



Cultural ambassadors: Hanna Tuulikki's *Away with the Birds* (main picture); *Gathered Together* (right); and Rob Mulholland (far right).



LET THE GAMES BEGIN

As an arts accompaniment to the Commonwealth Games, Culture 2014 will set Scotland alight. David Kettle picks out some highlights in a programme packed with delights

A boriginal art at Tramway; a pan-African orchestra exploring Glasgow's links with the slave trade; films from Shetland; a classical mega-orchestra; actor Tam Dean Burn giving a cycling tour of children's stories; Vivaldi choreography in Aberdeenshire; some young journalists exploring tomorrow's news. With almost 200 individual projects, it's hard to even scratch the surface of the bewilderingly broad and diverse events that form part of Culture 2014, the creative arts arm of Glasgow 2014.

'We didn't just want to parachute in a festival,' says Jill Miller, director of culture at Glasgow Life and one of the prime movers behind the programme. 'We wanted to make sure it connected with existing cultural activities.' And as such, it's one of the grandest showcases of Scottish contemporary culture that the nation has ever seen. 'We wanted to be clear about what it feels like to people in Glasgow and Scotland,

and how it comes across to people from the rest of the world who will be visiting the city.'

Miller is keen to stress links between the cultural events and the Commonwealth Games themselves: 'There are huge parallels between elite athletes and artists in terms of their passion, the work they put in.' And she's encouraging everyone to get involved: 'It's all about engaging people, so we've been asking artists and organisations to see how they can do that. One example is the Big Big Sing, where we're encouraging people to sing as part of a choir, and even set one up in their own communities.'

With events happening all over Scotland in the run-up to the Games, as well as a Glasgow-wide cultural celebration to coincide with the sporting activities, Glasgow 2014's cultural events will be hard to avoid. Here we look at three of the most intriguing projects . . .

AWAY WITH THE BIRDS

Glasgow-based artist and composer Hanna Tuulikki's entrancing choral piece *Away with the Birds* has already had a few incarnations, but its performance as part of Culture 2014 at the end of August is its grandest and most ambitious yet. 'It's going to be on a floating stage in the harbour on the isle of Canna. The Inner Hebrides is a magical place. I see the performance starting as soon as people get on the boat to go there: it's the experience of taking people on a journey.'

The piece explores connections between the birdsong of the Western Isles and Gaelic folksong. 'We're using fragments from nine traditional songs that imitate or emulate birdsong,' she says. 'Each section represents a different habitat and bird community. There will be choreography and costumes, with performers' red legs matching those of oystercatchers and redshanks, and the set will be a huge sail made from pieces of fabric donated by the community of artists and Canna residents.' And for anyone unable to make the island pilgrimage, Tuulikki is planning additional performances at Glasgow's Tramway in September.

GATHERED TOGETHER

Exploring the intersection of dance and disability, *Gathered Together* is Scotland's first inclusive dance festival. Held at Glasgow's Tramway from Wed 27–Sat 30 Aug, it features companies from France, Belgium, England and Scotland. 'There will be workshops, performances and discussions: our ethos is for people with whatever ability they have to be able to access dance,' says Karen Anderson, artistic director of inclusive dance company Indepen-dance which hosts the festival. 'Inclusivity goes right across the board; there will be disabled people involved in every area, giving workshops, performing and leading discussions.'

Headline performances are set to include some of the biggest names in Scottish dance but details are still being confirmed. 'The final event will be a huge, big, interactive ceilidh,' says Anderson who is finalising a top Scottish dance company and band to lead it. 'It'll be quite an alternative event. We've already had discussions about involving wheelchair users and other disabled dancers in the ceilidh.'

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Cuningar Loop is a new woodland park being developed for Glasgow as part of the Commonwealth Games' legacy, and Glasgow-born artist and sculptor Rob Mulholland is one of two creators (along with James Winnett) conceiving artworks for the site. 'It's a fascinating place,' he says. 'It was the site of the first Glasgow waterworks, in 1810, and the whole area is strewn with rubbish – stuff from the Gorbals clearances in the 50s and 60s.'

Mulholland has worked with local residents on ideas for artworks. 'We've come up with some more traditional permanent public artworks, and also ideas for pieces that use recycled bottles to create buildings, or bikes to build a giant sculpture.' The park isn't due to open until spring 2015, but he's keen to involve the community as widely as possible. 'There are about half a dozen local unemployed guys I've been working with. The idea is to set up a workshop in the East End and have them come in to help weld one of the sculptures, so that they're involved in the art, and to give them new skills.'

See glasgow2014.com/culture for full details