



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Organizers Announce Launch of Transatlantic Online Festival to Commemorate Frederick Douglass in Ireland

#### #DouglassWeek to be Celebrated from 8-14 February, 2021

**Cork, Ireland** - Organizers are delighted to announce #DouglassWeek 2021, a wide-ranging celebration of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass's visit to Ireland over 175 years ago.

#DouglassWeek will bring together students and researchers, historians, artists, musicians, poets, authors, singers, activists and community groups from Ireland and abroad to commemorate Douglass's visit. Participants will respond to Douglass's story with performances, visual art, music and more.

In the autumn of 1845, a young and charismatic African-American abolitionist sailed from America to Ireland for a four-month lecture tour of the island. Frederick Douglass had been born into slavery but escaped bondage on a plantation in Maryland by fleeing to the North, where he became a prominent anti-slavery activist. Douglass lectured to large and enthusiastic audiences in Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Belfast, met with Daniel O'Connell, and reflected upon the devastating effects of the famine then beginning to sweep the nation.

#DouglassWeek programming highlights the experience of Douglass and other abolitionists and explores issues like identity, migration and race in contemporary Ireland. It emphasizes the continued importance of remembering slavery and the intertwined struggle for independence and liberation in Ireland and the US.

#DouglassWeek consists of six different strands of interest: **Historical, Literary, Educational, Music, Creative** and **Sports**. All strands consist of a series of talks and "in conversation" events as well as other projects, performances and initiatives and contributions from the UK and the US. Some strands will include interactive workshops open to the public; videos, additional materials and messages of support from special guests on #DouglassWeek social media channels.

**WHO:** Students and researchers, historians, artists, musicians, poets, authors, singers, activists and community groups responding to the story of Frederick Douglass in Ireland across six strands

**WHAT:** Announcement of #DouglassWeek, an online commemoration of Frederick Douglass's journey to Ireland in 1845, bringing together artists, academics and change makers to celebrate the famous American author, orator, abolitionist, statesman, publisher and suffragist.

**WHEN:** Monday, February 8th - Sunday, February 14th, 2021  
Various times: Schedule and other information at [www.DouglassinCork.com](http://www.DouglassinCork.com)  
Twitter: @douglassincork - Instagram: @douglassweek

**WHERE:** All events are online and free of charge. More details at: [www.douglassincork.com](http://www.douglassincork.com)

**Highlights of the festival include:**

- **Monday, 8 February, 7-8:15pm (GMT): The Iveagh House Lecture: Douglass/O’Connell Address:** Address by Bryan Stevenson of the Equal Justice Initiative, followed by a panel conversation with Douglass descendant Kenneth B. Morris, Jr., Secretary General Niall Burgess, Mark Durkan from the John & Pat Hume Foundation and including a tribute to the late US Congressman John Lewis
- **Tuesday, 9 February, 8:30pm (GMT): Douglass and Diversity on Screen:** Roundtable with actors Roger Guenveur Smith and Paul Oakley Stovall (*Hamilton*), followed by a live performance by Smith of his play “Frederick Douglass NOW”
- **Wednesday, 10 February, 8pm (GMT): A Musical Evening to Commemorate Douglass,** featuring *Hamilton* stars Paul Oakley Stovall and Nikhil Saboo, Lesley Roy, Grammy-award winning songwriter Marcus Hummon and many others
- **Thursday, 11th, 8.30pm-10pm (GMT): Douglass’s Genres:** Panel discussion highlighting Douglass’s enormous contribution across several literary genres – autobiography, oratory, letter writing and more
- **Friday, 12th, 8pm (GMT): Poetry Evening: Frederick Douglass: Past, Present and Future:** Poetry readings featuring a selection of Irish and U.S. poets reading work about and inspired by Douglass. This event includes the **announcement of #DouglassWeek Poetry Competition** winner and a live performance of the poem by Roger Guenveur Smith
- **Saturday, 13 February, 8-9pm (GMT): Imagining Douglass:** Authors Colum McCann and Jewell Parker Rhodes read from and discuss their novels *Transatlantic* (2013) and *Douglass’s Women* (2002)
- **Sunday, 14 February, 8-9pm (GMT): Our Strong Women: Closing Event,** featuring former President of Ireland Mary Robinson, Douglass descendant Nettie Washington Douglass, Lord Mayor of Dublin Hazel Chu, Dr. Eburn Joseph and Emma Dabiri

Members of the press wishing to schedule an interview, please contact Dr. Caroline Schroeter ([caroline.schroeter@ucc.ie](mailto:caroline.schroeter@ucc.ie)), Dr. Tim Groenland ([tim.groenland@ucc.ie](mailto:tim.groenland@ucc.ie)) or Sarah McCreedy ([sarah.mccreedy@ucc.ie](mailto:sarah.mccreedy@ucc.ie)) or the wider #DouglassWeek team at [info@douglassincork.com](mailto:info@douglassincork.com).

**More Information and Full Schedule of Events at [www.douglassincork.com](http://www.douglassincork.com)**

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