

# Exodus Festival 2009 Evaluation Report

## Context

The *Exodus Refugee Arts Festival* is a unique celebration of arts and culture by Greater Manchester's diverse refugee communities including world music and dance from Angola, Bosnia, Cameroon, China, DR Congo, India, Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and other countries.

The festival includes a mixture of live music and dance performances, alongside spoken word, dance workshops, making sessions, food, crafts and information stalls. The festival has previously been held in Hulme Park (2005 and 2006), Platt Fields Park (2007) and Urbis for the first time in 2008.

## Summary



For the second year, to great success, the Exodus Festival took place in the prime city-centre location of *Urbis* and Cathedral Gardens enabling us to have two main stages (*Urbis Foyer* & Cathedral Gardens) and programme a diverse and exciting range of music, dance, and spoken word performances from both refugee and host communities.

This year the audience attendance was significantly larger than previous years with approximately 10,000 people attending. The weather was fantastic, leading to the festival being a bigger success than ever before.

The whole site was alive with activity generated by the many workshops, community food stalls, craft and information stalls, and performances that were available to watch or participate in. One particular highlight of the Exodus Festival 2009 was the big, beautiful, bold and colourful site decorations that refugee participants from throughout Greater Manchester had been involved in creating. They brought the festival site together and attracted hundreds of passers-by.

This year the festival layout was slightly different than in 2008, because the pavilion was no longer located in Cathedral Gardens. However this turned out to be a positive development because having an outdoor stage opened up the site, attracted passers-by, and created a compact festival site. Again, CAN found *Urbis* and Cathedral Gardens to be a fantastic venue due to their close proximity to Victoria train station (enabling people to attend from outside of the city very easily), and the number of new audiences it attracted. The close transport links were utilised even further in 2009.

## Exodus Festival Figures

- Number of attendees: **10,000**
- Number of performance groups: **20**
- Number of individual performers: **140**
- Number of volunteers: **27**
- Number of staff: **33**
- Number of food stalls: **5**
- Number of craft/information stalls: **15**
- Number of countries represented: **20**
- Number of participants in site décor and parade making workshops: **71**
- Number of participants in dance and arts workshops on the day: **200+**

## **Funded by**

The event was funded by Manchester City Council and the Big Lottery Fund.

## **Supported by**

Urbis, Manchester Youth Volunteering Project (MYVP).

## **Evaluation Methods**

The evaluation results included in this report have been compiled from a number of sources of information:

- 1) Questionnaires were completed by 113 festival attendees on the day.
- 2) Performers were asked a series of questions on the day and their feedback was noted.
- 3) CAN held a staff evaluation meeting.
- 4) Email feedback was collated from a number of participants and attendees.

## **SWOT Analysis**

### **Strengths**

- Huge audience attending (10,000 people plus) and staying throughout the day
- Good weather
- Prime city centre location
- Diverse programme
- A positive atmosphere
- Presented positive images of refugee communities within a mainstream high-quality venue
- Exceptional hired support staff
- The day ran very smoothly without any major issues
- Extensive positive media coverage (print, radio, TV and online) generated 24 pieces of positive media coverage
- Dance workshops were very popular with over 100 participants
- Drumming workshop was very popular- West African Development were very supportive teachers.
- Great food that sold out
- Excellent facilities provided for community food groups
- Good mix of host community and refugee/asylum-seeker groups attending
- Outdoor stage brought the site together – worked better without the Pavillion (used in 2008)
- Site decoration and parade banners looked fantastic and drew attention to the site. The 'Making projects' that were developed in the lead up to the festival were very successful and involved 71 participants from Manchester Academy, Salford Rainbow Haven and Bolton Red Cross.

### **Weaknesses**

- Five performance groups dropped out at the last minute leading to programme-gaps on the Foyer Stage in particular.
- A number of Foyer Stage performers complained that they wanted to perform on the Outdoor Stage. Next year it needs to state on each performer's contract which stage they are performing on.
- A better dance floor is needed for the Foyer Stage.
- Drumming workshop wasn't located in the best place as there was a sound clash with the main stage.
- There weren't many dance performers this year.
- Arts and crafts workshops should be located in a more central area to attract more participants.
- The same musicians were used by a number of different bands which caused clashes – look into booking them as a house band next year.
- Manchester Cathedral complained after the event that the noise level was too loud. Next year we need to allocate someone to the Cathedral to monitor sound levels.
- Three stalls and one food stall didn't attend on the day.

### **Opportunities**

- Look for more funding opportunities to enable the festival to grow and develop.
- It would increase the event profile further to buy-in higher profile headline acts.
- Continue to develop site decoration projects and work with Manchester Academy.
- Work with groups in the lead up to the festival to develop their performances.

### **Threats**

- 2010 is potentially the last Exodus Festival, because Big Lottery Fund funding ends in March 2011. CAN and the Greater Manchester Refugee Arts Partnership need to look at possibilities for developing the festival in the future.

### **Audience Feedback**

113 festival attendees filled in an evaluation form and gave the festival an average rating of **8/10**. These are some individual comments from the evaluation forms.

- *nice atmosphere, bringing lots of good energy for people around*
- *very positive. Nice, colourful, lots of people involved-good weather doesn't hurt*
- *enjoyable & entertaining*
- *very inclusive, accessible, stuff for kids, cultural diversity, good indoor/outdoor, food, family fun*
- *more stalls, great music, lovely food, nice sunshine*
- *fun, lively, dance session was fantastic*
- *colourful & positive*
- *lovely, relaxed, weather helped, great sounds*
- *lively, informative*
- *well organised, really good location, and interesting people.*
- *nice cultural mix*
- *good varied music*
- *great entertainment, daughter enjoyed it-food was good*
- *loved the live band, very good*
- *very welcoming and fun whilst promoting worthwhile causes*
- *great. Didn't know what to expect-very impressed*
- *well organised, interesting acts, good celebration of culture*
- *very different to the usual music and events that are in place*
- *very good, family entertainment*
- *lively, friendly, informative*
- *it is different to see different culture together in Manchester, I think Manchester should organise more things like that in the future. Well pleased, well done Manchester*
- *great. Superb music & urbis is a good venue*
- *music good, enjoyed food, laid back, good people diversity and stuff to do*
- *great music, lots going on, good value nice food*

### **Performer Feedback**

Some individual comments from performers at the festival:

- *It was the best performance we've ever done, the vibe was right. The setting was perfect. On behalf of the whole group we are ecstatic over the festival.*
- *Fantastic, brilliant, great crowd*
- *Great to perform to a new wider audience*
- *FAB*
- *Great to develop singing skills*
- *Great to have a chance to perform at such a good festival*
- *I felt great and happy because everyone was clapping for us, I'll do better next time*
- *The Audience is great and cooperative and extremely appreciative. Thank you for such a great opportunity.*
- *I feel full of enthusiasm and didn't feel nervous because you just have to concentrate on the dance. I never thought that lots of people would come to see this, it was a good opportunity.*
- *The good things are taking part, I feel full of energy after doing it.*
- *It was great there was such a great response which encouraged me a lot.*
- *I feel excited and happy the crowd gave me energy and I appreciate the work of Exodus*

- *Really good, it helps promote our workshops and reaches out to a wider audience. The performance promotes cultural awareness and education.*
- *People come together and learn about different cultures*
- *Very well organised*
- *Great to see so many different bands and acts*
- *Great opportunity for ethnic minorities to perform and meet others*
- *We loved it*
- *I feel that I need more festivals, more chances to perform because it felt good*
- *Felt good, lets people know about your talent*
- *It widens your fan base*
- *Having everybody treat you like you're one of them and not like you're a freak*
- *Its important for the young participants to get a chance to perform, this improves there ability and confidence.*

## Programme

### Music groups

#### **Testimony**

Irresistible rhythms of Congolese dance music, blended with Cameroonian R&B and South African jazz, with a sanctified message of salvation.



#### **King D'\$**

Contemporary urban R&B sounds from Angolan-born Francisco who now lives in Gorton, Manchester.



**Zhou Juan**

Chinese folk songs and tai chi performance. Originally from China, Zhou now resides in Irlam, Manchester.



**Elephant**

Zimbabwean Kwaito music (house music combined with African sounds) from Daniel Elephant.



**Dems Ndume**

Congolese musician singing for peace in Africa.



**West African Development**

West African Dance and Drumming using traditional drums such as djambes, doun doun, akouba and sato.



### **Tolu**

Tolu (Sunrise) are musicians from Afghanistan who perform contemporary and traditional songs.



### **Ajah**

Hard-hitting lyrics that navigate the audience through their experiences of perception, local national & international identities, gender & sexuality, poverty, caste & class. Their experimental set features amazing Glasgow based Romany Gypsy Flamenco artist Keriava, scratch DJ, percussionist and beat boxer.



### **Britannia Rumba**

An exciting and talented dance and music band, performing a particularly fresh and unique British version of Congolese Rumba. A firm festival favourite, they electrify the crowd with their infectious soukous rhythm and dance.



### **Ya Freddy**

Congolese pop singer-songwriter, Ya Freddy wrote and recorded a tribute song to Marc Vivien Foe the Manchester City player who tragically died in 2004. He has performed the song "Foe, We All Miss You" to 48,000 fans at Manchester City Stadium and in Albert Square.



**Bob Dunil**

Rochdale based performer Bob Dunil performed his own brand of reggae and rap performance.



**Educated Thugz**

Educated Thugz perform their own brand of Hip-Hop and Rap and their unique approach to their craft has resulted in popularity on both sides of the Atlantic.



**U-Jeff**

A Nigerian Gospel and R&B singer whose debut album Another State sold over 45,000 copies in Nigeria. U-Jeff has performed at Exodus Live and the Exodus Festival.



**Asian Music Talent**

Asian Music Talent perform driving Bhangra and classical Asian music. They are a multicultural group who have come together to promote racial harmony via music.



### **Bloco Novo**

An Afro Latin Percussion collective from East Manchester who are an exciting and dynamic group of young people.



### **Nouvelle Alliance**

Nouvelle Alliance is a live band created in 2005. Composed of Congolese and African musicians, Nouvelle Alliance shares Congolese culture through music and dance.

As well as live concerts, Nouvelle Alliance leads workshops on Congolese music and dance in Schools and Colleges.



### **Dance & Poetry**

#### **The New Step for African Community (NESTAC)**

This Rochdale-based project started in 2007. NESTAC's dance group is focused on building positive connections in their local neighbourhoods through the art of African Dance.



**WAST (Women Asylum Seekers Together)** are of all ages and backgrounds, often in vulnerable situations, who refuse to be invisible and want to make their voices heard.



**Upasana** are young dancers who perform the traditional Indian dance Bharatnatyam. The group have packed out the Lowry Theatre and performed in front of huge audiences throughout the North West.



### **Food Stalls**

Food has always been a popular element of the Exodus Festival. In 2009 Food Hygiene Certificate training was run by the Ensemble French Supplementary School, and a number of the groups who didn't already have the qualification attended this course.

The food groups also attended a meeting at CAN with Mike Atkinson the Health & Safety Advisor, and Louise Shelly the Food Area Manager a month before the event. The meeting included health & safety advice, an overview of the equipment provided and menu planning. Each group submitted a menu plan beforehand and this was discussed at the meeting.

For the first time CAN didn't organise a commercial catering van to attend the festival, except for an ice-cream van. This worked really well as all of the food stalls sold out of food by the end of the day, and an extra van would not have been needed.

On the day of the festival there were 5 community food stalls, each selling traditional food. The following groups had a stall:

- Pakistani Refugee Organisation
- Women from the Far West
- Ceebee
- Eritrean Women's Group
- Ensemble French Supplementary School

The Eritrean women also ran a traditional coffee ceremony stall. Originally 8 food stalls were planned but unfortunately three groups dropped out in the lead up to the festival.



The food stalls are very popular with members of the public and are a fantastic way to break down barriers between communities.

### **Site Décor Project**



The site decoration project was led by Wendy Meadley and aimed to create work to be displayed in Cathedral Gardens to add to the visual impact of the festival site. Wendy worked with Year 12 students at Manchester Academy to create banners and flags for the site. A banner was also created by the Bury Eagles Wings Textile Group and was displayed as part of the entrance archway. The festival site was very colourful and attractive, and helped draw the attention of passers-by. 71 participants took part in making workshops in the lead up to the festival for the site decoration and parade projects.

### **Parade**

Artist Alison Vaas worked with Rainbow Haven Salford and Bolton Red Cross Women's Group to create flags and banners to be used in the festival parade. Participants from Manchester Academy and Bolton Red Cross attended the festival and took part in the parade displaying the work they had created, alongside music from the samba band Bloco Novo. The parade took place in Cathedral Gardens and added an interesting dynamic element to the day.



### **Dance Workshops**

- African and Caribbean dance workshop with Magdalen Bartlett
- Tai Chi workshop with Zhou Juan
- South Indian dance workshop with Deepa Ganesh and Upasana

Over 100 people took part in these dance workshops in B2B Room 1 throughout the day. The workshops were very popular and the room was packed with participants of a wide range of ages.



### **Drumming Workshop**

West African Development ran a very popular African drumming workshop throughout the day in Cathedral Gardens. There was fantastic feedback from the participants who found it very accessible even for those who had never drummed before. The only problem was that the location was a little close to the Outdoor Stage which led to sound clashes.

### **Arts & Crafts Workshops**

A number of participatory arts activities took place in Cathedral Gardens.

- **Luke Marsh** - ran a paper-cutting workshop.
- **TAFWA** - ran a Nigerian painting workshop and displayed Nigerian head-gear.
- **Blackburn Art Gallery** - Thai artist Mok ran a clay sculpture workshop.
- **Chinese Art Centre** - ran a calligraphy workshop.
- **Akinyemi** - was based in Urbis painting performers and audience members throughout the day.

### **The workshops:**

- Got the public involved in a creative activity which they might not have tried before
- Allowed individuals to input directly into the Festival activities and creativity
- Brought people together through creative and inclusive workshops
- Provided free fun activities for children, young people and adults adding to the festival's reputation as a great day out for all of the family

### **DJs**

There were 2 DJs (one on each stage): DJ Richard Mujeri on the Foyer Stage and DJ Buzz Bury from Blackpool Promoting Music on the Outdoor Stage.

### **Comperes**

Yusra Warsama and Jean Azip Blanchard compered on the Foyer Stage, while Segun Lee-French and Borhan Mohammadi compered the Outdoor Stage.

## Marketing

### Print, radio, TV and online

Nicola Mason from Jagged Marketing was hired to publicise the Exodus Festival to press, radio, TV and online. This resulted in the following exposure:

28/06/2009	The Observer	Press	Manchester City Council Events Advert - paragraph on Exodus Festival
04/07/2009	The Guardian Guide	Press	Manchester City Council Events Advert - paragraph on Exodus Festival
23/07/2009	All FM	Radio	Interview with Erin on Breakfast Show about Exodus Festival
30/07/2009	All FM	Radio	Replay of Interview with Erin on Breakfast Show about Exodus Festival
29/07/2009	ALL FM East Manchester	Radio	Interview with Erin on African Taxi show and playing songs by Exodus artists
31/07/2009	DM Digital	TV	Interview with Erin at Urbis
31/07/2009	Manchester Evening News	Press	Double page article, including interview with Erin, photos & programme highlights.
July	Arts List	Web	Festival preview
July	BBC Manchester Online	Web	Festival preview
July	City Life Online	Web	Festival preview
July	Eventext	Web	Festival preview
July	Manchester Confidential	Web	Festival preview
July	The Asian News	Web	Festival preview
July	The Mule	Web	Festival Review
31/07/2009	Metro	Press	Festival preview
27/07/2009	Big Issue in the North	Press	Festival preview
30/07/2009	Oldham Chronicle	Press	Festival preview
30/07/2009	Heywood Advertiser	Press	Festival preview
30/07/2009	North & East Manchester Advertiser	Press	Festival preview
30/07/2009	Salford Advertiser	Press	Festival preview
30/07/2009	South Manchester Reporter	Press	Festival preview
30/07/2009	Stockport Express	Press	Festival preview
30/07/2009	Wilmslow Express	Press	Festival preview
01/08/2009	BBC Radio Manchester	Radio	Interview with B from Educated Thugz on Breakfast Show

Please see Appendix B for copies of all media coverage.

Nicola also arranged for the Exodus Festival to be promoted in the following e-newsletters: Arts About Manchester Family-Friendly, Arts About Manchester Festivals, Manchester Food & Drink Festival, Manchester Jazz Festival, 24:7 Theatre Festival and Feelgood Theatre. This promoted the festival to over 20,000 people.

### Leaflet

20,000 A5 leaflets were produced, designed by Reform Creative with four different designs (each featuring a different Exodus artist). 2000 leaflets were sent by direct mail to CAN's mailing list. 7500 leaflets were distributed by Arts About Manchester, and the rest were distributed through the Exodus networks, and by volunteers to shops, cafes and bars throughout Central Manchester.

## **Audience Feedback**

The audience evaluation forms showed that people heard about the festival in the following ways:

Flyer	16	= 14%
Newspaper/magazine	26	= <b>23%</b>
Radio/TV	1	= 0.8%
Website/email	18	= 15%
Word of mouth	39	= <b>35%</b>
Walked pass	7	= 6%
Other	6	= 5%

Word of mouth was as usual the most common way for people to hear about the festival. However the second most common way was from a newspaper or magazine, with a significant increase in this method from previous years. This may be in large part due to the prominent coverage the event received in the Manchester Evening News.

## **Recommendations for 2010**

- Hold the festival in July 2010, after Refugee Week to avoid this busy time, but before school holidays.
- Develop the site decoration project in 2010, working with Wendy Meadley again and building upon the work created this year.
- Ensure the festival continues to have two stages because of the programming opportunities it presents (CAN could programme all groups who wanted to perform, and 20% host community groups could perform which allowed for very diverse programming).
- Aim to programme more dance acts and some quality headline music groups.
- Performer contracts should state which stage they will be performing on to avoid misunderstanding.
- Continue to programme dance workshops and an all day drumming workshop as these were very popular.
- Work with groups in the lead up to the festival to develop their performances.

## **Appendix A**

### **Stalls**

The following organisations had stalls at the Exodus Festival.

Arts About Manchester  
Blackburn Gallery  
Boaz Trust  
British Red Cross  
Chinese Arts Centre  
Eagles Wing  
Embrace Project - Salford City Council  
George House Trust  
International Organisation of Migration  
Kurdish Creative Film Centre  
Manchester Advice  
Norba Crafts  
Refugee Action  
Salford University  
Women Asylum Seekers Together

### **Food Stalls**

The following groups had food stalls at the Exodus Festival.

- 1) Women from the Far West
- 2) Ceebee
- 3) Pakistani Refugee Organisation
- 4) Eritrean Women's Group
- 5) Ensemble French Supplementary School
- 6) Ice cream van

## Appendix B

### Press Coverage

Publication	Arts List – <a href="http://www.artslist.org.uk">www.artslist.org.uk</a>
Date	July 2009

arts list

## Exodus Festival 2009

various / outdoor

2 Aug 2009

**Congolese rumba, beat boxing and bhangra music** – there's something for everyone to enjoy at this year's **Exodus Festival**.

On **Sunday 2 August, 12-6pm, Urbis and Cathedral Gardens in Manchester** will be transformed by world music and culture as local communities unite for this year's **Exodus Festival**.

Now in its eighth year, the one day extravaganza celebrates **Greater Manchester's** diverse refugee communities and promises to be a cultural feast with **live music, dance performances, workshops, craft activities** and **international food stalls** from across the globe.

Festival co-coordinator **Erin McNeaney** said: "Exodus is about Greater Manchester celebrating its diversity. The festival is an opportunity for communities to express and share their different cultures through the arts and it's an event which has something for everyone to enjoy."

Along with music and dance performances on the main stages, there will be arts and craft activities, **Tai Chi, South Indian dance** and **African drumming workshops**. Plus, international food stalls from **Eritrea, Sudan, Congo, Cameroon** and **Pakistan**.

For further information, go to [www.can.uk.com/exodus](http://www.can.uk.com/exodus)

**Dates:** Sunday 2 August

**Location:** Urbis and Cathedral Gardens

**Time:** 12-6pm

**Price:** The Festival is free and there is no need to book.



**For more Information:** Go to [www.can.uk.com/exodus](http://www.can.uk.com/exodus)

Publication	BBC Manchester - <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk">www.bbc.co.uk</a>
Date	July 2009

## The Guide: weekend things to do

A few suggestions to help you plan your weekend (31 July-2 Aug)

### Kids & Family

Celebrating refugee communities from across Greater Manchester, **Exodus** is a chance to see and hear a diverse range of music and dance.

And it really is diverse, as there's music from Afghanistan, Angola, Cameroon, DR Congo, India, Kurdistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe on offer at the festival.

Better still, it doesn't have to be a case of just sitting back and listening, as there are also interactive workshops, children's activities, and international food market, world crafts and a selection of stalls.

It all makes for one of the most vibrant days in Manchester's summer and offers a chance to really celebrate the cultural mix that makes the city so special.

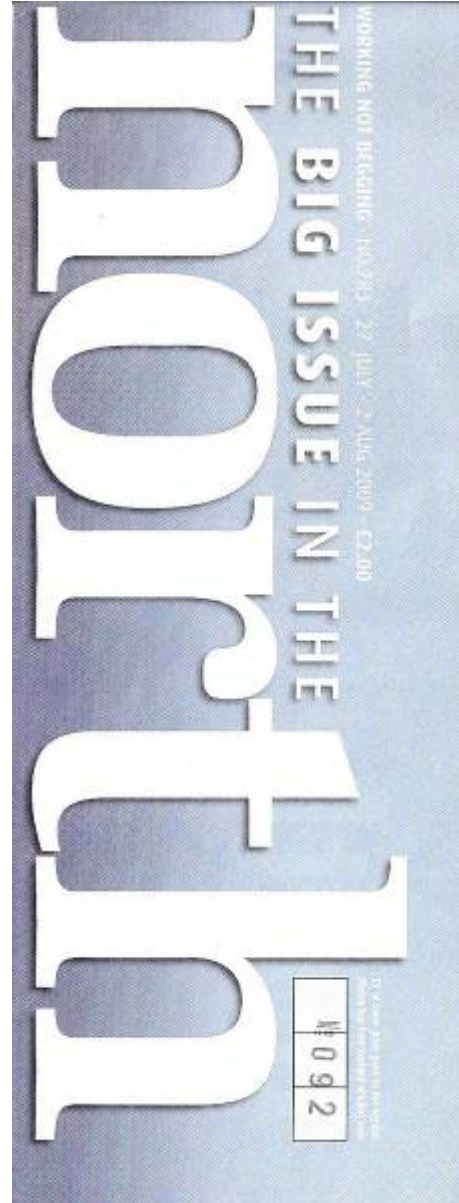
**Exodus is in Cathedral Gardens alongside Urbis on Sun 2 Aug. The event is free.**

*For more information, visit the Exodus website*



Exodus is a celebration of arts, music and culture

Publication	The Big Issue in the North
Date	27 July -2 August 2009



Publication	City Life online – www.citylife.co.uk
Date	July 2009



Testimony

## Exodus Festival 2009 (2 Aug)

May 11, 2009

### 2 August Urbis And Cathedral Gardens

A unique celebration of arts and culture brought to you by Greater Manchester's diverse refugee communities. Featuring world music and dance from Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Cameroon, DR Congo, India, Kurdistan, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Zimbabwe and other countries across the globe. Look out for interactive workshops, children's activities, international food market, world crafts and stalls. Event times: 1-7pm.

[www.can.uk.com/exodus](http://www.can.uk.com/exodus)

Publication	Eventtext – www.eventtext.com
Date	July 2009

## EXODUS FESTIVAL

2 AUGUST, 1-7PM

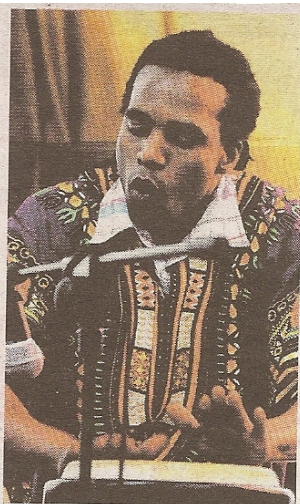
URBIS & CATHEDRAL GARDENS, FREE



A unique family-friendly celebration, all created by Greater Manchester's diverse refugee communities. Featuring world music and dance from across the globe, interactive workshops, children's arts activities, international food market, world crafts and stalls. For information call 0161 234 2975.

[www.can.uk.com/exodus](http://www.can.uk.com/exodus)

Publication	Heywood Advertiser
Date	Thursday 29 July 2009



**DIFFERENT DRUM** Heritage Survival will play at Exodus

## Exodus Festival

**Urbis and Cathedral Gardens, Manchester, Sunday, August 2**

EXPERIENCE a celebration of arts and culture from the North-West's diverse refugee communities.

This super free event, which runs from 12noon to 6pm, will feature everything from Congolese rumba to bhangra music, as Urbis and Cathedral Gardens are transformed by world music and culture.

Now in its eighth year, the one-day extravaganza features performances by people from an extraordinary range of countries, with Afghanistan, Angola, Cameroon, India, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan and Zimbabwe just some of the nations represented.

The emphasis here is on having a great time with interactive workshops, children's activities, world crafts and stalls and an international food market.

Two main stages of performances will welcome groups from across Greater Manchester including Afro-Latin percussion collective Bloco Novo, reggae band The Dubsid and festival favourites Britannia Rumba.

International names appearing include Congolese pop singer Ya Freddy, Manchester reggae band

Advertiser  
Heywood

Publication	Manchester City Council web-site
Date	July 2009

### **Events Listings: Exodus Festival 2009**

#### **Exodus Festival 2009**

**Date: 2nd Aug 09**

**Location: Urbis and Cathedral Gardens**

**Time: 12:00 - 18:00**

**Cost: Free**

A spectacular showcase of arts and culture and a day out for all the family to enjoy.

A unique celebration of arts and culture is brought to you by Greater Manchester's diverse refugee communities. Featuring world music and dance from Afghanistan, Angola, Cameroon, DR Congo, India, Kurdistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Zimbabwe and other countries across the globe.

Look out for interactive workshops, children's activities, international food market, world crafts and stalls.

The event is free and there's no need to book.

For more information see the [Exodus website](#) (external site) or call 0161 234 2975.

Publication	Manchesterconfidential.com
Date	July 2009

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ManchesterConfidential.Com

TELLS YOU WHERE TO EAT. WHERE TO GO OUT AND WHAT'S HOT IN THE CITY YOU LIVE IN.

SPONSOR:

## Free stuff to do this summer in Manchester

Here's a guide to festivals, carnivals, theatre, music and sport that won't cost the earth (or won't break the piggy bank) .....

If this year's holiday plans have been put on hold, there are far worse places to have a stay-at-home summer than Manchester. The City Council has just announced a bundle of free and great value events and celebrations that'll give city folk and their families something to do over the summer months – check out some of the free highlights in the calendar below, or [click here](#) to view the MCC Family events' microsite.

### Exodus Festival

2 August

#### Urbis and Cathedral Gardens

A family-friendly, free event featuring world music and dance, workshops, children's arts activities and international stalls, all created by Greater Manchester's diverse refugee communities.  
[www.can.uk.com/exodus](http://www.can.uk.com/exodus)



[ENLARGE IMAGE](#)



## Sarah Walters gets ready to join the cultural celebrations of Greater Manchester's diverse refugee communities

If world music has always felt that little bit too intimidating for you to dabble in alone, then Exodus is about as good an introduction to the globe's many musical riches as you could hope for.

From Congolese rumba to Indian bhajans, Nigerian hip-hop and Manchester sagg, Exodus is a celebration of multiculturalism - of sounds, cultures and people coming together to honour their diversity.

The event takes over Urbis and the surrounding Cathedral Gardens on Sunday with two big stages - one outdoor, one indoor - plus a range of market stalls and some smaller group events inside the gallery.

As well as a packed programme of music, there are dance and drumming performances and workshops, tai chi classes, craft activities and a huge array of stalls selling foods and flavours from across the world.

Exodus co-ordinator Erin McNeaney has been with the festival since it began in 2001, and the agenda has always been simple: to engage with refugees, asylum seekers and other local communities in Greater Manchester and get them involved in developing creative projects using their traditional art skills and contemporary approaches.

"It's always been an important event for the refugee community in Manchester - both those who have already settled in the country and new arrivals," says Erin.

"Asylum seekers who are waiting to see if they can stay are not allowed to work in this country, so it's good to be able to take their minds off what can be a very stressful time."

"The festival was key event for showcasing the stuff we're doing in the rest of the year with the Exodus Greater Manchester Refugee Arts project in the local community."

The programme, then, aims to reflect the cultural background of the refugee communities taking part as well as understand the past they can play in the region they now call, or hope to call, home.

"It's very international, and that's something you don't see in any other festival," continues Erin.

"It's great that the city has such wonderful festivals as the Manchester International Festival, but this kind of cultural mix is something only Exodus can claim.

"This festival is an opportunity for communities to express and share their different cultures through the arts and it's an event which has something for everyone to enjoy.

"It's always so popular with performers, it's never hard to get groups who are committed to taking part. It's always harder to fill them all in."

The event's list of creatives - which includes nationals of Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Angola, China, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Africa, Kurdistan, Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Iran as well as a Romany Gypsy Flamenco artist from Glasgow and plenty of representatives from around Greater Manchester - makes Exodus one giant cultural melting pot.

It's a fact that Exodus regulars Educated Thugg, a Manchester hip-hop outfit, know from experience. This year, they're back for a solo set as well as to perform alongside Testimony, a Congolese dance group set up by Congolese asylum seeker Emmanuela Machoi Yogoletu to make friends and support people in a similar position to hers.



**CULTURAL EXCHANGE** Exodus regulars Educated Thugg, above, will be back in action, alongside Congolese dance group Testimony, above left, and Brazilian percussionist Aisha, above right. The festival has lots to offer young and old alike

group set up by Congolese asylum seeker Emmanuela Machoi Yogoletu to make friends and support people in a similar position to hers.

Educated Thugg co-founder, B, said Exodus is an event they return to because of its every cultural and everyday appeal.

"It brings communities together and gives everybody new

ple the opportunity to perform and get out there," he says. "It's because of performances at festivals like Exodus that we have been able to raise our profile in the music industry."

Certainly, many of the one-day event's performers will be hoping Exodus can give their careers wings, too. Testimony are one of the hand-picked for



critical acclaim at this year's show, but they've joined by many others who threaten to steal the show.

Already well known to the Manchester City crowd, Congolese singer Ya Freddy opens proceedings outside, and his ode to the extraordinary life and tragic death of footballer Marc Vivien Foe could be the day's biggest show stopper.

Inside, Lamin The Wizard threatens to give him a run for his money when the Sierra Le-

onean musician opens up the Urbis Foyer Stage with some Afro hip-hop, while Elephant (taking over inside at 12.20pm) should draw an eclectic crowd with his Zimbabwean Kwato music - a clash of house music and African sounds.

Then, there's the parade - kicking off at 3.35pm outside - when samba band Bloco Novo will lead the audience in a procession around Cathedral Gardens waving flags and banners made by various community

groups, including Bolson Red Cross Women's Group and Salford Rainbow Haven.

"I'm really looking forward to the parade," adds Erin. "Bloco Novo have always been a very popular draw and they've been doing a lot of work back in Africa for this so it'll be great to see what they've been getting up to."

» Exodus Festival, Urbis and Cathedral Gardens, Sunday, 12pm-6pm, Free.

that feast of global flavours is spread across two stages. CityLife is here to guide you through the bits we think will be the best to make the most of the day's performances. For a full schedule for all stages, go to [can.uk.com/exodus](http://can.uk.com/exodus).

**12pm: Ya Freddy**  
Outdoor Stage, Cathedral Gardens  
If you turn up to find a sea of blue shirts gathered around the stage in Cathedral Gardens on Sunday afternoon, don't be at all surprised. Congolese singer-songwriter Freddy did, after all, write a tribute song to one-time Manchester City FC player and Cameroonian Marc-Vivien Foe after the 28-year-old's untimely death in 2003 after he suffered a cardiac arrest on the pitch. He played his tribute, Foe, We All Miss You, to a full house at City's stadium. No doubt a few will be back to sing along again.

**12.20pm: Elephant**  
Urbis Foyer Stage  
If someone told you they made Zimbabwean Kwato music, you'd probably scratch your head, but if they told you that essentially meant African-influenced house music, you'd dig out your smallest, most fluorescent outfit, shove your whistle in your pocket and get ready to pan-ar-tay.

**12.40pm: Zhou Juan**  
Urbis Foyer Stage  
A mixture of music and medication - Chinese folk songs set to tai chi. Zhou is also running tai chi sessions in Urbis' B2B Room 1 until 3pm.

**1pm: West African Development**  
Outdoor Stage, Cathedral Gardens  
There's nothing that says world music more than some fantastic West African drumming music. And few do it better than WAD, who dance to the beat of their djambes, dou dou, akouba and sato drums.

**1.25pm: Tolu, and 1.35pm: Parveen Nughai**  
Outdoor Stage and Urbis Foyer Stage  
Split yourself in two if you can to catch traditional sounds from two countries that we would benefit from knowing more about. Tolu (meaning sunrise) hail from Afghanistan and Parveen comes from Iran.

**1.45pm: Educated Thuggz**  
Outdoor Stage, Cathedral Gardens  
Already making waves on both sides of the Pond, Educated Thuggz call Manchester home, but they have come together from Europe, Africa and the UK. Their worldly-wise blend of hip-hop and rap influences from all corners of the globe, and their



duet with Testimony, are likely to be the big draws of the day.

**2.05pm: WAST**  
Urbis Foyer Stage  
Away from the music, Wast Asylum Seekers Together is 20 minutes of poetry to the schedule at the indoor stage. All-ages group, WAST come from all kinds of vulnerable backgrounds but are united by their desire to make as much noise as they can about the injustices they have seen.

**3pm-4.30pm: African & Caribbean Dance**  
B2B Room 1, Urbis  
Learn the ins and outs of the dance styles with Magdalen Bartlett and NESTEC (the name of whom will show you how to do it professionally on the B2B Stage at 2.25pm).

**3.35pm: Parade**  
Outdoor Stage, Cathedral Gardens  
Well, we say stage... Yes, it's 3.35pm and time for a Samba-style parade around the gardens. Communities from across Greater Manchester Samba band Bloco Novo (pictured) for a flag and banner-waving dance session. Bloco Novo carry on the parade back on stage at 4pm.

**3.40pm: Upasana**  
Urbis Foyer Stage  
You might miss the start if you're locked in a Samba parade but get inside to check out Upasana as soon as you can because the young dancers will be performing the traditional Indian dance of Bharatanatyam. They've already sold out many theatres prior to this performance, so this is a pe-

Your one-stop guide to what's on in Manchester



## Festival highlights

A FULL day of world music is a lot to take in, especially when that feast of global flavours is spread across two stages. CityLife is here to guide you through the bits we think will be the best to make the most of the day's performances. For a full schedule for all stages, go to [can.uk.com/exodus](http://can.uk.com/exodus).

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opportunity to watch them do their thing.

### 4.30pm-6pm: South African Dance

B2B Room 1, Urbis  
Back indoors, Upasana turn their attentions to teaching us the skills we've just been witnessing.

### 4.35pm: Testimony

Outdoor Stage, Cathedral Gardens  
Congolese rhythms, Cameroonian R&B and South African jazz, all delivered with a sanctified message of salvation.

### 4.45pm: Letwin Berebende & Rumba Maestro, and 5.20pm: Britannia Rumba

Urbis Foyer Stage and Outdoor Stage  
As the day draws to a close, the speed of the music is just hotting up with two great rumba bands scheduled to close the stage. Firstly, Letwin and Rumba Maestro turn up the Zimbabwean live beats and then Britannia Rumba get to curtain closing slot outdoors to play their distinctly British take on the Congolese rumba.

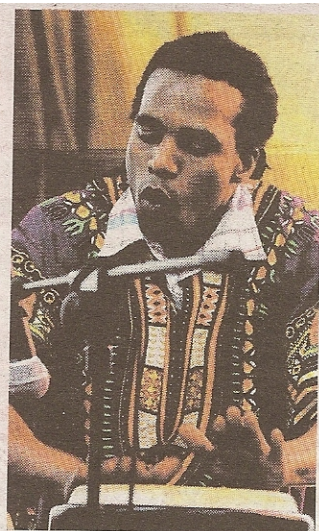
And throughout the day... arts and crafts markets and food stalls are open all day, with specialist makers and vendors from Kurdistan, Nigeria, Eritrea, Sudan, Pakistan and Africa. Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery's pAAy artist in residence and sculptor Mok Buakaow will also be at the festival. The colourful site has also been decorated by 40 Year 12 students from Manchester Academy High School, Moss Side.

Sarah Walters

Your one-stop guide to



Publication	Middleton Guardian
Date	Thursday 29 July 2009



**DIFFERENT DRUM** Heritage Survival will play at Exodus

## Exodus Festival

**Urbis and Cathedral Gardens, Manchester, Sunday, August 2**

EXPERIENCE a celebration of arts and culture from the North-West's diverse refugee communities.

This super free event, which runs from 12noon to 6pm, will feature everything from Congolese rumba to bhangra music, as Urbis and Cathedral Gardens are transformed by world music and culture.

Now in its eighth year, the one-day extravaganza features performances by people from an extraordinary range of countries, with Afghanistan, Angola, Cameroon, India, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan and Zimbabwe just some of the nations represented.

The emphasis here is on having a great time with interactive workshops, children's activities, world crafts and stalls and an international food market.

Two main stages of performances will welcome groups from across Greater Manchester including Afro-Latin percussion collective Bloco Novo, reggae band The Dubside and festival favourites Britannia Rumba.

International names appearing include Congolese pop singer Ya Freddy, Manchester reggae band



Publication	Salford Advertiser
Date	Thursday 29 July 2009



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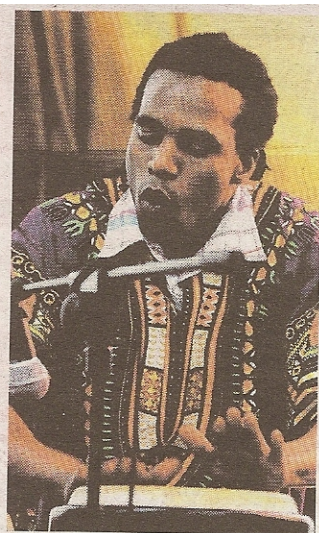
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Publication	South Manchester Reporter
Date	Thursday 30 July



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Publication	Oldham Chronicle
Date	Thursday 30 July

# OLDHAM EVENING Chronicle

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THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2009

day out



## Fun for all, from anywhere...

**C**ONGOLESE rumba — *no, real* — beat-boxing and bhangra music are just three of dozens of things to see, hear or try at Sunday's Exodus Festival in Manchester's Cathedral Gardens.

From noon-6pm the area around Urbis will be transformed by world music and culture as local communities unite for this year's colourfully exotic festival.

Now in its eighth year, the event celebrates Greater Manchester's diverse religious communities with a cultural feast of music, dance performances, workshops, craft activities and international food stalls.

Two main performance stages will feature groups from across Greater Manchester, including Afro-Latin percussion collective Bloco Novo, reggae band The Dubside and festival favourites Britannia Rumba, whose infectious rhythm and dance sounds are guaranteed to get crowds dancing.

One of the festival highlights will be a performance by Testimony, a women's gospel and community group set up by Emmanuel Machoz Yogoile, an asylum seeker from Democratic Republic of Congo.



Testimony will be accompanied by Educated Thugs, a hip hop rap group formed in 2008, the six members of which are of different backgrounds and cultural heritage, all of which is used in creating their music.

Exodus is one of the more interesting events in Manchester's summer calendar, the only festival in the city dedicated to promoting communities and varied cultures.

Festival co-ordinator Erin McNeaney said: "The festival is an opportunity for communities to share their different cultures through the arts — and it's an event with something for everyone to enjoy."

More info at [www.cam.uk.com/exodus](http://www.cam.uk.com/exodus)

Publication	The Advertiser – East Manchester
Date	Thursday 29 July 2009



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Now in its eighth year, the one-day extravaganza features performances by people from an extraordinary range of countries, with Afghanistan, Angola, Cameroon, India, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan and Zimbabwe just some of the nations represented.

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Publication	The Asian News – <a href="http://www.theasiannews.co.uk">www.theasiannews.co.uk</a>
Date	14 July 2009

## **The Asian News**

### **Exodus Festival 2009**

July 14, 2009

Urbis and Cathedral Gardens will be transformed by world music and culture as local communities unite for this year's Exodus Festival.

Now in its eighth year, the one day extravaganza taking place on 2 August celebrates Greater Manchester's diverse refugee communities and promises to be a cultural feast with live music, dance performances, workshops, craft activities and international food stalls from across the globe.

Congolese rumba, South African jazz, Kurdish dance and West African drumming will provide an electrifying afternoon of free entertainment. Two main stages of performances will welcome groups from across Greater Manchester including Pakistani and Indian group Asian Music Talent, Afro Latin percussion collective 'Bloco Novo', reggae band 'The Dubside' and festival favourites 'Britannia Rumba', whose infectious rhythm and dance sounds are guaranteed to get the crowd dancing.

One of the festival highlights is a performance by 'Educated Thugz', a hip hop / rap group formed in 2003. The six members of the group are of different backgrounds and cultural heritage which inspires and influences their music. To B, one of the co-founders of the group, Exodus is one of the most unique and important events in Manchester's summer calendar.

B said: "Exodus stands out for me because it is the only festival in Manchester dedicated to promoting communities and the city's different cultures. It brings communities together and gives everyday people the opportunity to perform and get out there. It's because of performances at festivals like Exodus we have been able to raise our profile in the music industry".

Festival co-coordinator Erin McNeaney said: "Exodus is about Greater Manchester celebrating its diversity. The festival is an opportunity for communities to express and share their different cultures through the arts and it's an event which has something for everyone to enjoy."

Along with music and dance performances on the main stages, there will be arts and craft activities, Tai Chi, South Indian dance and African drumming workshops. Plus, international food stalls from Eritrea, Sudan, Congo, Cameroon and Pakistan.

The Festival is free and there is no need to book. For further information, go to [www.can.uk.com/exodus](http://www.can.uk.com/exodus)

Publication	The Mule – <a href="http://www.themule.info">www.themule.info</a>
Date	August 2009

## Review

### Exodus Festival (Sunday 2nd August)

**Manchester’s diverse art scene is one not to be sniffed at, especially when it reveals gems like the Exodus Festival, a unique celebration of arts and culture from Greater Manchester’s refugee communities.**



Exodus is a year round project, administered by Community Arts Northwest, working with Manchester-based refugees and asylum seekers on an array of arts projects. The intention of the project is to take the experiences of refugee artists to the wider public.

Erin McNeany, the festival’s coordinator, described Exodus as an opportunity to “showcase and celebrate the culture of refugee communities and what they bring to Manchester.”

On Sunday these sentiments were resonated by many of the acts themselves. “West African Development”, a traditional dance and drumming group, said the great benefit of the festival was the opportunity it offers for ethnic minorities to let their culture be known to others.

Lucidity, a performer from the Ajah Collective, summed up perfectly what the festival is about: everyone is welcome to come along and celebrate together. “It gives people the chance to hear your music and through that learn the plight of asylum seekers.”

From Women Asylum Seekers Together’s poetry readings and songs, to the workshops on Tai Chi, African and South Indian Dance – via food and craft stalls – the carnival atmosphere certainly suggested that the festival was a fantastic success!

Best of all, Exodus is just one of many free festivals and events in Manchester this summer, celebrating arts, culture and everything this fantastic city has to offer.

For more information on how to get involved with the Exodus project, visit [www.can.uk.com/exodus](http://www.can.uk.com/exodus). **Jennie O’Hara**

Publication	Wilmslow Express
Date	Thursday 29 July 2009



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