

EMBARGO: NEWS FOR RELEASE ON 19 February 2018

Cityread London announces *The Muse* by Jessie Burton as its 2018 book

It was announced today that *The Muse* by Jessie Burton (Picador) has been chosen as the focus of Cityread London's 2018 festival. The title will be the centre of a month-long celebration of reading in the capital, starting on 30 April and running throughout May. Cityread is a huge city-wide book group which aims to help Londoners explore and celebrate their city through its stories.

The Muse opens in London 1967, where we meet Odelle Bastien, recently arrived from Trinidad and trying to make her way in a new country. A new job at the Skelton Institute of Art brings a mysterious painting, and even more enigmatic colleague, into her life. We are then transported to Spain, 1936, we meet Olive Schloss, and discover how the painting came into being, against the turbulent backdrop of Spain on the eve of war.

Taking Burton's depictions of 1960s London and 1930s Spain as a starting point, a programme of events exploring *The Muse's* themes of arrival, the creative process, art history and family secrets will take place across 26 London boroughs as well as in Slough, Reading and Luton, in libraries, and other venues. The festival centrepiece will be an interactive audio digital installation at Idea Store Whitechapel, where audiences will be invited into Odelle's flat and Olive's studio to discover the secrets of the mysterious painting at the heart of the novel, *Rufina and the Lion*. The installation will include immersive audio provided by Audible.

Other events will include Cynth and Sam's Wedding Party (a live music event at Westminster Reference Library featuring Jazzie B in conversation with Lloyd Bradley, author of *Sounds Like London*), life drawing classes and family history workshops, and author events with Jessie Burton.

Cityread 2018 will also work with homeless charities to gift 800 signed copies of *The Muse* to homeless readers across the capital.

Cityread 2018 is sponsored by Audible UK.

Jessie Burton said:

"I'm truly delighted that *The Muse* will be London's Cityread for 2018. It's a novel that celebrates the diversity, humour and spirit of Londoners - both those who were born here and those welcomed in to make it their home. It's an honour to support our city's libraries and to be reminded of their incomparable value, and I can't wait for new readers to find my story of Odelle and Olive, and make it their own."

Lord Tope, Chair of Cityread said:

"2018 is Year of the Woman and also the 70th anniversary of the arrival of The Windrush, making *The Muse* the perfect choice for Cityread London. Working with our amazing library partners, and with

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Jessie, our events will inspire Londoners to find out more about women in art, discover the secrets in their own family trees, and celebrate the impact that Caribbean migration in the 1960s had on our capital, the food we eat and the music we listen to.”

Tracey Markham at Audible said:

“We passionately believe in the power of a great story, told by a great voice. So we are thrilled to be supporting Cityread for the third year in its mission to get people reading and listening to the best UK storytelling. *The Muse* is a wonderful piece of writing and we are incredibly proud to help bring it to more eyes and ears across London and beyond.”

About Cityread London:

Cityread London is a registered charity that promotes the key ideas of reading for pleasure, engaging new library users, enhancing the experience of existing readers, and encouraging people to explore and celebrate London’s culture, landscape and history through its stories. Cityread works in partnership with library services in 26 London boroughs plus Slough, Reading and Luton. Founded in 2012 it has featured: *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens (Penguin), 2012; *A Week in December* by Sebastian Faulks (Vintage), 2013; *My Dear I Wanted to Tell You* by Louisa Young (Borough Press), 2014; *Rivers of London* by Ben Aaronovitch (Gollancz) 2015; *Ten Days* by Gillian Slovo (Canongate) 2016; *Prophecy* by S.J. Parris (HarperCollins) 2017.

Further details of all Cityread London activity can be found at the website: www.cityread.london and at Facebook/CityreadLondon

About *The Muse*

The Muse, Jessie Burton’s second bestselling novel, is an enthralling story about art, identity, and the hidden power within us all.

On a hot July day in 1967, Odelle Bastien climbs the stone steps of the Skelton gallery in London, knowing that her life is about to change forever. Having struggled to find her place in the city since she arrived from Trinidad five years ago, she has been offered a job as a typist under the tutelage of the glamorous and enigmatic Marjorie Quick. But though Quick takes Odelle into her confidence, and unlocks a potential she didn’t know she had, she remains a mystery to Odelle – no more so than when a lost masterpiece with a secret history is delivered to the gallery.

The truth about the painting lies in 1936 and a large house in rural Spain, where Olive Schloss, the daughter of a renowned art dealer, is harbouring ambitions of her own. Into this fragile paradise come an artist and revolutionary, Isaac Robles, and his half-sister Teresa, who insinuate themselves into the family, with explosive and devastating consequences . . .

Seductive, exhilarating and suspenseful, *The Muse* is a novel about aspiration and identity, love and obsession, authenticity and deception.

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About Jessie Burton

Jessie Burton was born in south London in 1982. She studied at Oxford University and The Central School of Speech and Drama. She has appeared in several productions at the National, Bristol Old Vic, Salisbury Playhouse and the Donmar among others. Her debut novel, *The Miniaturist*, was an instant bestseller after its release in 2014, selling over a million copies by 2015. It was in the Sunday Times top 10 for three months, Christmas number one in the UK, and a New York Times bestseller. It went on to win Waterstones Book of the Year in 2014, the 2014 Specsavers National Book Award and was a Richard & Judy book club pick in 2015. In December 2017, the BBC adaptation starring Anya Taylor-Joy, Alex Hassell and Romola Garai hit TV screens to wide acclaim and the novel once again appeared in the top ten. Her second novel, *The Muse*, was published in summer 2016 and spent 10 weeks straight on the Sunday Times bestseller list, peaking at number one.

Jessie's first novel for children, *The Restless Girls*, will be published in September 2018. She is working on her second novel for children, and her third novel for adults.

Praise for The Muse

“An intricate story of imposture . . . strong on the emotional and sensual . . . who would bet against it selling a million copies like its predecessor?” *Guardian*

“Burton has an undoubted gift for seizing the reader's attention and holding it”
Sunday Times

“Deftly plotted, a masterclass in pacing, tension and suspense, and richly characterised . . . exquisitely written, evocative and suspenseful” *Sunday Express*

“Those who loved *The Miniaturist* will find here all the cliffhangers, twists and heart-stopping revelations they expected, and in two evocative settings . . . as a study of female creativity, it triumphs”
Daily Telegraph

“Burton clearly has a way with words, crafting masterful, complex and atmospheric mysteries that keep the reader hooked right up until the very last page. *The Muse* is a brilliantly realised story and the parallel narratives are perfectly balanced, propelling the story forward at breakneck speed . . . An exhilarating read, Jessie Burton can expect more awards to soon be coming her way” *The Herald*

“Rich and gripping . . . Burton breathes life into her words” *Independent*

“Impressive . . . It takes all the promise of *The Miniaturist* - the complex female characters, an entrancing mystery, a lush and evocative sense of place - and executes it with wit and style.” *Elle*

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“A painterly writer with an eye for the telling detail . . . suspenseful . . . when the postman rang the doorbell bang in the middle of the denouement, I sprinted back up six flights of stairs to know who was going to get out of Arazuelo alive” *The Spectator*

“Readers who enjoyed *The Miniaturist* won't be disappointed” *The Times*

About Audible

Audible, an Amazon.com, Inc. subsidiary (NASDAQ:AMZN), is the leading provider of premium digital spoken audio information and entertainment, offering customers a new way to enhance and enrich their lives every day. Audible was created to unleash the emotive music in language and the habituating power and utility of verbal expression. Audible content includes more than 250,000 audio programs from leading audiobook publishers, broadcasters, entertainers, magazine and newspaper publishers, and business information providers.

About Pan Macmillan

Pan Macmillan is the consumer publishing arm of Macmillan, a global publishing company. Its imprints include Macmillan, Mantle, Pan, Picador, Bluebird, Boxtree, Sidgwick & Jackson, Bello, Tor, Macmillan Children's Books, Campbell Books and Macmillan Digital Audio. Pan Macmillan was named Publisher of the Year at The Bookseller Industry Awards in 2015 and again in 2017.

IMAGES

Images of Jessie Burton and *The Muse* are available on request.

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