New exhibition reveals rare images and precious memories of adventures in Manchester music

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Previously unseen and rare images and artefacts and the personal memories of music-loving Greater Mancunians will recall the influence and excitement brought to the city by the likes of Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Sex Pistols and the Halle Orchestra in a new exhibition, *Defining Me: Musical Adventures in Manchester* at The Lowry, Salford Quays between Sat 28 September 2013 – Sun 23 February 2014, following the award of a grant of £42,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), it was announced today.

From the beginnings of the world's first paid orchestra, the Halle in 1858 to the punk explosion of the 1970s and the success of Manchester and Salford's indie and dance exports of the eighties and nineties, the region's musical pedigree has garnered a global reputation. Now, for the first time many of the personal photographs and stories from both back stage and front of house will be told, offering candid images and recollections on how fashions and friendships came to be forged through music and how music legends flocked to play to enthusiastic local crowds.

Defining Me draws from the extensive collections of members of the Manchester District Music Archive (MDMArchive) including Rochdale punk Denise Shaw, former DJ at both The Hacienda and Moss Side's Reno nightclub, Hewan Clarke, broadcaster and folk expert Mike Harding, drummer of Factory records band Durruti Column, Bruce Mitchell, jazz historian and author Bill Birch and celebrated composer and arranger, Joe Duddell, who combined old and new to bring together Elbow and the Halle Orchestra for a series of special performances in 2009.

Dave Rofe of MDMArchive said: "Certain periods of Manchester's musical history – Madchester and the baggy era – have been widely celebrated, and rightly so, but this exhibition is an opportunity to tell some of the personal stories behind the city's diverse and long history of producing and welcoming music of all genres. Personal photographs of huge stars on their rise to fame, passing through Manchester's clubs, will sit alongside the stories of punks growing up in the north during the 1970s and images of legendary American jazz musicians enjoying our northern hospitality and climate."

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: "This is an extremely exciting project driven by MDMArchive's online community. It demonstrates how our heritage can be a living part of a community bringing people together to learn from and enjoy their shared identity. We are delighted to be giving this very worthwhile venture our full support."

This specially curated exhibition will pull together items and stories from the personal collections of around 12 MDMArchive members allowing them to share what were often life-changing, experiences. The exhibition helps to celebrate ten years since MDMArchive's inception as a virtual home for the posters, photographs, ticket stubs and personal memories of anyone willing to share their local musical experiences. Since launching the MDMArchive website in 2006, over 9,000 items and written accounts of moments in musical history have been collected, with *Defining Me* being the first time items have been gathered for public display.

Uncovering lesser known tales, the exhibition will look at the Kazoo bands which helped pull Mancunians through the Great Depression, the city's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender clubbing scene, the Swing and Jazz brought to the

city by Second World War American service men, the uniting effect of the black music and club culture of Moss Side and Hulme, the experimental Magic Village wave which inspired a new generation of musicians and the punk era which launched Manchester's much prized and highly democratic DIY/outsider art ethic.

Kate Farrell, Special Exhibitions Curator at The Lowry said: "We are delighted to be working with Manchester District Music Archive to realise an exhibition which will celebrate the diverse musical history of Greater Manchester, through a unique mix of personal memories, objects and memorabilia. This exhibition fits perfectly within our performance programming strand and reinforces our commitment to celebrating performance in its broadest sense. Manchester and Salford have a vibrant musical history and we know our visitors will be captivated by these memories and artefacts".

MDMArchive members first met in 2003 to establish an online community archive designed to bring enthusiasts together to celebrate Greater Manchester music, protect its heritage and the collections which depict it.

For more information about *Defining Me: Musical Adventures in Manchester* visit The Lowry website.