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LOTTERY FUNDED

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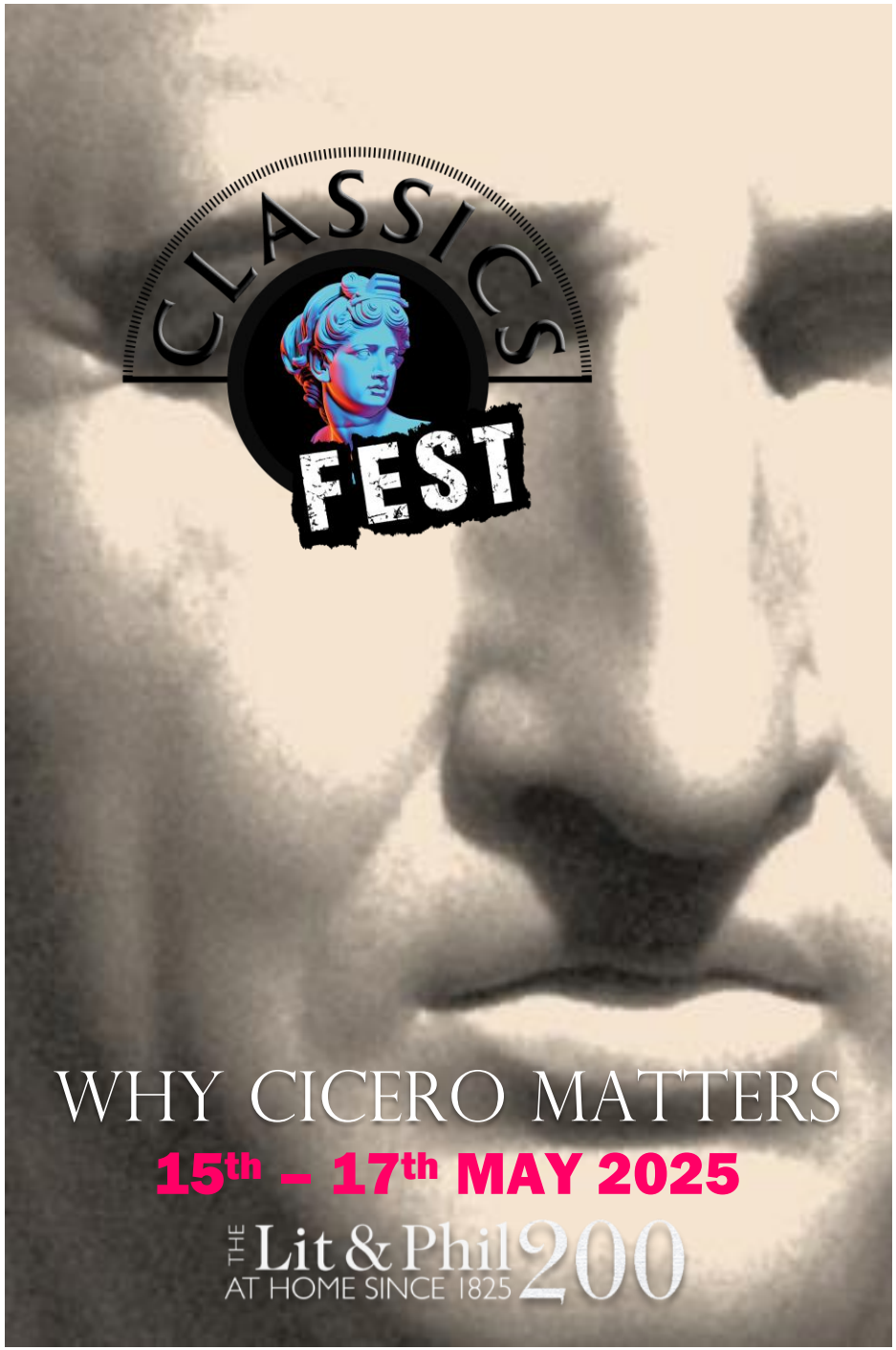

ClassicsFest is a collaboration between the Lit & Phil and the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at Newcastle University, and is produced by **Cinzia Hardy**.

Between **15th – 17th May** we will focus on the ideas of the Roman orator and lawyer, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 – 43 BC), as a springboard for an exciting programme of discussions and performances. We are delighted to welcome **Dr Vittorio Bufacchi**, Senior Lecturer in the Philosophy Department, University College Cork, Ireland. His stimulating book *Why Cicero Matters* (Bloomsbury 2023) inspires this year's festival and we invite you to join us in the conversations.

Thursday 15th May | 2pm | FREE

Cicero and the ghosts of the Republic

Presented by **Dr Marta Garcia Morcillo**, Lecturer in Ancient History at the School of History, Classics & Archaeology at Newcastle University.

An introduction to Marcus Tullius Cicero and his importance as a key author, witness and main protagonist in the final decades of the Roman Republic.

Thursday 15th May | 6.30pm

Why Cicero Matters

Join **Prof. Arlene Holmes-Henderson** and **Dr. Vittorio Bufacchi** as they discuss his book *Why Cicero Matters*, an engaging and provocative account of Cicero, emphasising his contemporary relevance.

We will also be joined by young writers from New Writing North's Young Writers' programme. They have been working with performance poet and director **Kirsten Luckins**.

£10 to include a glass of wine.

Friday 16th May | 3pm | FREE

at The Lecture Theatre at The Common Room (next door to the Lit & Phil)

Corruption in the Spotlight: Cicero versus Verres.

A performance followed by a panel discussion.

Fake news, tax fraud and bribery - not today's headlines but those of ancient Rome. Join us in exploring the roots of political corruption by looking at the Roman Magistrate Gaius Verres, whom Cicero famously put on trial (70 BC) for offences including spreading fake news. With contributions from sixth form students across the region, writer **Kirsten Luckins** reimagines the trial and puts a spotlight on its contemporary parallels. Performed by **Wambui Hardcastle** and **Eilís Konstantina** and presided over by **Prof. Deveral Capps**, Dean of Leeds Law School. This is a collaboration with Classics for All, Newcastle and Durham Universities and the Lit & Phil.

Friday 16th May | 7pm

Imperium: The Cicero Plays

This two-part event starts with actors coming together to read and discuss scenes from the play *Imperium*, based on the Cicero trilogy by Robert Harris, adapted by Mike Poulton. As they delve into the scenes they discover a story of natural humanity, and good laws versus military ambition at a time in history when the political values and certainties of governments were overwhelmed by a world in turmoil. Does that sound familiar?

The second part brings together a panel of speakers chaired by **Baroness Joyce Quin** to discuss some of the issues the actors have raised. The panel includes **Chi Onwurah**, Labour MP, Newcastle Central and West and **Dr Kathryn Tempest**, Lecturer in Roman History at The School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester.

£10 to include a glass of wine.

Saturday 17th May | 11am | FREE

Cicero, Facebook and Cyber-Friendships

An exploration of how Facebook, Twitter (X) and Instagram are changing our conception of friendship - and not for the better.

Presented by **Dr. Vittorio Bufacchi**

Saturday 17th May | 2pm

at Alphabetti Theatre, St James Boulevard

ClassicsFest Competition finale

Following a call out for new persuasive arguments inspired by the rhetoric style of Cicero, up to eight shortlisted entries will be performed and the two winning entries will be chosen live, by the audience.

Tickets are 'pay what you feel' and must be booked through Alphabetti Theatre on **www.alphabettitheatre.co.uk/classicsfestcompetitionfinale** or by calling 0191 261 9125.

Saturday 17th May | 6pm | FREE

Festival Finale at the Lit & Phil

Join us to hear from the winning writers of our competition and debate with them and our festival contributors about the issues they and the festival itself have raised. Your chance to challenge the writers and presenters, to comment on what you have heard during the festival and perhaps, to make your own case for or against Cicero. With **Dr Marta Garcia-Morcillo**, **Dr. Vittorio Bufacchi** and **Dr Kathryn Tempest**.

Ancient Worlds in Book Art

An exhibition of books from the Lit & Phil's collection, curated by students from Newcastle University's School of History, Classics & Archaeology.

Throughout the month of May in the main library during opening hours.

On certain dates the students will lead tours of the exhibition, to be booked in advance. Please check the festival website for details.

ClassicsFest Satellite Lectures

Advance Booking essential

Wednesday 7th May | 6pm | FREE

Classics in Schools

Prof. Arlene Holmes-Henderson MBE

Friday 9th May |1pm | FREE

Reconstructing the Cosmos with Hesiod

Prof. Athanassios Vergados

Saturday 10th May | 11am | FREE

Understanding Hadrian's Wall

Prof. David Breeze

Monday 12th May | 6pm | FREE

Venus di Milo | The Goddess in the Garden Centre

Dr. Gail-Nina Anderson

Tuesday 13th May | 6pm | FREE

Disease and Community in Antiquity and Beyond

Dr Chiara Blanco

Full details at www.litandphil.org.uk/classicsfest-2025

Most events are **free** and take place at the Lit & Phil unless otherwise stated. Where there is a ticket charge, those on unemployment benefit and students are free.

Booking opens 1st April

Age recommendation for all events is 12 years+

All events **must** be booked in advance unless otherwise stated. Except for the **ClassicsFest** Competition Finale at Alphabetti Theatre, all events can be booked online at www.litandphil.org.uk/classicsfest-2025/ or the Lit & Phil library on 0191 232 0192