoken word piece around the theme of 'Identity'. Upload it to YouTube, tagging it as 'SLAMBassadors 2013', then email the link to your clip to Joelle Taylor, SLAMBassadors Artistic Director, at: jtaylor@poetrysociety.org.uk

You also need to email Joelle with your completed entry form, downloaded from <http://slam.poetrysociety.org.uk/>

The closing date is 15 September 2013.



The critically acclaimed spoken word star Hollie McNish (pictured left) will judge the competition, and is also the Spoken Word Icon of SLAMBassadors UK 2013. She will be helping Joelle Taylor, Bea Colley of Southbank Centre, London, and a member of the Poetry Society team, to select six emerging spoken word artists from across the UK.

The six winners will join Joelle Taylor in an intensive master class, helping them to develop a full set. This will be premiered in the Clore Ballroom, Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, London, on 1 November at 5pm. They'll have the chance to perform in support of Hollie McNish, in a show that will also feature underground DJs and live VJ-ing, from a pair of lucky VJs chosen in an online competition in association with Ideastap.

Continues over

The Poetry Society runs regular SLAMBassadors Sessions to showcase the work of the SLAMBassadors alumni. These are held on the first Thursday of every month and the next one will be on 17 August 2013, 7pm, at the Rich Mix, Bethnal Green Road, Shoreditch, London, EC1 6LA.

There's also been talent-scouting events at festivals like Glastonbury and Lamer Tree, and at in-school events in Buckinghamshire and Tower Hamlets, but we continue to look for new contenders for the title of SLAMBassador 2013. Could it be you?

If you take the crown, you'll join an impressive list of winners from the past including: Chris Preddie OBE, Pace, Kayo Chingonyi and Charlotte Higgins. So get your videos uploaded for the chance to win the title of UK SLAMBassador 2013!

– ENDS –

Joelle Taylor, SLAMBassadors Artistic Director, is available for interview. To find out more, please contact Robyn Donaldson on 020 7420 9886, or email marketing@poetrysociety.org.uk

Notes to Editors:

• **SLAMBassadors UK** is the Poetry Society's dynamic national spoken word championship aimed at 12-18 year olds, which on its inception in 2008 pioneered the use of online technology to submit entries, and to create a national archive of youth poetry. Well-known poets and spoken word artists perform and deliver slam and performance poetry workshops in schools and youth groups, enable the young participants to create their own poems/ raps around the theme of Identity, and then film each young poet performing their poem. These films are then uploaded to the Poetry Society YouTube channel where they are judged by a panel of professional performance poets. Crucially, these films remain as a constant archive of both the artistry of young people and as a socio-political barometer of their thoughts and ideas. SLAMBassadors is as much about the opinions of young people as it is about the forms they choose to write and perform in.

• **Hollie McNish** has released two poetry albums, *Touch* and *Push Kick*, both to critical acclaim, and a first collection of written poetry, *Papers*. She has appeared in venues as diverse as Glastonbury festival, Ronnie Scott's Jazz Bar, and Cambridge University, and has had poems commissioned by Radio 4 *Woman's Hour*, WOW festival, Tate Modern and Channel 4 *Random Acts*. She performs across the UK as well as abroad, with previous tours and residencies in Belgium, Australia, France and Portugal, and for the British Council in Latvia and Poland. She is a former UK Slam champion and represented the country at the World Slam, coming third. In May 2013 she released a poetry film *Mathematics* to YouTube. It has gained over 1.2 million hits and is still rising.
www.holliemcnish.com

• **Joelle Taylor** is the Artistic Director for SLAMBassadors UK, the national youth slam championships run by the Poetry Society. Joelle is also the coach of the UK team and delivers Master Classes and ongoing mentoring for young poets and spoken word artists (aged 12-19). She has a wide experience of working in both primary and secondary schools – and is the Poet in Residence at both Kingsmead Primary in Hackney and Newstead Wood School for Girls in Kent – as well as tutoring adult poetry courses (Arvon Foundation, Poetry School, Cardboard Citizens).

• **VJ-ing Competition in association with Ideastap** - the Poetry Society and Ideastap are looking for two emerging VJ artists to support the poets' performances at the annual national final for SLAMBassadors UK in the Clore Ballroom at the Southbank Centre and have a masterclass with professional VJ Danielle Harper. Please apply by submitting your CV and a visual track to the poem 'Last Poet Standing', <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GasEftVfyLL>. Joelle Taylor and VJ Harper will then select the lucky pair from all the uploaded entries.

• **The Poetry Society** was founded in 1909 to promote a "more general recognition and appreciation of poetry". Since then, it has grown into one of Britain's most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally. With innovative education and commissioning programmes and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, the Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages. It publishes the magazine *Poetry Review*, runs the National Poetry Competition, the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award and the youth performance poetry championship SLAMBassadors UK.
www.poetrysociety.org.uk