



The Twelfth UK International Audio Drama Festival

The Community Studio, Cathedral Lodge Hotel, The Precincts,
Canterbury CT1 2EH

And online

www.radiodramafestival.org.uk

Full programme

Welcome!

To Canterbury with Rich Offerings

We are delighted to welcome you to our twelfth edition of the festival, celebrating the best in audio drama from around the globe. This year we have had a very diverse range of entries but have been particularly pleased to have had a significant number from younger creatives – a sure sign that the art form is indeed flourishing. It is, of course, a source of great sadness that we cannot include everything and we do recognise how disappointing it is if your work is not included. We try to reflect the full range of countries, languages and genres in those we are able to include and hope that everyone will therefore find something to enjoy. Don't forget that after the Festival finishes, there is a month in which you can vote for the work you think you should receive the Audience Award. The outcome is nearly always different from the jury awards!

We would like to say a special thank you for their continuing support to the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) who have been much valued friends of the festival since we moved to Canterbury. We would also like to express our appreciation to Canterbury BID for their support in promoting the festival. A huge thank you too to Alison and Nigel Deacon for The Young Producer's award and to our jury co-chairs this year Nigel Deacon and Helen Rowe.

As ever, the festival is made possible by a team. So thank you Pete, Eric, Bethan, Chris, Krzysia. And Thank You - our often unseen team of online hosts who make sure that online listeners also enjoy a festival experience - Jenny, Casey, Kateryna, Stephanie, Beatrice and Ed. They will be hosting from the UK, Italy, Ireland, Poland and Romania.

And finally to you – joining us in Canterbury or wherever you are around the world. We are really looking forward to it.

Festival Team.

Notes to the programme

All descriptions have been taken from material supplied by submitters. Some have been edited for length.

Timings are approximate and include short breaks. The programme is subject to short notice amendment. For technical or other reasons, we may have to adjust the programme or remove entries. The producers' decision on these matters is final.

Please note that days start and finish at different times.

Scripts are available on the website. All bookings for online and in person events via Eventbrite.

Jury discussions take place each evening after a break – they will take place in the same space we have used for the listening sessions. Anyone who has heard any of the work during the day in person or online is welcome to join the discussion. The discussion will be in person and on zoom. The discussion last about an hour.

All audio files can be accessed at any time from their presentation at the festival to the close of the Audience Award via the website.

Monday 30 March

10 am Welcomes and introductions

Jury confirmation and other information.

10.30 Praxis Media & Echidna Audio (Australia)/ Dogman episode 3/ English/ 34 Minutes

Well known current affairs investigator David Chase nick-named 'the axe' from popular segment 'Cut to the Chase' has been on the tail of a murderer who was released from gaol after killing a man but who claims he was a wolf man at the time. A good old fashioned right-wing 'moral outrage sensationalist' field-operative, Chase doesn't like what he sees happening to the news world around him - especially at his long-standing Network, CNT (we missed 'u') , which, under the spinning eye of Veronica Fox, is reverting to myth making, 'false facts' and disinformation. Chase feels his expiration date is closing in as he tries to keep traditional gutsy tabloid antics front and centre. He gets his chance to bribe Ted Victor the self-alleged 'wolf man of Wirrawee' in for a live interview... and to show real guts - on the crest of a

full moon. Veronica Fox can't help but get her magic wand spinning and tries moulding it all for the alt-right, while Chase desperately clings onto his authority as a 'common sense' conservative reporter. The world comes to a standstill as Ted and Chase go face-to-face in an event billed as the next tabloid 'Frost versus Nixon' - left activists surround the building and the recipe is set for an outlandish denouement...

11.10 **Georgian Public Radio (Georgia)/ Anna's Reverie/ Georgian/ 47 Minutes**

Where does the boundary lie between reality and invention? What is a simple mistake, and what becomes a crime? Zurab Kandelaki's radio play *Anna's Reverie* and the *Story of Becoming a Rabbit* leads the listener into a labyrinth of memories and sensations, where two figures - Anna and the Man - attempt to find their way. Anna cannot remember what a rabbit looks like; the Man obsessively searches for a lost melody, one that seems to be trapped within his own past. For both of them, this search is not only an act of recollection, but an effort to reclaim the self. Their relationship oscillates between reality and imagination - like an encounter that might have happened, or like a memory's persistent shadow. Time fractures into fragments, epochs bleed into one another, and the listener moves across shifting spaces: from dreamlike textures to reality, or to something dangerously close to it; between private pain and collective memory. The sound of a hostile era follows the play quietly yet insistently - like the distant, relentless song of the sea, like the echo of lost cities, wars, and interrupted lives. Here, the rabbit is no longer merely an animal, and the forgotten melody is no longer just music: both transform into inner states, moral signs, and shapes of fear. Forgetting becomes one way of survival. Remembering - an act of confession. And confession, a source of pain. The radio play offers no easy answers. It leaves us among voices and silences, compelling us to ask ourselves: when do we remain human, and when do we begin, slowly, to turn into rabbits?

12.00 **Fereydoun Mehrabi (Iran)/ The Autumn's Dream/ Persian/35 minutes**

In this poignant radio drama, Nader, a seasoned writer, embarks on a journey back to his childhood town after years of absence, driven by a longing to reconnect with the love of his youth. As he wanders through familiar streets, vivid memories from his past resurface, evoking a bittersweet nostalgia. However, he discovers that the girl he once adored is now married and has a young daughter. Inspired by his experiences and the complexities of love, Nader channels his emotions into crafting a romance novel that intertwines his life story with the echoes of his past. This tale explores themes of love, memory, and the passage of time, inviting listeners to reflect on the enduring impact of first love.

12.40 **Alla Turovskaya (Montenegro)/ Not Lost Any more/ English/ 22 minutes**

Not Lost Anymore is a radio drama set almost entirely in a pub called The Black Horse. Mike is the narrator. Every Friday night, he sits at the bar, drinks Guinness, and watches the same man. The man is Edwin. Edwin always orders a Martini and

sits very still. His phone never stops buzzing. His parents call. His wife calls. His daughter, whom he calls Poppet, calls. Work calls. Edwin answers every time. He is polite, controlled, and clearly exhausted.

Mike and Edwin barely speak. They nod, exchange names, and sit in silence. Mike slowly learns who Edwin is through overheard phone calls: a responsible son, husband, father, and manager. He carries everyone's problems. He never seems to have a moment to himself. One Friday, Edwin finally talks.

Lunch

14.00 Chuse Fernandez (Spain)/ Ultea / Spanish/ 11 minutes

A solitary albino man living in the hills rescues a mermaid he names Ulitea after catching her by accident in the Valbona reservoir. They form a tender, unconventional bond marked by daily rituals, shared discoveries, and the quiet joy of companionship. While he finds in her the affection life had always denied him, Ulitea brings playfulness, mystery, and a shifting palette of emotions that shimmer across her scales. Their fragile happiness is shattered when local men, driven by cruelty and prejudice, attack their home. The man arrives too late to save her and is left to face a desolate world without the only being who ever made him feel whole.

14.15 Adrian-Mihai Hasna-Preda (Romania)/ Pădurea mireseilor din Canarale/ Romania/ 42 minutes

A group of present-day YouTubers—Ema, Iris, Luca, and Cosmin—travel to the Forest of the Brides near the village of Dumbrăveni in Dobrogea to film an episode about paranormal activity. As they set up camp and equipment, they introduce the local legend that made the forest infamous: the tragic story of a young woman known as Furnica, also called Ileana.

The narrative shifts to the past, where Furnica is portrayed as a free-spirited, kind, and curious young woman who loves wandering the forest. She lives with her mother, Lăcrămioara, and shares a deep bond with her grandfather, Neculai. Furnica forms close friendships across cultural and religious lines, including Alona, a Jewish girl, and Yasin, a Turkish boy. Furnica and Yasin develop a quiet, tender affection, but social and religious barriers make their love seem impossible, leaving Furnica torn between hope and resignation.

One day, while walking alone through the forest, Furnica encounters three Tatar bandits. What begins as a seemingly harmless interaction turns violent: she is attacked and killed, her body hidden among the fallen leaves. When she fails to return home, her family and the villagers search desperately for her, only to discover her death. According to legend, divine justice follows—the bandits perish in a catastrophic storm, struck down by lightning or drowned.

In memory of Furnica, the villagers name the forest and nearby settlement after her, and the place becomes steeped in fear and superstition. It is said that Furnica's restless spirit still haunts the woods, appearing as a sorrowful bride who terrifies wanderers and lures the unwary, while other undead figures roam the forest at night.

Back in the present, as the YouTubers explore the forest at night, their equipment begins to register unexplained activity. They experience intense fear, physical distress, and apparent paranormal phenomena, forcing them to retreat to their camp. By morning, they realize their camera may have captured something extraordinary, suggesting that the legend of Furnica may not be merely a myth, but a lingering presence still bound to the Forest of the Brides.

15.00 Anne Lepere (Belgium)/Nuages/French/ 53 minutes

CLOUDS is a sound fiction unfolding between earth and sky. It begins with the narrator wandering in quiet contemplation, her gaze lost in the sky, when she is suddenly surprised by an eagle that lifts her upward. Carried through multiple layers of the atmosphere, she reaches the threshold of the Cloud Reserve, where she meets its guardian and embarks on an initiatory visit across shifting altitudes.

As the journey progresses, the narrator becomes aware of the growing fragility of clouds, affected by present climate realities. Along the way, magical beings appear, including Big Grain, who investigates how clouds are perceived by humans today. These reflections gradually surface throughout the piece, leading to a climactic moment when the guardian invites the narrator to swallow a cumulus cloud—an intimate experience of becoming cloud from within, feeling each water-filled cell vibrate.

Movements between earth and sky punctuate encounters with the poem-clouds: Cumulus, Stratus, and Cirrus, each embodied through syllables, words, and sonic textures. Human voices emerge and dissolve like drifting cloud formations, shaped by the altitudes they inhabit—lively and playful in mid-levels, dark and dense below, light and ethereal above.

The listening experience unfolds like watching a living sky, where clouds continuously pass and transform. CLOUDS is a meditation on impermanence, reminding us that no one lives under a uniform sky, nor one that is entirely grey or blue. And you—what color is your sky today?

16.00 Fierbinteanu and Stamatina (Belgium)/What is important? /English/ 35 minutes

About 15 years ago, Romanian director Bogdan Stamatina asked his closest friends "What is important?". He filmed their answers and presented them to the world as videos on the internet. The project gained visibility, and the number of interviewees grew. The director then resumed the process, after more than 10 years, to see how the answers changed over time. With some of these recordings, he created a video exhibition in 2025, which, through its approach and production, straddles the seductive boundary between art and anthropology. And now, in 2026, we present "What is important" as a radio drama centred on the same question that haunts us

all. But while the real people who can be seen in the online clips or on the screens of the aforementioned exhibition answering the question "What is important?" have clear identities—a face, a name, a personality—the characters in the radio drama are not like that. They appear stripped of their concrete identity they have in Bogdan Stamatina's footage. Like the people filmed, the characters in this radio drama also say what they think is important, but they find themselves in a soundscape that strips them of everything that is particular and distinct. The intention of the play presented here is to move from the concrete and particular to the universal and timeless, even at the risk of becoming impersonal, lacking in contour, detail, and nuance. With some exceptions, of course, because the temptation of using voices that bring to mind well-known pop culture symbols is great, especially in the age of AI.

16.45 Exxon Institute (Iran) 2 shorts/ Persian

Under the Rain
Shadow on the Green

Jack Lawlor and Daniel Barron (Ireland) / The Tower of the Swallow /English

17.00 Break

17.30 Jury Discussion – open to all

Tuesday 31 March

10.00 David Alan Grier (US)/ A Tower Rises in Babel/ English with some Japanese/10.56

This is an absurdist retelling Tower of Babel Story, (Gen 11:1-9), a story which blames hubris as the reason that humans lost a common language. In re-examining this story for the 21st Century, we assume the role of the Supreme Being. Our creation consists of AI Bots (the lack of opposable thumbs makes the roles somewhat challenging for them). Instead of building a tower, they are attempting to teach a Human Being. Instead of bricks and slime, the Bots are attempting to use the 1940 "Radio Announcer's Test" from National Broadcasting Red Network, a document they seem to confuse with the seasonal song "The 12 Days of Christmas." How our Bots expected to build a tower to the sky from this piece of drivel is unexplainable. But then, once upon a time, The National Broadcast Corporate, the future NBC, expected that this document would form the foundation of radio network that would dominate broadcasting. And they very nearly succeeded

10.10 Tomasz Zacharewicz (Poland)/ Wlazłkotek/Polish/ 45

Somewhere on a farm, animals live peacefully in harmony and routine. That is, until a certain Kitty decides to break free from routine and everyday life. His mission here and now, in this farmyard, is to fulfill his greatest dream: to battle the stereotypes that have clung to the feline family. Firstly, the one that cats can't fly. Just because they can't do it, it doesn't mean they can't learn to! Secondly, a widely known Polish song that has imprisoned cats in the shackles of the words: „A Kitty Once Clambered Very High”.

Our hero says NO – to this song, these shackles, and these stereotypes. And once he's said NO, he sets off on a journey to prove to himself and the whole farm that everything is possible. Unfortunately, his feline brothers also say NO – to the idea of flying, that is – and throw Kitty out of the barn. Shortly after, our hero meets a Dog (a rising star of backyard literature), who, captivated by Kitty's idea, decides to join him and help him on his journey.

11.10 Lietuvos nacionalinis radijas ir televizija (Lithuania)/ Baltieji prieš juoduosius/ Lithuanian/ 44

The radio play *Baltieji prieš juoduosius* (*White vs Black*), based on Danutė Kalinauskaitė's novel, delves into the depths of mother-daughter relationships. Women separated by fate try to rebuild their relationship, while the main character, Dalia, and her mother explore the fate of their family. One of the most important motifs in this work is memory. Dalia's mother's progressive amnesia plunges her into a world of visions. Dalia is forced to watch helplessly as the person closest to her becomes a stranger to reality. We must admit that memories often change, embellish, or disappear altogether as they live in our minds.

The leitmotif of the performance is the soundscape of water. It was chosen as a symbol of memory because true memory is fluid and changing, like water. It can suddenly dry up, freeze or simply evaporate, or it can suddenly burst forth like a spring flood and flood our consciousness, causing new waves of memories. Stories, fragments of feelings, vivid details passed down to us by our parents or grandparents are a priceless legacy that permeates our identity and often determines our life choices in ways we cannot comprehend.

12.00 Piotr Skotnicki (Poland)/ Stan Euphorii/ Polish/ 40

In the aftermath of a cosmic catastrophe, humanity's last survivors—selenites living in lunar cities—cling to a single hope: the Ark, a colossal evacuation vessel built to carry a hundred thousand people back to Earth. Years earlier, a meteor strike devastated the Moon, swallowing the domed settlements in darkness and throwing Earth's natural satellite out of orbit. As the dust finally clears, the Ark's biological-computational systems begin the long "restoration" of its sleeping colonists from anabiosis. Walt Bedfort awakens alone in an isolation cell, disoriented and physically shaken by the revival process. His guide is Gabriel—an unnervingly calm, highly advanced artificial entity whose "cultural prosthesis" allows it to assume a human-like face and voice. Gabriel speaks with the assurance of a caretaker and the cold precision of a mission protocol. Walt, desperate to regain control and to reunite with his wife Flower, pushes against the rules of adaptive quarantine: no contact with other colonists, no access to Noah (the Ark's main onboard computer), and no freedom beyond what the ship permits.

When Walt tries to reclaim Flower and force the Ark to complete its purpose, Gabriel answers with a final test of "humanity": self-destruction. The Ark begins a countdown to annihilation. Walt and Cassandra race to a lifeboat carrying Flower's hibernator, gambling that escape and re-anabiosis will preserve at least a fragment of truth. As Walt seals himself into the pod, he begins recording a log—insisting, as if by sheer declaration he can anchor identity: "My name is Walt Bedfort and I am... human." The story closes as it began—looping back into uncertainty—leaving the audience with a haunting question: is Walt escaping into freedom, or cycling forever inside an intelligence that has mistaken salvation for control, and evolution for possession?

12.45 Beatrice Roman (Romania)/ Half Time/Romanian/4.30

It is the summer of 1981. Marcel Răducanu travels to Dortmund, West Germany, with the Romanian national football team. Officially, he is still an army captain, bound by contract and watched by the state. Unofficially, this journey offers him a single, irreversible chance: after the match, he could stay in the West. If he defects, the Romanian authorities will brand him a deserter and sentence him in absentia to many years in prison. He would lose his country forever, with no right of return. Răducanu stands before an impossible choice. Halftime. In the locker room, amid the smell of sweat and leather, he ties his boots. A moment of stillness. Then movement. Then flight. What will he choose?

12.50 Don Hill (Canada)/ You Asked a Question/ English and Morse Code/ 6.31

January 2026.

The 'new world order' has been declared.

Professor Michael A Persinger died in 2018. The neuroscientist warned before his passing, there soon would be 'no more secrets'. He instructed how layers of hidden persuasion encroaches on the human 'mind'; emotional messages buried within subtle mediums of exchange – repeated, repeated, repeated.

To what end?

Worldwide domination of the human psyche?

Realpolitik now speaks in tongues of analog pulses & digital actors...

13.00 **Lunch**

14.00 **Floriane Pochon Phaune Radio (France)/Time Grows By/French and English/37**

TIME GROWS BY is an immersive audio drama conceived as a soundwalk, where listening becomes the main narrative force and the listener's body is part of the story. The piece unfolds in the Jardin Extraordinaire of Nantes, a place imagined as a temporal anomaly where past, present and future coexist, interfere, and speak to one another. The listener is guided by Rémi Verne, an improbable, fictional grandson of Jules Verne. Part-guide, part-ghost, part-temporal hacker, claims to come from the future and to remember what has not yet happened. Through him, the garden is revealed as a cover for something deeper: a zone where time no longer moves forward but thickens, bifurcates, rewinds, and takes root.

Originally created as a site-specific outdoor experience, TIME GROWS BY is conceived to function fully as an autonomous audio drama. Through spatialized sound and intimate voice work, the piece reconstructs movement, depth and thresholds, allowing the listener to traverse an inner landscape even when experienced remotely. TIME GROWS BY invites the listener to experience time not as something that runs out, but as something that grows. A fiction of listening. A walk through forking temporal paths. An act of attention where the future is not predicted, but carefully cultivated.

14.45 **Tia Morgan (Germany)/ NIXE. Eine Geschichte queerer Beziehungsgewalt / German/54**

In her podcast 'Open Frequency', Jara speaks openly and unapologetically about pleasure, sex, and desire. While researching violence in queer relationships for a new episode, Tonia suddenly reappears — Jara's former swimming coach and her first lesbian love. An old connection flares up, charged with a5racGon, tenderness, and intimacy. As Jara interviews survivors of queer relationship violence for her podcast, she herself is drawn deeper and deeper into a dynamic of dependency and power. A love that turns into a nightmare. For her two-part audio drama NIXE, writer, director, and producer Tia Morgen spoke with people who have experienced psychological or physical violence in queer relationships. These conversations became the basis for an atmospherically dense and emotionally gripping audio drama, with a soundscape that is both tender and unse5ling, performed by a queer ensemble. The soundtrack by Philo Tsoungui moves between trap, UK garage, and siren-like sonic textures. Unfiltered and immersive, NIXE tells stories of lived realities that are too often left unheard.

16.00 Marta Rebzda (Poland)/To The Stars/Polish/English/45

Janina Lewandowska, née Dowbor-Muśnicka (daughter of the general of the Greater Poland Uprising), and Mieczysław Lewandowski meet in 1936 during a gliding competition. From then on, they meet regularly. Mieczysław teaches Janina how to fly a glider. They get married in June 1939. The wedding ceremony takes place at the airport in Tęgorze. No one is surprised. All the guests know that the newlyweds are united by their love of flying. In July, they go to the mountains for a few days. As they say goodbye, Janina whispers to Mieczysław: "You know, I have a feeling that we won't see each other again" ..Three months later, on September 3, 1939, Janina, without waiting for her husband, who is on his way to her from Tęgorze, sets off for war. They pass each other by a few hours... At the end of September, the group of airmen with whom Janina is traveling will fall into the hands of the Soviets. In April 1940, Janina, as the only woman, will be shot in Katyn. This will happen on her thirty-second birthday. Mieczysław will make his way to Great Britain via France. He will never stop looking for her...

Even when he starts a family with his English wife, he will continue to write letters to the Red Cross. He will always receive the same reply: "The fate of your wife is unknown." The keeper of this story will be Mieczysław's daughter, Diana Pitt, who will be visited by a journalist from Poland. "I felt really close to Janina during this time, closer than I ever felt in my life. I've often thought about her, her tremendous courage and bravery. The tragically wrong decisions that she made during the attempted escape from Poland. And I'm going to be able to let her go and to live my life now in a slightly different way. Just a little bit freer, flying high, and using the motto of the Royal Air Force in Britain, "Per ardua ad astra", "Through difficulties to the stars" – she will say.

17.00 Zohreh Nadimi (Iran)/ The Wind Up Doll/ Persian/5

"The Wind-up Doll" follows Roya, a thirty-year-old woman who, haunted by the persistent ticking of the clock, realises her entire life—from her career to the colour of her clothes—has been curated by her family. Trapped between a suppressed desire to say "no" and a paralysed will, she eventually retreats into her role as the submissive daughter. The play is a poignant portrayal of the erosion of individuality under the weight of traditional expectations.

17.05 Cristina Marras (Italy)/ A step by step guide to wooden spoon carving/ English/6

It's called a "step-by-step" guide, and it promises to teach you how to carve a wooden spoon, but despite its promising beginning, the piece soon becomes something completely different, as the "advice" turns into personal anecdotes and unexpected digressions that touch on paranoia (and maybe even murderous thoughts). If you are someone who wants to learn how to carve a wooden spoon, this guide will leave you disappointed. But if you are after a quirky, personal essay that is strangely compelling and, at the same time, totally unhelpful, then this might be for you.

17.15 Break

17.45 Jury Discussion

Wednesday 1 April

10.00 Ana Sorina Corneanu & Dr Catalina Florescu (Romania)/Lyre Bird/English/15

The Lyrebird is an intimate, poetic audio drama following a woman who navigates illness, dementia, lost love, and the fragile boundaries between memory and identity.

A 15-minute audio drama that immerses the listener in the fragmented consciousness of a woman nearing the end of her life. Living with the residues of cancer and the advancing fog of dementia, she prepares to leave her home for the Netherlands, where she has chosen euthanasia as a final act of clarity and dignity.

“The Lyrebird” is both fragile and fierce, inviting audiences to confront stigma around dementia, euthanasia, and women’s agency over their bodies and narratives.

10.15 Mamuka Magularia (Georgia)/ Polovtsian Date/English/ 17

His Georgian heritage whispers secrets of Caucasian mountains, while His soul resonates with gloomy Russian Empire. His destiny is twofold: chemistry courses through His veins alongside the notes of His compositions. His white coat conceals a restless spirit - a chemist who unravels the mysteries of reactions.

His beloved wife shares His clandestine passion for music, blooms like a rare orchid. Alexander Borodin’s music soars, painting the clash of two cultures - against a backdrop of passion and sacrifice. In the twilight of His life, He gazes at the periodic table, its elements like musical motifs. Borodin’s final composition - a Duel of atoms and overtones - echoes through time, forever.

The voices were generated artificially as part of an experiment in modern-day technologies.

10.40 Czech National Radio (Czech Republic)/ Matko Boží, vyžeň Putina/Czech/49

On 21 February 2012, the Russian punk band, Pussy Riot, tried to sing an anti-Putin song in Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. Only a few words and tones were sung and played before the five girls, wearing brightly coloured balaclavas, were driven away by the security guards. The incident became a pretext for three members of the band, who were identified, to be arrested. They were then held in custody for months and two of them were convicted in a show trial, sentenced to two years in prison and then sent to the toughest penal colonies.

A closer look reveals that this story has multiple layers. Both convicted artists were students of philosophy and their seemingly naïve activism was based on a thought-out relationship to art, emancipation of women and the Russian society. Their intervention was a response to the 2011 electoral manipulation in Russia, which resulted in protests. Their performance in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour also pointed out the pro-regime, extremely conservative character of the Russian Orthodox Church headed by a former KGB agent and a secret billionaire, Patriarch Kirill. The protest was also aimed at the

peculiar business activities carried out at the cathedral. Pussy Riot's performance shows traces of the biblical theme of the clearing out of the Temple. That is connected to the form of the Marian "punk prayer," as the band members called their song.

Playwright and director Jiří Adámek Austerlitz decided to render the context of this original protest in an original radio form. His composition, *Mother of God, Banish Putin*, features three gentle female voices in a varied stream of litanies, statements, quotations and singing. They ask why Russian society is so attached to the dictator, Vladimir Putin, and why it is so difficult to banish him from Russian hearts and minds. Who actually blasphemed in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow? And against what?

11.40 Exxon Institute (Iran)/The Forbidden Voice/Persian/12

11.50 Luuk Imhaan (The Netherlands)/ Dit Vuur/Dutch and other languages/59

1967. Lying on his deathbed in his Princeton home, the 62-year-old physicist Robert Oppenheimer suffers from lung cancer and tells the story of his life to a nurse. We are thus transported back to his years as a bright boy in the early 1900s and how, at school, he pondered the myth of Lucifer, who, as a serpent in Paradise, tempted Eve to eat an apple from the Tree of Knowledge. He too ate the apple, says Oppenheimer. He tried to poison the teacher who tormented him at Cambridge, so he left that school and traveled to Germany to understand quantum mechanics. But he was an outsider, wanted to learn ever more, studying physics alongside Ovid and Dante.

When Oppenheimer hears the atom has been split in Germany he immediately understands that it could become a devastating bomb. It is 1939. War breaks out, Hitler threatens the world, and Robert's Jewish identity surfaces when he hears what is happening to the Jews in Nazi Germany. An American general wants his help to build the atom bomb. Struggling with his conscience, he helps build the bomb, openly questioning whether all human knowledge has ultimately led to this. They test the bomb, and he repeats the words of the Indian god Vishnu from the Bhagavad Gita: "Now I am become Death, destroyer of worlds."

He contemplates life and wonders if, with the atom bomb, he has created a weapon that shouldn't exist, and he talks about Prometheus, the Titan who created humanity and stole fire from the gods to give to humanity. And recounting the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he remembers how Prometheus was punished for the theft of fire by the Greek god Zeus. Will he also be punished? Oppenheimer recounts how the FBI stripped him of his power and influence, but was that his punishment? No, explains the nurse. He was stripped of his soul. He absorbed the myths, but didn't understand them, creating the weapon that will destroy mankind. Knowledge is an evil thing. As the nurse wonders whether the world will end with an unbearable soft whimper, Robert's heart breaks.

13.00 Peter Vamos (Ireland)/Timisoara Now/English and Romanian/5.06

Timișoara Now is an almost dialogue free passage of time and space through the mind and memory of a traveller returning to the city after three years. Taking its name from the famous Coppola film, it is a journey towards an unknown ending taking in historic

atmospheres, wrestling the theme of revolution and reconciling ghosts. The drama concludes with legendary Producer/Director Mihai Lungeanu outlining how to make a wordless drama.

13.05 Eliot Thompson (Ireland)/Hunger/English/4.37

13.10 Stefano Giannotti (Italy)/ The Word /Italian/7

In a primordial landscape, amidst volcanic eruptions and other natural disasters, a group of hominids listens to the calls of various animals and discovers their first articulated word: “bureaucracy.”

Suddenly, a surreal car accident transports the scene to the present day: a world filled with the hum of printers, fax machines, ringing phones, and bustling offices.

A modern man attempts—without success—to teach a pig the word “bureaucracy.”

Frustrated by his failure, he transforms into a text-to-speech device and embarks on a missile-shaped journey in search of new worlds. Meanwhile, the pig, attuned to the sounds of printers, phones, and faxes, gradually learns the word. Another car accident then returns the story to the primordial world, where the animals continue to chant the first word.

13.20 Break

13.45 Jury Session

FREE AFTERNOON

Thursday 2 April

10.00 Mohammad Mirinezhad (Iran)/ Three Drops of Blood/Persian/30

This feature revisits and examines the phenomenon of “honor killings”—a hidden and deep-rooted form of violence that, in certain layers of society, is justified through concepts such as honor, family, reputation, and prejudice. Through the use of audio reenactments, narration, and expert interviews, the work seeks to explore the intellectual, cultural, and social mechanisms that give rise to this type of violence, and to show how ignorance, anger, and bias can lead to decisions that take human lives. Beyond recounting a single incident, this feature is an effort to give voice to the silenced victims, encourage reflection on prevailing beliefs, and invite the audience to reconsider the boundaries between protection, control, and violence.

10.30 Senta Hofner (Germany)/ Ein Leben im Blick der Securitate/German/56

The 1970s and 80s, Helga Höfer, a Romanian-German, worked as a journalist for Bavarian Broadcasting. She conducted research, established contacts, carried out interviews, and translated. West German correspondents used this information to create their reports. She herself was rarely seen on television, but her phone was extensively wiretapped. Over thirty years later, her daughter, Senta Höfer, is shown her Securitate file and discovers a chronicle of her own childhood in Bucharest that is by turns unintentionally comical and eerie. She also realizes how the consequences of this surveillance extend into the present day.

11.45 Radio-Television of Vojvodina (Serbia)/ Pendrekom Do Zvezda part 1/Serbian/34

SUMMARY: A tragedy in which the main character, a young, decorated police officer, arrests a corrupt colleague, because of which he ends up suspended and later dies, not agreeing to work with criminals.

SYNOPSIS: Spasoje is a state “associate”, arrested in the late 1980s abroad on account of murder. In prison, a drug addict named Zora, one of the prostitutes he pimped out, prematurely gives birth to her son, Vidan. At the insistence of his Godfather, Spasoje agrees to marry Zora and accept Vidan as his son, but is violent towards them. After the gun incident, Spasoje hits Vidan, causing him to go deaf in his left ear. The accordion player Jezda, Zora’s only friend, accepts Vidan when Spasoje disappears and Zora overdoses. Under Jezda’s care, Vidan finishes school, and learns to play the accordion despite his handicap.

12.25 Gabriele Heller (UK)/Round Midnight/English and German/20

It is almost midnight, as two voices meet around a kitchen table. In the middle of the night an indefinable anxiety brings more and more questions to light. Round Midnight is an intimate play about migration and identity. About open and closed borders outside and inside of our minds. A soliloquy about being a stranger and a native. An unusual biography taking place between the South of Germany and the North of England. Round Midnight

circles around the questions of where someone can stay and where someone chooses to stay, where one can be at home and where one can truly feel at home.

12.45 ACSR (France) Poste Parking /French/23

Between the unease of bodies and chance words, two characters gradually connect whilst waiting for something only they know the reason for. Questions arise, clues appear, we think things are happening and we still wonder what we're doing here, what remains for us? "The dialogue between the two characters is punctuated by silences, which makes room for the sonic atmosphere in which the fiction unfolds. The composition is quite minimalist; we notice its presence mainly through its variations. This means that each sound event takes on a whole other dimension, benefits from a different resonance. It was important for us to go against the grain of dense writing and take the risk of tenuousness on radio. The silences therefore structure the dialogue, the space-time, and allow us to sustain the tension that plays out between the characters as well as create a form of suspense in the narrative. They are inhabited by the awkwardness of a first meeting, by this waiting that stretches out and distends. The silences also tell us something in contrast with the societal climate that we gradually sense as the piece unfolds. A permission to be together without necessarily oversharing. For us there was the challenge of conveying what can happen in an interaction beyond words, and this without the support of image. 1

The recordings took place at night in the countryside, as close as possible to the situation in the fiction. The surrounding soundscape influenced the performance and atmosphere particular to the piece. The intriguing universe arose from the desire to anchor the meeting between these two characters in a murky and relatively dystopian context. At the heart of this fiction, there were two desires that seemed able to coexist. We wanted to explore the encounter between two characters in a car - an intimate space sheltered from view - and let their fragilities unfold. At the same time we were deeply concerned by current events: the rise of the far right everywhere, repression, censorship. We needed to offer ourselves an underground and alternative space, like a breath in this particularly anxiety-inducing context."

13.15 Lunch

14.00 Shaun Mendum (UK)/The Doorway/English/29

The Doorway is a Lovecraftian ghost-story set on Mars. Written by Daniel Bradley, directed by James O'Niell, produced by Shaun Mendum. In the near future, Robin and Ellis have been sent to Mars to colonise the planet, and have been alone together for years. Isolation and lonely, while Ellis is desperate for control and stability on a lonely planet, Robin is desperate for a sign of life. Wandering off the beaten track, Robin sees what she believes to be a doorway built into a cave. Despite this being impossible, Robin becomes fixated, and dreams of what this could mean. On route back to their base, they are caught in a storm, and Ellis falls into a crater, breaking her ankle.

Fixated on what could be in that ejecta, Robin gets into an argument with Ellis, and leaves her at the base to investigate the cave. Packing it with explosives, the cave blows

up, and Robin is trapped inside. Helmet cracked; comms broken. But Ellis is able to speak with her, and somehow, Robin is able to breathe. She finds herself in a tunnel, and with Ellis as her guide, follows this new route deeper into Mars. It is revealed that Ellis knows more about Robin's situation than she should. Indeed, this voice in Robin's ear, is not Ellis at all.

14.35 Tamar Tchintchirauli (International) /The Letter/English/Albanian/48

In a remote Communist-era Albanian village, Marc, an elderly shepherd and former political prisoner, lives on the margins of society, branded an "enemy of the people" for an absurd and arbitrary crime. Illiterate, poor, and utterly alone, he survives in a collapsing shack by a mountain torrent, invisible to a system that has already judged him unworthy of dignity or care.

When Marc is released from prison, he turns to André, a young schoolteacher newly assigned to the village, and asks him to write a letter to the Party authorities - a formal plea for a house in the cooperative housing. André carefully composes the letter in the submissive language demanded by the regime. But when he reads it aloud, something unexpected happens. Hearing his own life articulated - his loneliness, humiliation, and quiet endurance - overwhelms Marc. For the first time, his existence is shaped into words, and those words give him a fragile sense of recognition.

Marc never sends the letter. Instead, he clings to it obsessively, asking André, villagers, and schoolchildren to read it to him again and again. The letter becomes more than a bureaucratic request; it becomes a mirror, a proof that his life can be spoken, remembered, and understood. Each reading offers comfort, but also deepens his pain. What he seeks is no longer merely shelter, but authorship over his own story.

15.35 Lily Sloane & Zara Zimbardo (US)/Are we only dreaming)/English/5.30

Listeners first hear three voices, evoking a Greek chorus or Macbeth's witches — ancient beings who have witnessed Earth in geologic time. With alternating tones of whimsy and gravity, they trade memories of the ways that this planet has been many planets, from crocodiles in the Arctic to the Permian extinction to a million years of rain. Arriving at the recent window of Holocene habitability, the focus then zooms into an individual story of a family's experience of being uprooted, living as squatters in their former residence. We join the narrator in feeling out of place and time, unsettled in their decaying house as it is being taken over by the elements. The ancient chorus returns with a question about our relationship to home.

15.45 Detention Lottery Team (US)/ The Detention Lottery/English/58

The Detention Lottery brings the audience inside a US immigration detention center and courtroom to observe what one immigration judge has called "life and death decisions in a traffic court setting." It was born of playwright Margaret O'Donnell's despair as an US immigration attorney, realizing that mere statistics about the scope of the injustice and inhumanity to immigrants do not help Americans understand what is being done in their names. The play begins as ICE agents arrest people on city streets as they go about their daily lives. An announcer gives an overview of conditions in US immigrant detention centers.

Those arrested are detained and find themselves, without notice or information, hustled to court inside the center. Each of the detainees introduces themselves to the audience. A guard provides general warnings about conduct to the courtroom audience, to which the court clerk adds details.

The play ends as the judge leaves the courtroom, and court personnel announce the outcome of each detainee's sentence. The audience hears a summary of current detention and deportation numbers and practices. The recording ends with a brief call to action and recording credits.

16.50 Chris Gregory, *Alternative Stories (UK)/Dead Air/ English/5.56*

On a cold winter night, a citizens' band radio enthusiast is trying to contact a friend in another part of the company. The two chat amicably and talk of their ongoing friendship, brought together through CB radio in the me before mobile telephones, email or WhatsApp. As the conversation progresses it becomes apparent that one of the characters has misread their conversations and friendship for something far more serious and has done something drastic as a result. As the conversation continues a growing sense of horror develops as the realisation of what has happened is spelt out. *Dear Air* is an episode of "Terror Tapes" a horror anthology based on fictional recordings found in a box of cassettes purchased at a car boot sale. Drawing on the genre of folk horror and produced by a small ensemble team of writers and actors from the north of England, *Terror Tapes* is a podcast and there are plans for a stage version based on the concept.

17.00 Christian Cucinello (US)/ *ADotHDot/ English/ 3.49*

ADotHDot is a cerebral and visceral landscape built for the poetry of Arthur Harrison. It uses the combination of sound design and abstract spoken word to immerse listeners in a world of contradiction where what matters most is arbitrary.

Christopher Plumridge (UK)/ *Y and Z/ English/ 5.33*

In a telephone conversation between Y and Z, Y is desperately seeking help and reassurance from an unseen but deadly intruder into their high-rise apartment. But Z is too far away and is powerless to be of any help. As the tension rises, so does the temperature as the unknown, unseen intruder closes in on its prey. A short, tense horror.

17.10 Break

17.40 Jury Session

Friday 3 April

10 am **Samuel Mattern (Spain)/ Spanish Sundown. Calle de la Cabeza: Eat the Rich/ English/29**

Is there a difference between an immigrant and an expat? Between one who leaves their home country because they want to, and one who leaves because they have to?

'Calle de la Cabeza: Eat the Rich' is a part of Spanish Sundown, a series of free-standing episodes based around one same premise: voices trapped in objects from Spain's past that tell their story.

Listeners follow our character into the hot stench of the darker side of the Madrid night as he runs from a man with an odd wheeze-whistle. The same man who tried to rob him a few hours before.

With authentic sounds recorded on-location, I want listeners to travel with me through their ears. To discover the foul underbelly of Madrid that led me to tell the legend of the Calle de la Cabeza, or Head Street.

To join me as I, show creator and an American immigrant to Spain, grapple with my own hypocrisy.

10.40 **South West Radio, Germany/ Geschichten aus der Vorstadt des universums/ German/57**

Nine tales from outer suburbia. Each of these tales stands for itself, yet they are all connected by a particular notion – that of suburbia. A place on the outer parts of a town that conjures visions of sameness. A place where people live, but not much ever happens. But Shaun Tan's suburbia isn't suburbia as we know it. He treats the familiar suburban landscape as a strange and alien world, blending everyday life with fantastical elements, making the mundane feel like an unknown territory, much like "outer space" to a visitor. In Tan's suburbia a water buffalo is juxtaposed with intercontinental missiles, an exchange student with an amnesia machine, and a grandfather with a dugong. Shaun Tan's Tales from Outer Suburbia is a collection of generously illustrated short stories that invite the reader/viewer to engage. In the radio play, the music takes on the role of the illustrations – specially composed by Martina Eisenreich for the radio play and recorded by the German Radio Philharmonic Orchestra Saarbrücken/Kaiserslautern under the direction of Luka Hauser. The congenial translation from the visual (illustrations) to the acoustic (music) relies on the vibrancy of the orchestra and gives the listener time and space to let their mind wander .

The radio play Tales from Outer Suburbia in the excellent translation by Eike Schöfeld appeals not only to young listeners but to a wide audience of all ages. The radio play was broadcast on SWR Kultur Spielraum; originally a children's programme, it has now been redesignated to a programme for all age groups. With Tales from Outer Suburbia, we have embarked on a journey to address new listening groups. The excellent cast – including some of our finest voice talents – brings Tan's unique world to life, making this a complex and immersive audio experience for all ages.

11.50 RTE (Ireland)/ The 30 Acres/ English/30

30 Acres is a 4-part mockumentary series written by Colm Tobin and Aidan O'Donovan and co-produced by RTÉ Documentary On One and RTÉ Drama On One. This black comedy is set in a sprawling ghost estate - a failed housing project called 30 Acres. The series follows the lives of its three remaining inhabitants, as they go to remarkable lengths to resist eviction orders from a government-appointed liquidator, in a tale of community activism, abduction, and ketamine abuse. This tale of post Celtic Tiger inequality chimes with the everyday experience of the housing crisis, as the have-nots try to reclaim some ground from the haves, in a storyline as surreal as the lavish overspending in Ireland's 'Celtic Tiger' era.

12.20 Lizzie Goldsmith (US)/ When we were on Fire /English/20

This full-cast, four-part audio drama podcast was created by Lizzie Goldsmith, and is based on the book *When We Were on Fire: A Memoir of Consuming Faith, Tangled Love, and Starting Over* by American author Addie Zieman. Hailed by *Publisher's Weekly* as one of the best religion books of 2013, *When We Were on Fire* is a funny, heartbreaking, deeply personal, and ultimately hopeful story about faith, doubt, and first love. Part religious deconstruction journey, part coming-of-age story, this audio drama adaptation embodies the experiences of a generation — and a subculture — and features 45 voice actors (including Aria Sivick as Addie), immersive sound design, and original music by Frank Sheffield.

12.50 Polskie Radio Białystok, Fundacja MalczOff (Poland)/ Głosy ciemności / Polish/ 46

The radio play *Voices of Darkness* is inspired by the work and life of the great Polish painter Jerzy Nowosielski - creator of stunning abstractions, disturbing nudes and religious painting.... Particularly important is the theological aspect of this work - after all, Nowosielski was one of the most famous reinterpreters of the Orthodox icon tradition in the twentieth century. The spirituality we see in these works is extremely ambiguous - full of darkness, anxiety, suspension between life and death and Gnostic doubts. For Nowosielski, faith is a challenge, a necessity to confront suffering and the unknown. There are more questions than answers, doubts than strongly held assertions. The compositional framework for the contemporary original text of the radio play is two collections of old texts: the *Tenebrae* (Darkness), a Catholic service with medieval Latin texts, and selected psalms in a 16th century translation by Jakub Wujek. The symbolism of our work is inspired by Catholic theology, linked to the rites of Good Friday and Good Saturday, celebrating the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ. In this radio play, we travel through the metaphysical journey of a painter (inspired by Nowosielski's character) who, the day after Christ's death, must undergo his own "descent into hell" . The action of the radio play takes place in total darkness - as if in a tomb, and the protagonist, suddenly thrust into this darkness, must trust his guides - a mysterious woman and a man. Here he meets his dead brother, struggles with the demons of addiction, a tempting woman puts him to the test, and finally - he meets the beloved he once betrayed and must now - by the power of his love - bring into the light. In this subterranean purgatory he struggles with his own past, sins, fears and memories, in order to experience his own redemption and find true meaning in love and devotion to another human being.

13.45 Darrick Wood School (UK)/ A Side View /English /1.35

Have you ever wondered what it's like to hear from the side character? This audio play details the very strong views and opinions of an overlooked side character who's done being stuck in the shadows; as her friend, the main character, expresses her personal romance troubles through song.

Glen Dickson (UK)/The Patrolman/ English/5.3

What happens when an actor carrying knives attracts the attention of a police officer.

13.50 Lunch

Dhaadha's Fireplace (Uganda)/Her Dying Wish/ English /45

The story opens in the sterile, echoing visiting room of a rehabilitation center. Paul Muhereza, a young man carrying a heavy burden of resentment, has come to visit his father, Saul. They have not seen each other in six years. Saul, currently in recovery for alcoholism, attempts to bridge the gap with nervous humour and fatherly affection, but Paul is cold and distant. Paul reveals that he has not come to reconcile, but to deliver a letter from his mother, Abigail, who passed away from cancer just three days prior. As Saul begins to read the letter aloud, the narrative weaves between the tense present day confrontation and the sonic memories of the family's tragic past

15.00 Jury session

19.30 Awards Ceremony

