

DRINK THE MUSIC! EAT THE POEMS! (UK POETRY AND SONG LIVE EVENT)

MGU SHIROKANE ART HALL 18 MAY 2023
'REFLECTIONS'

PAUL HULLAH

If language is our greatest creation, then literature, of which poetry is the purest form, is our reward. Writers, though they deny it, persevere because readers and listeners praise and relish what they make. If a poem falls in a forest, and no one hears it... Well, something's missing. Without its audience, the written word is impotent. The concept, appeal, nature, culture, meaning of a spectacle such as our May 2023 *Drink the Music! Eat the Poems!* event affirm this synergy. Bigger than its component parts, it's empowering, inspiring *gestalt*. We are all word 'users' here, constantly composing our story. The more language we can immerse ourselves in, the surer we can shape the story we create.

Over a hundred pilgrims assembled in MGU Art Hall to enjoy our art and craft tonight. The Romantics believed poetry is good for us: medicine for the soul, gateway to goodness. We share that belief in poetry's power to see the world in a grain of sand, imagining and imaging the unknown from good bits of the knowable, gleaned from the unsaid from the palpable as Heaney wrote. Teaching us how to praise, evaluate, freely, Auden proposed.

For me, poetry, written or sung, is an emotional diary: a way to make some sense of things I'm not confident or sure about. Social media's where we shout about politics and try to reshape society now; poetry becomes our catharsis and comfort at home. Our human(e) 'emotional media'. Therapeutically sifting and sculpting language into memorable bits of would-be life guidance: something beautiful and useful, as William Morris prescribed it. It is a symbolic embodiment of our human quest to make

order out of chaos. I think therefore I am, but I leave these unique utterances therefore I might, in some good way, remain. Our secret oozes out, Freud said. He also said that wherever we go, a poet's been there first.

Writing is 'spelling': casting spells. Maybe if we say it enough times, we will come to understand it, and know ourselves a bit better. A defining characteristic of 'poetic' language is that it deliberately draws attention to itself. And people who do that most skillfully, we can call 'poet'. Such people epitomise the high regard with which elegant eloquent expression is held in British culture, and the centrality that wit and rhetoric and the written word and the sung song still hold in the hearts and minds of British people like Hollie and Michael and me, and adopted Brits such as Nobu.

And often poetry's a witty and wonderful way to say what we wouldn't normally say. Words we wish to say, want to say. ('Words I want to remember', John Carey memorably called literature.) So here's Hollie, celebrating 'things they told me not to like', a critical, thinking reaction to inherited 'truths' (sic). And Michael, extolling male friendship, and the awful mental mess left by the sudden loss of a beautiful pal: things that men are not supposed to speak about. And Nobu, using his 'second language' rather than being used by it, songsmith with a singular vision, pristine blend of substance and style, out-English-ing most English lyricists. And it's not for me to say, but I think my own poems are about love of language and love of being alive and trying to be good at both those pursuits. A human perspective on what Victorians called 'Betterment', perhaps? I don't know. As Larkin says at the end of his Mr Bleaney poem: I don't know. All I can say is that an event such as this brings out the imposter syndrome in me. I feel humbled in this company.

But here we are. Thanks to the Meiji Gakuin University Institute of Language and Culture, and the English Department, for so generously supporting and sponsoring this event, and all the staff members and students who've generously helped us get this show the road. Poets, songsters, questers, pilgrims, crusaders, ordinary confused vulnerable sensitive souls. We're all in it together, and we hope you enjoyed the evening. We hope you took home something soothing and nice.

Poems have to be about something, just as life has to be about something. So best make it something good. And art *can* truly offer us hitherto unnoticed options in this regard. At the end of the day, that's why it was so special and wonderful to host this event, see it through, from conception to fruition, and give something (hopefully!) beautiful and useful to all my

students and colleagues at MGU and everyone else who made the effort and came along and supported this event. So lovely to have you all with us. So lovely to have dear Michael and Hollie come all the way from Britain to perform for us and lift our spirits with their generous eloquent gifts. And to welcome to the stage my former student and amazing talented friend Nobu too: MGU should be proud of him and everything he does.

I felt such joy tonight. I could almost write some happy poetry now. I will try.

Paul x



(Photo: Kana Takahashi)

MICHAEL PEDERSEN

What a total thrill it was to perform in The Art Hall of MGU on such a tantalising and stellar line-up of word churners and sound makers.

The students arrived en masse, galvanised by the good Professor Paul Hullah, who had promised them literary glory...and so the night delivered. Alongside students, it was sublime to see humans from across the globe flock into the stunning space — familiar faces from our previous visit and new fans of all the various acts on the line-up, each as resplendent as the next. The venue’s circular grooves held them in our thrall like a warm glove.

From our Hullah’s tender and trenchant opening poems, off into the wonderful filmic world of the animator David Shrigley we cantered. It was rousing, thought-provoking and joyous from the outset until the end. I have shared many spaces with the poetic wonder Hollie McNish but to do so upon this stage in Tokyo is one that will stick with me for forever.



(Photo: Kana Takahashi)

Having Nobu close the show was a truly relishable moment, one that carried some serious emotional significance. Us having had Nobu in the audience of our Neu! Reekie! MGU Tokyo show back in 2015, nearly 8 years back to the very day. As a former graduate of MGU the warmth and admiration in the room for him was palpable. He delivered his songs with glitter and gusto.

All our books sold out with unbelievable speed after the show and the number of interesting, quirky, and charming connections we made are near unending.

The post show Italian Pizzeria gave us European-hearted humans a chance to say cheers to all the love and lustre of the night with bellies as full as our hearts.

Of course, we headed off to the karaoke booths to sing our celebrations into the small hours. A cultural rite of passage, I'm sure you'll agree.

The next morning, we awoke to reflect on a magnificent show that buoyed us up the rest of the trip. No, this was not merely a trip but a quest, one that buoys us up still to this day.

My thanks and love you wonderful humans. Soar well.

Michael x

HOLLIE MCNISH

It is hard to expand on what Michael has written about this night so I won't try! I agree with everything he has said! It was an absolute joy.

Unlike Michael, however, this was my first gig in Japan, my first time in Japan full stop, and it was the most glorious of gargantuan welcomes from Paul Hullah and all of the students, both those who were helping with the event and those who came to watch the show.

I had no idea what to expect from the country, the city, the university, the audience, and the attentiveness, kindness, enthusiasm, and incredible hospitality was just overwhelming.

Paul's timeless tingling poems, sweet and soppy in places, were a beautiful beginning and to hear Nobu close the show in both English and Japanese was a real treat for me on this visit, especially in such an intimate concert space.



(Photo: Kana Takahashi)

It was a gorgeous blend of folk who rallied around to listen to the evening of poetry and music; from the students of MGU to the local poetry enthusiasts and journalists, to those from further afield now settled in Japan keen to hear their native tongue live, and then a handful of mothers with daughters and book club pals on a night out, and professors. What a terrific gaggle. The books also sold in record time which was so kind.

As with most of my gigs, the mingling afters was fantastic, to meet and chat with so many people now residing in Tokyo, and to go on a scoff my face with pizza afterwards was equally delicious!

So thank you so much for having us, for putting on the night, and to Paul for his unbelievable hospitality. To be able to tour somewhere I had only ever read about in books and feel immediately at ease was just such a lovely thing.

Hollie x

NOBUKI AKIYAMA

白金校舎で演奏できると聞いて、すぐに引き受けた今回のイベント『Drink the Music! Eat the Poems!』。コロナ期間にはイベントどころか通常の講義すら対面でできなかったとの事で、こうして詩やアート、音楽と出会える機会が戻ってきて嬉しいです。芸術表現にチャンスを与えてくれる明学を改めて好きになりました。

最近はどこもかしこも情報に溢れていて、どんどんと世の中のスピードが上がっているみたいですね。こんな時代では、詩やアート、音楽表現と向き合うことはコスパが悪いことかもしれない。時間も金もかかるし、考える労力も使う。でもこの忙しい倍速社会を生きているからこそ、時に時間をかけて自分の思考や感覚、あるいは得体の知れない未知なものと同じ向き合う事が必要な時もある。時間をかけてしか、自分の人生に根付かないものもあると感じます。

大学生によるカレッジラジオが音楽の歴史に大きく影響を与えてきたように、元来若い人たちには新しいものを生み出す力があります。今回私たちの表現をお客さんとして見て下さった方々が、今度はステージに立ち何かを表現する。そんな循環こそ、表現活動の一つのパワーだと思うし、何かその循環の一部に貢献できていたら嬉しいです。若さによるフラストレーションは、抑圧されればされるほど歪んでしまうもの。ニュースを見ていると多くの若者たちがその捌け口を見失い、自分自身を破壊的に扱ってしまったり、搾取的な組織やマルチのような反社会的なビジネス、新しい犯罪のシステムに巻き込まれてしまっているようでとても心配です。心の内側で滾るフラストレーションやもどかしさを、表現を見たり自分でやってみることを通して、必要なコミュニティと繋がり、健康的なエネルギーに変換して欲しい。今回の詩や音楽、映像との出会いを、自分や社会と向き合うきっかけとして受け止めてくれた人がいたら幸いです。

テーマパークや広告代理店が打ち出す『エンターテインメント』はわかりやすく人を楽しませてくれる。けれどアートと呼ばれる表現には、「答え」の代わりに「疑問」しか残さない場合もある。その疑問の種は時間をかけて自分の中で育ててゆき、その思考のプロセス自体が財産になってゆく。時代のスピードが年々上がり、物事が倍速、コスパ重視になってしまったからこそ、何かに時間をかけて向き合うことでこそ満たされる心の渇きがあることに、最近私も気づきました。

出演者として参加した私自身も含め、在学中から今に至るまで、物事を考えるきっかけをくれる明学には本当に感謝しています。この先も、迷いや悩みをポジティブに変換する為の思考の鍵を、多くの人に丁寧に手渡す大学であって欲しいと願っています。

改めてになりますが、今回素敵な機会を下さった主催の Paul Hullah 先生、イベント実現に尽力して下さいました職員のみなさんやボランティアとして必要なサポートをして下さった学生のみなさん。本当にありがとうございました。

また明日が楽しみになる一日を、一緒に作りましょう。

Nobu x



(Photo: Kana Takahashi)



(Photo: Kana Takahashi)



(Photo: Kana Takahashi)



(Photo: Kana Takahashi)



(Photo: Kana Takahashi)

DRINK THE MUSIC! EAT THE POEMS!

poetry, music, art & film from the UK & Japan
6-8 pm Thursday 18th May 2023
Meiji Gakuin University Art Hall Tokyo

HOLLIE MCNISH
MICHAEL PEDERSEN
NOBUKI AKIYAMA (DYGL solo set)
PAUL HULLAH
- films from David Shrigley -



Meiji Gakuin University Shirokane Campus Art Hall
1-2-37 Shirokanedai, Minato, Tokyo 108-8636

Sponsored by
Meiji Gakuin University
Institute for Language and Culture & Department of English

Hollie McNish is a Sunday Times bestselling author based between Cambridge and Glasgow. She won the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry for her poetic parenting memoir *Nobody Told Me*, of which *The Scotsman* stated, 'the world needs this book'. She has published four further collections of poetry – *Papers*, *Cherry Pie*, *Plum* and her most recent poetic memoir *Slug and Other Things I've Been Told to Hate*. She has just completed a re-imagining of Sophocles' Greek Tragedy *Antigone* and her poetry has been translated into German, Spanish, Hungarian, Polish, Japanese, and French. She is a patron of Baby Milk Action.

'one of the best poets we have'
Matt Haig

Seashells

some days are hard
some days friends feel far away
some days they are

some days lovers leave
lungs lose the art of easy
breathing
sleep a skill forgot

tomorrow might be better
it might not

either way i am here
if you want to talk we can

but i hug just as willingly
through awkward
sobbing silence

if you'd rather weep in peace
i'll read a book downstairs
slip biscuits through the
letterbox

distract you
if that's better
with facts i learnt last week

about the way
a seashell opens



Michael Pedersen is a prize-winning Scottish poet and arts producer. He has had two acclaimed poetry collections published by Polygon Books with a third forthcoming this year from Little Brown. His prose debut, *Boy Friends*, a memoir of grief, was published by Faber & Faber in 2022 to rave reviews, both in the UK and North America. Recipient of a Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship and the John Mathers Rising Star of Literature Award, Pedersen has performed all over the globe, attracting fans that include: Stephen Fry, Maggie Smith, Alan Cumming, Shirley Manson, Jackie Kay, Kae Tempest, Charlotte Church, and his mum.

'fabulously sensual and alive. I adore poetry like this'
Stephen Fry

Let The Lilac In

having hared through the day
let me be your armchair
by the night window—unhaul,
coorie in; into this cradle
of salt & buffer inject
those wayfarer bones; douse down
the day's flare of voices—
see the restless gritters sleep
or, better still, delete themselves;
be held, a pebble lagooned
in water's midnight minerals;
behold moon plated in the eyes
of an owl—starlight's lapidary scrawl
rallying the dark like hot ash caught
on spiderweb; the luminescence
graffiti-ing your slippers
& sloshed onto the chin's timber;
hush now, as, on my lap, you begin
a dreamer's mumble,
sommnambulant lips kiss the air
until finding my skin



Nobuki Akiyama graduated from Meiji Gakuin University in 2015 with a BA in English Literature, majoring in British Poetry. He is vocalist, guitarist, and songwriter-lyricist with Japanese alt rock band DYGL (pronounced 'dayglo') formed at MGU's 'modern music circle' club. DYGL have toured extensively, playing sell-out shows in Japan, the UK, Europe, and the USA, releasing 4 successful major studio albums and 11 singles. Their debut album was recorded in New York, their second in London, their third in Tokyo. Their latest is *Thirst*, self-produced and released in December 2022. All DYGL songs have English lyrics.

'Tokyo's hottest new band'
NME



Road

I just wanted to know how to spell your name
now we walk a different road, like it's destined
loud and quiet inside, feeling left behind
in a suburb of dawn, a car is waiting

I just wanna know about the things you've tried to hold
find myself in why before I find the way home
in a parking lot still when I'm trying to find it all
playing broken chords I'm learning how to let go

we should start again with all the lessons unlearned
you just need a cure and I just need to heal my soul
when it comes to the end and there is nothing left to sing
I'll be by your side until we see the sunrise

Paul Hullah is Associate Professor of British Poetry at MGU. He has published literary studies, including *Romanticism and Wild Places* (1998) and *We Found Her Hidden: The Remarkable Poetry of Christina Rossetti* (2018); over twenty university-level textbooks, including *Rock UK: A Sociocultural History of British Popular Music* (2013); and seven collections of poetry, including *Climbable* (2016). He co-edited the authorised collection of Iris Murdoch's *Poems*, and is President of the Iris Murdoch Society of Japan. In 2013, he received the Asia Pacific Brand Laureate Award for 'paramount contribution to the cultivation of literature'.

'fine poems, with an enchantment that touches me deeply'
Iris Murdoch



My Axe

I took an axe to sadness
on the winding painful warpath
where it stood, obstructing sunlight:
watched it buckle, saw it topple.

I took my axe to madness
as it mauled me like a monster:
in the mayhem of the aftermath,
at last I slew the dragon.

I germinate my gladness,
flower fragile all but lost before,
I keep my mindful eye on me:
I keep my axe beside my door.

DRINK THE MUSIC! EAT THE POEMS!

poetry, music, art & film from the UK & Japan

音楽を飲んで、詩を食べよう！

イギリスと日本から来た詩、音楽、美術、短編映画

本イベントでは、詩・音楽・短編映画・パフォーマンスを組み合わせた、総合的かつ知的好奇心を刺激する内容を予定しています。
出演予定の著名な詩人マイケル・ペダーセン氏とホリー・マクニッシュ氏は、それぞれスコットランドとイングランド出身で、今回のイベントのための来日となります。
両者は類まれなる才能を持つ熟練パフォーマーであり、まさに詩に生命を吹き込む存在と形容することができます。
詩人であり、本学で教鞭をとるポール・ハラ氏および、本学の卒業生で現在ミュージシャンとして活躍中の秋山信樹氏も出演予定。
加えて、イギリスのビジュアルアーティストであるデヴィッド・シュリグリー氏が手掛ける短編映画も初公開の予定です。

出演者:

ホリー・マクニッシュ: 詩人、劇作家。出産、母性、女性の経験について率直かつウィットに富んだ文章を執筆し、数々の賞を受賞。絶大な人気を誇る英国の詩人。権威ある **Ted Hughes** 賞の詩部門を受賞し、イギリスの **Slam Poetry** のチャンピオンに輝き、**BBC ラジオ 4** のレギュラープレゼンターを務める。近著 **SLUG (2021年)** は **Sunday Times** のベストセラーとなっている。
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hollie_McNish

マイケル・ペダーセン: 詩人、小説家、パフォーマー。**Rising Star of Literature** 賞受賞。英国 (スコットランド) の人気詩人、作家。世界各地で公演を行い、数々の賞を受賞しているほか、有名バンドのポップソングや **National Theatre of Scotland** の短編劇の脚本も手掛ける。最新作、**Boy Friends (2022年)** はフェイバー&フェイバー社から出版され、各国のメディアで取り上げられて高い評価を得ている。
<https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poet/michael-pedersen>

秋山信樹: ミュージシャン、作詞家。明治学院大学文学部英文学科 **2015年** 卒業。DYGL (読みは「デイグロ」) 日本のロックバンド、**2012年**、明治学院大学のサークル内で結成した) のボーカル、ギター、ソングライター、作詞を担当。**2017年** 以来 **4枚** のスタジオ・アルバムと **11枚** のシングル **CD** を発表。
<https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/DYGL>

ポール・ハラ: 詩人、ミュージシャン、英文学者、明治学院大学文学部英文学科准教授。文学批評研究 **We Found Her Hidden: The Remarkable Poetry of Christina Rossetti (2018年)** をはじめ、大学向け教科書 **Rock UK: A Sociocultural History of British Popular Music (2013年)** など多数の著書および、**Climbable (2016年)** を含む **7冊** の自作詩集がある。**2013年**、「文学の育成に最も貢献した」として **Asia-Pacific Brand Laureate** 賞を受賞。
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Hullah

デヴィッド・シュリグリー: 数々の受賞歴のある世界的に有名なイギリスのビジュアルアーティスト。**2015年** にイギリスのブライトンに移住するまでの **27年間**、スコットランドのグラスゴーで暮らしながら制作活動。**1990年代**に、ウィットに富み、シュールでダークかつニューモアに満ちた題材を扱い、子供のようなスタイルで描かれた独特の線画で注目を集めた。
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Shrigley

パフォーマンスイベント: **2023年5月18日(木) 18:00-20:00**

会場: 明治学院大学白金キャンパス バレットゾーン 白金 アートホール
アクセス: JR 品川駅高輪口 都営バス「目黒駅前」行き乗車、「明治学院前」下車

問合せ先: 〒108-8636 東京都港区白金台 1-2-37
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**POETRY, MUSIC, ART & FILM
FROM THE UK & JAPAN**



**THURSDAY 18TH MAY 2023
MEIJI GAKUIN UNIVERSITY,
TOKYO · 6-8PM, FREE**

**HOLLIE McNISH
PAUL HULLAH
MICHAEL PEDERSEN
NOBUKI AKIYAMA (DYGL)
FILMS BY DAVID SHRIGLEY**

**EVENT AT:
MEIJI GAKUIN UNIVERSITY, SHIROKANE CAMPUS ART HALL
1-2-37 SHIROKANEDAI, MINATO, TOKYO 108-8636, JAPAN**

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