

Solid audiences for Wimbledon festival

News - Festivals Friday, 24th September 2021

Wimbledon BookFest's third in-person festival of the pandemic last month reached audiences of over 10,000 - with 29 events now available to watch on demand



Wimbledon BookFest is celebrating the success of its third live, in-person literary festival of the pandemic. Its Sunset Festival, which ran from 15 – 19 September, presented more than 40 events with both high-profile speakers and emerging writers in its Covid-safe marquee village on Wimbledon Common.

Among the highlights of Sunset Festival were appearances from veteran actress Miriam Margolyes (*pictured*); punk poet John Cooper Clarke; celebrity chef Rick Stein; star of the hit musical Hamilton Giles Terera; politicians Vince Cable and Jess Phillips (who was zoomed in live from Westminster); broadcasters Anita Rani and Robert Peston; virtuoso cellist Steven Isserlis; ballet star Sergei Polunin; philosopher AC Grayling; and novelists Elif Shafak, Sebastian Faulks and Christy Lefteri.

In total, 4,000 tickets were sold for Sunset Festival's public events. Additionally, special events for schools featuring poet Sophia Thakur, author Emma Carroll and Jess Phillips MP were attended by 600 local students and were live streamed to a further audience of 4,900 pupils from registered schools.

Wimbledon BookFest's director Fiona Razvi said: "It's amazing to think that we have put on three live festivals during the pandemic. It has certainly been challenging putting on live events with ever-changing circumstances and restrictions. From scheduling to reconfigured venues, we have had to adapt every aspect of what we do – all on just 50% of our usual capacity and income.

"As well as our wonderful live festivals, Wimbledon BookFest has still managed to work with over 100 London schools on literacy projects during the pandemic. This simply couldn't have been done without the support everyone who came to an event, our authors, our brilliant staff and volunteers, our Friends and sponsors, and the continued support by Arts Council England. We are very proud of what we have achieved, and the achievements of our colleagues across the live events industry who have shown such resilience and creativity."

Source article: <https://www.bookbrunch.co.uk/page/article-detail/solid-audiences-for-wimbledon-festival>