



**FREEDOM &**

***TRANSFORMATION***

**Albania, 21 - 22 September**

a culture festival during British Week 2024

# A MESSAGE

*from Lea Ypi*

I have long thought about organising a literary festival in Albania. The tradition is well-established in the UK, where I live, and having spoken at many such events since the warm reception of my book *Free* in the UK, I thought it would be wonderful to organise an event bringing some of my favourite authors to my home country. Thus, I called Joanne Ooi, the founder of one of my favourite events in the UK, EA Festival, and invited her to join me in the production of an Albanian equivalent. The result is *Freedom & Transformation*, a British-Albanian weekend that promises to be a vibrant celebration of literature, art, and their transformative power with some of the world's top thinkers.

We wanted as many people as possible to come, and so decided to hold it in two cities, Tirana (where I was born) and Durrës (where I grew up). This will give international visitors a chance to learn more about Albania: a country with an exceptionally rich culture, at the intersection of East and West, where ideas have often clashed tragically, and where the lessons of history are still being absorbed. *Freedom & Transformation* aims to provide a venue for provoking thought, challenging assumptions, and inspiring action.

In the last few decades, Albania has undergone radical change, and increasingly features on the world's top new tourist destinations. Yet exploring culture enables people to engage a new context with much more nuance and greater critical awareness. Our conversations, ranging from Balkan history and culture to human rights, from migration to security, from politics to poetry, aim to create a space where diverse voices can come together to reflect on the past and reimagine the future. As someone deeply committed to the power of art to effect change, both in oneself, and in society, I am delighted to co-curate this festival with EA Festival. It is an opportunity for engagement, critique, and finding hope. I hope you will join us.

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# DY FJALË

*nga Lea Ypi*

Prej kohësh mendoja organizimin e një festivali letrar në Shqipëri, traditë mjaft e përhapur në Mbretërinë e Bashkuar, ku jetoj e punoj. Pas pjesëmarrjes në disa prej tyre falë pritjes së ngrohtë nga lexuesit britanikë të librit tim Të Lirë, dëshira për të sjellë diçka të ngjashme në Shqipëri bëri që të lidhem me Joanne Ooi, themeluesen e EA Festival, një prej festivaleve letrare të mi më të dashur. Ajo e pranoi me kënaqësi ftesën për të bashkëpunuar në Shqipëri. Kështu nisi të marrë formë "Liri dhe Transformim", fundjavë britaniko-shqiptare e planifikuar për në shtator të këtij viti e cila shpresoj të jetë njëkohësisht edhe kremtim i fuqisë përmirësuese të letërsisë e artit me disa nga shkrimtarët, publicistët dhe mendimtarët më të njohur në botë.

Për të mundësuar një pjesëmarrje sa më të gjerë vendosëm që festivalin ta mbajmë në dy qytete, Tiranë dhe Durrës. Kësisoj vizitorët e huaj do të mësojnë më shumë për Shqipërinë, një vend me kulturë jashtëzakonisht të pasur, në atë udhëkryq mes Perëndimit e Lindjes, ku idetë shpesh janë përplasur tragjikisht e ku mësimet e historisë ndonjëherë përthithen me vështirësi. "Liri dhe Transformim" është një platformë kulturore ku për dy ditë me radhë do të mund të gjallërojmë debati pa paragjykime, të shkëmbehen mendime rreth letërsisë, politikës, artit, shoqërisë e mbase edhe të frymëzohen nisma kulturore të mëtejshme.

Në dekadat e fundit, Shqipëria ka përjetuar ndryshime rrënjësore, duke u rreshtuar sa vjen e më shpesh në kataloget e stacioneve turistike më të dëshiruara në botë. Megjithatë, të njohësh kulturën e një vendi do të thotë të interpretosh kontekstin përtej stereotipeve pozitive e negative, duke zbuluar ndërgjegjen kritike, e cila është e domosdoshme për të patur ndryshimet e duhura. Debatet në panelet tona, që do të mbulojnë tema nga historia dhe kultura ballkanike deri tek të drejtat e njeriut, nga migracioni tek çështjet e sigurisë, nga politika te poezia, synojnë të krijojnë një hapësirë ku zëra të ndryshëm si të huaj ashtu edhe vendas të bashkohen për të reflektuar sa më thellë rreth të kaluarës e për të përfytyruar një të ardhme sa më të lirë e të drejtë.

Kam besuar gjithnjë fort në aftësinë e letërsisë dhe artit për të ndryshuar mendje e zemra, si brenda individëve ashtu edhe në shoqëri. Ky bashkëpunim me EA festival është një kënaqësi e veçantë, me shpresën që do të shërbeje edhe në Shqipëri si një kontribut modest në pelegrinazhin drejt shpresës. Uroj që të na bashkohen sa më shumë nga ju.

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# LINE-UP



## BARONESS SHAMI CHAKRABARTI

Shami is a barrister, human rights campaigner and Labour Peer who has written and broadcast widely over recent decades. She was Shadow Attorney General for England and Wales from 2016 to 2020 and Director of Liberty (The National Council for Civil Liberties) from 2003 to 2016. In 2012, she carried the Olympic Flag at the London Games and served as a panelist on the Leveson Inquiry into the ethics and practice of the media. She is the author of three books, *ON LIBERTY* (2014), *OF WOMEN* (2017) and *HUMAN RIGHTS - The Case for the Defence* (May 2024).



## PETER FRANKOPAN

Peter is Professor of Global History at Oxford University, where he is Director of the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research and Senior Research Fellow at Worcester College, Oxford. He is also Professor of Silk Roads Studies and a Bye-Fellow at King's College, Cambridge. His breathtaking syntheses of global (and, now, environmental) history have been international best-sellers and consistently attract critical raves. His most recent book, *The Earth Transformed* was The Times History Book of the Year 2023 and, prior to that, *The Silk Roads* was the Sunday Times Book of the Decade 2010-19.

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# LINE-UP



## MISHA GLENNY

Misha is the Rector of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna, one of Austria's leading advanced research institutes. A former BBC Central Europe Correspondent who covered the revolutions in Eastern Europe and the wars in the former Yugoslavia, Misha has written extensively about the geo-politics of cyber security and organised crime. His best-selling non-fiction book, *McMafia* - about the globalisation of organised crime - was adapted into a major TV drama series on BBC. Misha is also the author of an acclaimed one-volume history of the modern Balkans. He has taught as a visiting professor at the London School of Economics, Columbia University and University College London.



## SALLY HAYDEN

Sally is an award-winning journalist and photographer currently focused on migration, conflict and humanitarian crises. Her first book, *My Fourth Time, We Drowned: Seeking Refuge on the World's Deadliest Migration Route*, was published in 2022 and won the 2022 Orwell Prize, Michel Deon Prize, overall Book of the Year at the Irish Book Awards, the 2024 Premio Terzani, and was shortlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize. Sally's work has been published in the Financial Times Magazine, TIME, BBC, the Washington Post, the Guardian, the New York Times, Foreign Policy, Al Jazeera, National Geographic, NPR and the Economist, among many other outlets.

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# LINE-UP



## CHRISTINA LAMB

Christina is Chief Foreign Correspondent at The Sunday Times and one of Britain's leading foreign journalists as well as a bestselling author. She has won Europe's top war reporting prize, the Prix Bayeux, and been named Foreign Correspondent of the Year six times. She has authored ten books including co-writing the global bestseller *I Am Malala* with Malala Yousafzai. In particular, she has always focused on what happens to women in war, and collected accounts of sexual violence in conflict from all over the world for her recent book, *Our Bodies, Their Battlefields* (2020). The book was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize, the Bailie Gifford Prize and the Kapuscinski award. Christina was made an OBE in 2013.



## SIR NOEL MALCOLM

Noel is a Senior Research Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford, and a member of the British Academy. He has published widely on intellectual, cultural and social history, and has edited Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* and his correspondence. His works on Balkan history include *Bosnia: A Short History*; *Kosovo: A Short History*; *Agents of Empire*; and *Rebels, Believers, Survivors: Studies in the History of the Albanians*. He is President of the Anglo-Albanian Association, a Foreign Member of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo, and an Honorary Member of the Academy of Sciences of Albania. He was knighted in 2014 for services to scholarship, journalism, and European history.

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# LINE-UP



## WILLIAM SIEGHART

The founder of National Poetry Day and the international Forward Prizes for Poetry, William is Britain's "Mr. Poetry". Several years ago, seeking to share his love of poetry with the public, he set up poetry "pharmacies" in literary festivals around the UK, only to find people queuing for hours to receive his personalized prescriptions - poems selected and read aloud by him to salve their ailments. Wanting to widen access to his "prescriptions", he published *The Poetry Pharmacy*, a series of poetry anthologies, now in their third, best-selling edition.



## OLIVIA SUDJIC

Olivia was named one of Granta's Best of Young British Novelists in 2023. Her debut novel, *Sympathy*, was a finalist for the Salerno European Book Award and Collyer Bristow Prize in 2017. *Exposure*, an extended essay on anxiety and fiction in the digital age, was named an Irish Times, Evening Standard and White Review Book of the Year for 2018. Her follow-up novel, *Asylum Road*, was shortlisted for the Encore Award and the Gordon Bowker Volcano Prize in 2021. A third novel, *The Termite Queen*, will be published next year. Her writing has also appeared in publications such as The New York Times, Financial Times, the Guardian and Paris Review.

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## ALDA DIZDARI - Violinist

Alda was born into a family of musicians and left her native Albania at an early age to pursue her career in music. She studied in Romania and received a Bachelor Degree from the University of Bucharest. She did her Masters at the University of Illinois in USA and continued her Advanced Studies in London, at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with David Takeno where she also held the prestigious Leverhulme String Fellowship for two years. She rose to international fame in 2008 after performing the Sibelius Violin Concerto with the Albanian Radio-Television Symphony Orchestra at their UK debut in Canterbury Cathedral. In 2006 she received her first nomination for “The Best Classical Musician of the Year” in her native Albania. In 2008 she was appointed Musician in Residence of The Wapping Arts Trust with HRH Princess Michael of Kent as Patron. Selected by Gramophone Magazine in May 2011 as “One to Watch”, she toured the UK in July of that year to promote her album, *In the Footsteps of BACH*. In 2013 and 2014, she released three highly acclaimed CDs, one of which was a live recording of her Wigmore Hall debut. Since then, Alda has performed at all the major concert venues in the UK and has been a regular guest on BBC Radio 3 and Radio 4 programmes.

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# SPECIAL GUEST & CO-CURATOR



## LEA YPI

Lea Ypi is Professor in Political Theory at the London School of Economics and Political Science and an Honorary Professor in Philosophy at the Australian National University. A native of Albania, she has degrees in Philosophy and in Literature from the University of Rome La Sapienza, a PhD from the European University Institute and was a Post-Doctoral Prize Research Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford University. She is the author of *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency*, *The Meaning of Partisanship* (with Jonathan White), and *The Architectonic of Reason*. Her latest book, a philosophical memoir entitled *Free: Coming of Age at the End of History*, won the 2024 Ridenhour Prize, 2022 Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize and the Slightly Foxed First Biography Prize and is being translated in thirty languages. Her academic work has been recognised with the British Academy Prize for Excellence in Political Science and the Leverhulme Prize for Outstanding Research Achievement. She co-edits the journal *Political Philosophy* and occasionally writes for *The Guardian* and *Financial Times*.

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# DURRËS

**Day One, Saturday, 21 September\***

*Children's Cultural Centre of Durrës*

*Qendra Kulturore e Fëmijëve Durrës*

**13.30h** Lea Ypi & Sir Noel Malcolm - *Albanian, Balkan & Ottoman History*

**15h** Olivia Sudjic - *Contemporary Fiction*

**16h** Baroness Shami Chakrabarti - *Human Rights*

**17h** Misha Glenny - *Organised Crime, Cyber Crime & Geopolitics*

*\*The organiser reserves the right to change the timing and content of this schedule at its discretion.*

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# TIRANA

**Day Two, Sunday, 22 September\***

**National Theatre of Opera & Ballet**

**Teatri Kombëtar i Operas dhe Baletit**

**14h** Christina Lamb - *Women & War*

**15h** Peter Frankopan - *History & Environment*

**16h** Sally Hayden - *Migration*

**17h** William Sieghart - *Poetry*

**18.30h Concert** - Alda Dizdari (Violin) & Camilla Pay (Harp) - *Fjalet e Qiririt (The Words of the Candle)*

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# ABOUT



# Festival

EA Festival is the producer of two biennial festivals, EA Festival, an ideas and literary festival, and EA Sustain, a festival about Environment, Culture and Entrepreneurship. Since its launch in 2021, EA Festival has become the top ideas festival in the East of England. Both festivals are known for the excellence of their speakers and, in the case of EA Festival, its smorgasbord approach to curation. Topics range widely, from art and literature to regenerative farming and psychedelic drugs. In addition, EA Festival produces events in partnership with many leading cultural organisations including the Food Museum, Jockey Club Rooms, Gainsborough's House, Battersea Power Station and Essex Book Festival. This autumn will see the launch of a new event series at Tate Modern – *Corner Conversations: EA Festival x Tate Modern*.

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# Notes from the organiser

**Hyrja (falas për shtetasit shqiptarë) duhet prenotuar në [www.eafestival.com](http://www.eafestival.com)**

- For international visitors, EA Festival is offering a weekend ticket which includes a rich and diverting series of excursions and activities to deepen their understanding of Albania, its culture, history and people. Full details of this supplementary programme taking place during festival weekend, 21-22 September, can be found at <https://www.eafestival.com/> under “Albania” or please email Jacki Forsyth at [jacki@eafestival.com](mailto:jacki@eafestival.com). *N.B. The supplementary programme is devised, managed and produced by EA Festival independently and separately of this event.*
- This schedule and its contents are subject to change and we expect to augment and update the programme over the coming months. Please check back at [www.eafestival.com](http://www.eafestival.com) for updates.
- In line with UK festival industry practice, we do not issue ticket refunds or exchanges.

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