



## British Festival 2014 Evaluation Report

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## **Executive Summary**

The first British Festival in more than 20 years took place between 9 March and 12 April 2014. The programme of events included concerts, performances and exhibitions by British musicians, performers and artists, education events and outreach programmes, and British-themed retail, dining and commercial promotions. The Festival culminated in the annual Queen's Birthday celebrations held at the British Embassy.

The five-week Festival consisted of over 30 events and campaigns, involving more than 30 different partners, generated 200 pieces of media coverage, 6.3 million Twitter impressions, and engaged more than 10000 individuals. The overwhelmingly positive response to the Festival from audiences, the media and the business community has confirmed that the British Festival will become an annual event.

## **Aims of the Festival**

The British Festival was launched in 2014 to build on the success of the Qatar-UK 2013 Year of Culture. The aim of the Festival is to develop an annual platform to showcase the UK's cultural, educational and commercial offer to a broad audience, and to celebrate the close bilateral relationship between the UK and Qatar. The programme included events and activities designed to appeal to the key audience groups of Qatari and expatriate adults, families, 14 – 18 year olds, and school communities.

The Festival was organised jointly by the British Embassy, the British Council and UKTI, and sponsored by Qatar Shell and BAE Systems. In addition to the core programme of cultural, educational and retail events, a number of British and locally-based community organisations and businesses contributed their own events and campaigns, boosting engagement and the impact of the Festival brand.

## **Programme of Events**

The programme was designed to showcase British culture, education, trade and retail. It aimed to be inclusive, with events appealing to a range of ages and interest groups. Events were a mix of free access, ticketed and invitation-only concerts, lectures and performances, encompassing a variety of genres and themes, from street dance to supersonic cars, and from classical opera to modern British world music.

Highlights of the cultural programme were the visit by the Welsh National Opera, who performed for invited audiences and ran development workshops for young musicians; the multi-award-winning Circle of Sound, who launched their new album at their first concert in Doha; parkour street dance

performances from the Urban Playground in the streets of Souq Waqif; and live artwork creation by visually impaired artist Rachel Gadsden, the UK's National Diversity Champion.

The education programme included an exhibition promoting studying in the UK, with 20 UK universities representing the strength and depth of British higher education. The best of UK science and innovation was showcased at an inspiring lecture by Sir Richard Noble, former World Land Speed record holder, who presented Bloodhound SSC, the car which will hopefully see the title return to the UK in 2016. The UK's expertise in the teaching and learning of the English language took centre stage at a conference for Qatari teachers.

In parallel to the mainstream events, all the headline festival contributors took part in an education outreach programme, which brought adapted content to younger audiences at schools and youth organisations.

The Festival also included a significant number of commercial, retail and hospitality promotions, with many local stakeholders supporting the drive to promote Britain's world-leading brands and products. These included British-themed menus at the Four Seasons and Grand Hyatt hotels, British product showcases and in-store promotions, store launches, and hugely popular competitions and giveaways from the likes of Molton Brown, BHS, Hackett, Debenhams and others. The Festival also saw two successful inward trade missions from the UK; Creative Industries and British Water.

## **Audience Engagement**

### **VIP Engagement**

The organisers were able to engage Ministers and VIPs with the Festival programme. In particular, HE the Minister of Culture, Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kuwari, lent his personal support to a number of events in the cultural programme. The Qatari Minister of Defence, Major General Hamad Bin Ali Al Attiyah, attended the Queen's birthday party with HE the Minister of Energy and Industry, Dr Mohammed al-Sada. For the UK, the Secretary of State for Defence, Philip Hammond MP, was guest of honour at the Queen's Birthday party and Lord Livingstone, Trade and Investment Minister, supported a number of trade and commercial events.

### **Wider Public engagement and participation : 10,000 face-to-face participants**

Audiences for the concerts and performances were excellent, underlining the appreciation for the UK's high quality and diverse cultural offer. In addition to ticketed events in theatres and halls (Circle of Sound and the British Paraorchestra), the Festival also endeavoured to reach and engage casual audiences by taking performances to public locations which naturally attract a large number of visitors. The Urban Playground Team's show, The Inner City, was performed outdoors at Souq Waqif and attracted an audience of over 1200 people over the three days of performances. Similarly, retail promotions such as the British shopping festival at Lulu Hypermarket (who doubled the sales of their UK imports in the first two days of the launch) and the Shopping is GREAT campaign at Ezdan Mall

engaged large numbers of Qatari families with the Festival. The higher education exhibition attracted hundreds of prospective students and their families, and the English language teaching conference brought the British Festival brand to hundreds of Qatari teachers.

#### **Education Outreach Programme: 800 schoolchildren involved in Festival events**

The Festival also took workshops to a number of schools, education institutions and youth organisations. The Urban Playground, Rachel Gadsden, the Bloodhound SSC project, and the Welsh National Opera all contributed to the outreach programme, involving Qatar Music Academy, Aspire Academy, al-Noor Institute, The Youth Company and a number of Qatari and expatriate schools. The outreach programme had a significant focus on inclusion, working with groups of disabled and visually-impaired children.

Over 800 children and young people participated in the various workshops delivered during the Festival.

## **Media, Marketing and Branding**

PR and marketing agencies were retained by the Festival organisers to ensure consistent branding and production of high quality collaterals, and to ensure maximum engagement with all elements of the Festival from print, online and social media channels.

### **Marketing**

A visual identity was created for the Festival, which was the focal point of the logo strips and collaterals. Sponsor logos were included in all collaterals produced to support the overall Festival campaign, in addition to specific event-driven marketing activations. These included online advertising, flyers, posters, newspaper inserts, mall promotions, in-event branding, and digital branding. The Festival programme, brand and campaigns were picked up by Qatar's most popular websites including Doha News, Qatar Happening, I love Qatar and Marhaba.

### **Media Coverage**

200 separate pieces of media coverage were published, primarily in the daily newspapers, and arts, culture and lifestyle magazines. The majority of the coverage appeared in English-language outlets. The launch of the Festival, the Circle of Sound concert and the Urban Playground performances attracted the most coverage in English-language media. Arabic media picked up principally on the launch of the Festival and the Bloodhound, Education UK Exhibition and Qatar University events. Press releases are included at the end of this document, and a full media coverage report is available separately.

### **Social Media Engagement**

Twitter drove much of the engagement in social media. The **#BritFestQA** hashtag generated a significant amount of engagement, with an estimated **6.3 million impressions**. 85% of mentions of **#BritFestQA** originated from Qatar, and 8% of mentions from the UK.

There were 1201 individual mentions on Twitter from 528 users. 22% of the content was driven by “medium authority” Twitter users – indicating engagement with and from respected social media users in Qatar. (Mr Q, Doha News, etc). 18% of Twitter users tweeted more than twice, indicating sustained interest. Twitter followers were evenly balanced between males and females.

The event-specific hashtags **#circleofsound** and **#parkour** also created a significant amount of interest.

The Festival programme was promoted through the British Embassy and British Council’s Facebook pages. Festival-branded online competitions, with prizes donated by British brands, attracted a large number of Facebook followers. A number of other participating organisations (FashionRocksQatar, Marhaba, I Love Qatar) also used their social media channels to promote specific Festival events and campaigns.

## **Beyond the 2014 Festival**

The British Embassy and British Council are committed to making the British Festival an annual event. Plans for 2015 are already being developed, and will build on the successes of the 2014 season, with a blend of education, culture, science and commercial activities. We aim to work closely with Qatari celebrations, events and institutions to co-create the programme and to reach the largest possible audience. We look forward to a successful Festival in 2015 and beyond.

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**British Festival 2014 – Summary of Programme and Partners**

9 March	<b>Launch of the British Festival</b>	British Embassy, British Council, UKTI
9th March - 9th April	<b>British Festival</b> - British menus, products and discounts	Grand Hyatt Doha
9th March - 9th April	<b>British High Tea</b>	Intercontinental The City
9th March - 9th May	<b>British Festival – Taste of Britain</b>	Four Seasons Hotel
10-March	<b>Grand Property Event</b>	UKTI
10-March	<b>Welsh Alumni Event</b>	Welsh Government
11-March	<b>British business networking event</b>	QBBF
11-March	<b>Welsh National Opera School Workshops</b>	Welsh Government, British Council, Qatar Music Academy, Doha English Speaking School.
12-March	<b>Welsh National Opera Concert – British Embassy</b>	Welsh Government
11 March - 12 March	<b>Study in the UK Exhibition</b>	British Council
15-March	<b>British picnic on the Lawn</b>	Opal by Gordon Ramsay
17-18 March	<b>Ministerial Visit - Lord Livingstone, Minister of State for Trade &amp; Investment</b>	UKTI
17-March	<b>British Book Day – Celebration of British Literature and Publishing</b>	British Council HE The Minister of Culture HE President of Qatar University
21-March	<b>British Spycraft Celebration</b>	Grand Hyatt Hotel
22-25 March	<b>British Water Trade Mission</b>	UKTI
27-March	<b>British Food Festival launch</b>	Lulu Hypermarket
27-March	<b>English Language Teacher Development Day</b>	British Council Supreme Education Council
27-March	<b>Hackett Store Launch – Jeremy Hackett and Aston Martin</b>	UKTI, Aston Martin
27-28 March	<b>British weekend package</b>	Grand Hyatt Hotel
30-March	<b>Circle of Sound Concert Al Rayyan Theatre</b>	British Council

2-April	<b>Bloodhound SSC – schools presentation and VIP evening with Sir Richard Noble</b>	UKTI/University of the West of England/British Council Grand Hyatt Hotel.
4-April	<b>British Brunch</b>	Grand Hyatt Hotel
7-9 April	<b>Creative Industries Trade Mission Visit</b>	UKTI
7 Apr - 10 April	<b>Rachel Gadsden Artist workshops and performances</b>	British Council/Ministry of Culture, Al-Noor Institute, Shafallah Centre
10-April	<b>Book Launch : Romantic Revolution Arabic translation</b>	British Council/Ministry of Culture
7 April- 10 April	<b>The Urban Playground - Schools Workshops</b>	British Council, Aspire Academy, DESS, The Youth Company, The Mighty Jokerz
9-April	<b>Queen's Birthday Party</b> Annual official celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's birthday	British Embassy.
10, 11 , 12 April	<b>The Urban Playground Public Performances – Souq Waqif</b>	British Council
12-April	<b>British Picnic on the Lawn</b>	Opal by Gordon Ramsay



## British Festival 2014 Events Calendar

### BRITISH FESTIVAL 2014 March-April Events Calendar



#### Cultural Highlights:

##### Study in the UK Exhibition

Come and learn about study opportunities in the UK. Take your first step towards a UK education by meeting more than 20 UK institutions and get the chance to WIN A FREE TRIP to experience student life at the University of Central Lancashire or the University of St Andrews.  
Date: 11 Mar - 12 Mar (16:00 - 21:00)  
Location: Radisson Blu (Gwana Blu)  
For more information  
Contact: 4425 1888  
EducationUK@qa.britishcouncil.org

##### British Book Day

Celebrating British books at Qatar University Library. 300 books will be donated by the British Council and the British Embassy to encourage wider reading of British literature.  
Date: 17th March: 10.30am  
Location: Qatar University Library, third floor

##### 'The Inner City': Parkour Performance

Watch the internationally acclaimed contemporary dance group: The Urban Playground in live public performances. The exciting street theatre dance/parkour performers will show off their skills to the public.  
Date: 10, 11, 12 April  
Location: Souq Waqif  
Thursday 10 April  
First Performance: 7:00 pm  
Second Performance: 8:30 pm  
Friday 11 & Saturday 12 April  
First Performance: 5:00 pm  
Second Performance: 7:00 pm

##### Lines in the Sand

'Lines in the Sand' is an exhibition that brings together realms that seem at first to be mutually exclusive – the historical and the contemporary; the real and the virtual; the tangible and the intangible. This exhibition unearths Qatar's rich and complex history through interactive media designed to create new and alternate frameworks through which we may view, use and engage with the past.  
Exhibition Dates: 12 Mar - 14 Apr, 2014  
Opening Reception: 12 Mar, 6:00pm  
Entry: Free - Open invitation  
Location: VCUQatar Atrium

##### Circle of Sound - Performance

Join us to see one of the most highly acclaimed British up and coming artists led by sarod player/composer Soumik Datta and percussionist Bernhard Schimpelsberger. Soumik has collaborated with Beyonce Knowles, Nitin Sawhney, Raghu Dixit, Bill Bailey, Olivier award winning Akram Khan, Mercury Award winner Talvin Singh, Shankar Ehsaan Loy and Javed Akhtar.  
Circle of Sound will be accompanied by English singer-songwriter Fiona Bevan.  
Date: 30th March at 7pm  
Location: Souq Waqif Al Rayyan Theatre

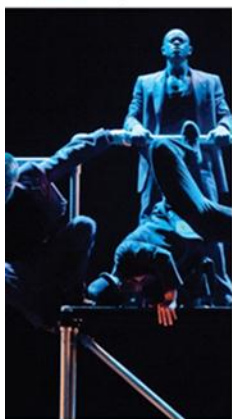
##### Tickets:

[www.virginmegastore.me](http://www.virginmegastore.me)

#### Promotions:

##### Ongoing Specials

Enjoy ongoing discounts, a special British Bar Food Fare and Biscotti's celebration of British desserts and cakes! 20% discount for all British Residents of Qatar in our bar and restaurants (not including brunch and already discounted prices).  
Date: 9th March - 9th April  
Location: Grand Hyatt



##### 'Taste of Britain'

Join us in the Library Bar and Cigar Lounge at Four Seasons Doha. Available 5pm until midnight daily.  
Date: 9th March - 9th May  
Location: Four Seasons Hotel

##### Picnic on the Lawn

Join us at Opal by Gordon Ramsay for a traditional picnic on our terrace lawn overlooking the Arabian Gulf. Bring family and friends, pick a spot on the grass, settle on your rug and enjoy a wicker basket full of authentic picnic treats and British classics such as sausage rolls and fish & chips. Entertainment for children will be by The St. Regis Doha recreation team.  
Time: 12pm - 4pm  
Date: 15th March and 12th April  
Location: Opal by Gordon Ramsay Terrace, St. Regis Hotel  
Price: QR 290 per person for food only, beverages on consumption.  
QR 125 for children under 12, includes a wide range of children's activities.  
For reservations, call +974 4446 0105 or email [diningreservations@stregis.com](mailto:diningreservations@stregis.com)

##### British Spycraft Celebration

Join us for a James Bond themed evening at Dunes Bar!  
Date: 21st Mar 9pm - 1am  
Location: Dunes Bar, Grand Hyatt

##### 'British Festival' launch

Join us for the launch of British Festival at Lulu Hypermarket Gharaffa.  
Date: 27th March: 11.30am  
Location: Lulu Hypermarket Gharaffa



##### Weekend Package

Special weekend package for Bed & Breakfast occupancy, discounts on 'Come Fly With Me' special British Brunch.  
Date: 27-28th March  
Location: Grand Hyatt

##### British Brunch

Details: British Brunch including live British Pop music with DJ Santiago. 10% discount for all British Residents of Qatar!  
Date: 4th April at 12.30 pm - 4pm  
Location: Grand Hyatt

##### Brunch with DJ Hughie

Don't miss a special Brunch with legendary DJ Hughie and his world class mix of Salsa, Latin, Jazz and Soul. 10% discount for all British Residents of Qatar!  
Date: 11-April  
Location: Grand Hyatt

##### Follow us:

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**British Festival 2014 Press Releases**

## **Launch of the British Festival will Forge New Partnerships**

**Doha, 2 March 2014** : Her Majesty's Ambassador to Qatar, His Excellency Nicholas Hopton launched the British Festival 2014 at the British Embassy in Doha. The festival is the first of several flagship initiatives focused on building a high-quality legacy programme for the immensely popular Qatar UK 2013 Year of Culture, which engaged over 175,000 people through an intense international programme of 80 events last year.

Key British entities in Qatar focusing on education, commerce and culture – including the British Council, British Embassy Doha and UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) – launched the British Festival, a series of British-sourced programmes that aim to educate, entertain and enrich audiences in Qatar.

The British Festival 2014 has created a platform to celebrate best of UK art, education, science and brands in Qatar.

Her Majesty's Ambassador to Qatar, His Excellency Nicholas Hopton said: "We are delighted and proud to launch the British Festival 2014 in Qatar. Following a recent visit by the Prince of Wales and the tremendous success of Qatar UK 2013 Year of Culture, this festival is a continuing celebration of the strong ties and ongoing cultural exchange between Qatar and the United Kingdom. The British Festival provides a platform for growing existing partnerships and forging new ones - in art, education and science. We look forward to continuing our work with the infinitely innovative British Council and its partners as the festival kicks off."

Martin Hope, Director of British Council Qatar, said: "We are thrilled to continue the strong legacy of Qatar UK 2013 Year of Culture through the British Festival. As the British Council celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the cultural events which form part of the British Festival 2014 continue our longstanding work in creating opportunities for individuals and institutions to experience the unique cultural offering of the UK. We hope this festival will reach a wide and broad audience, building on existing collaborations and creating new ones."

The British Embassy encouraged British schools and organisations and residents living in Qatar to hold their own events and participate in the celebration of British Festival 2014 using this month as an opportunity to highlight the very best of British with the whole of Qatar.

The British Festival is sponsored by Qatar Shell and BAE Systems, and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage and many local partners such as Souq Waqif, Al Rayyan theatre, Virgin Mega Store, Bhs, Debenhams, East India Company, Ezdan Mall, Hackett, Hilton Hotel, Imperial Advertising, Jo Malone, Molton Brown, Pizza Express and Spinneys, with others joining us. #BritFestQA

## **Two-day Education UK Exhibition brings top British higher education institutions to Qatar**

*Students in Qatar can meet over 20 British higher education institutions at Radisson Blu as British Festival 2014 continues*

**Doha, 10 March 2014:** The British Council's Education UK Exhibition opens today at the Radisson Blu, showcasing the best British higher education institutions and the growing educational ties between Qatar and the UK. A flagship initiative of the recently-launched British Festival 2014, the Education UK Exhibition offers anyone interested in pursuing a UK education the chance to meet 21 UK institutions.

The UK remains a preferred destination for students from Qatar. UK's Higher Education Statistics Agency announced last week that in 2013, 1,490 students from Qatar were studying in the UK – an increase of 16% from the previous year. Of those students, about three-quarters are pursuing undergraduate degrees and roughly one quarter is pursuing postgraduate degrees. In the recently published QS World University Rankings 2013/14, four of the top six universities in the world are in the UK. The same QS report also surveyed 27,000 graduate employers and found that graduates from UK universities are among the most employable, with employers rating five UK universities among the world's top 10.

The Education UK Exhibition will be open 4:30-8:30pm on Tuesday 11 March and Wednesday 12 March 2014. The exhibition is hosted in the Giwana Ballroom at the Radisson Blu. All visitors will get the chance to win a free trip to experience student life at the University of Central Lancashire or the University of St Andrews. To register for the event, visit <http://qa.edukexhibitions.org/>.

Martin Hope, Director of the British Council Qatar said: "Employers in Qatar and around the world respect the renowned quality and value of a British education, which empowers students with the skills, qualifications and connections they need to launch a successful career. We are proud to launch this year's Education UK Exhibition and delighted to see Qatar and the UK deepen educational ties through constant collaboration, educational exchange and knowledge sharing. This exhibition and wider British Festival 2014 are powerful vehicles for ongoing exchange between the two countries in the areas of education, culture, science and sport."

*British Festival 2014* aims to build a high-quality legacy programme for the immensely popular Qatar UK 2013 Year of Culture, which engaged over 175,000 people through an intense international programme of 80 events last year. The Education UK Exhibition is one of several ongoing British Council programmes engaging Qatari students and cementing a legacy of educational exchange between the two countries.

For the latest updates on the British Festival 2014, follow the British Council Qatar's official social media channels (<http://www.facebook.com/BritishCouncilQatar> ; <https://twitter.com/qaBritish>) and the hashtag #BritFestQA. The British Festival is supported by Qatar Shell and BAE Systems.

## **Bloodhound\_SSC**

**Doha, 2 April, 2014:** The British Festival and University of the West of England, Bristol celebrated British innovation and engineering by showcasing a 1,000 mph Bloodhound Super Sonic Car designed to break the world land speed record.

Bloodhound SSC is a jet and rocket powered car designed to travel at 1,000 mph (just over 1,600 kph). Weighing over 7 tonnes, its engines produce over 135,000 horsepower - more than 6 times the power of all the Formula 1 cars on a starting grid, combined. The UWE Bristol team displayed a 2m scale model of the car to invited students from a number of schools in Qatar, who attended a lecture about the ground-breaking project. The lecture explored the challenges the team had encountered and overcome so far, and shared some of the ways UWE Bristol students have participated in BloodhoundSSC whilst studying.

The educational component was followed by a VIP event, consisting of a lecture and reception held at the Grand Hyatt. Both lectures were hosted by Professor Richard Noble, Project Director for Bloodhound SSC. The evening's festivities also welcomed Qatar's industry leaders and decision makers, as well as motor enthusiasts all keen to learn more about the engineering expertise emanating from British educational institutions.

Martin Hope, Director of British Council Qatar said: "Since the launch of the British Festival, the British Council together with the British Embassy Doha have been highlighting the best of Britain in Qatar. Education, innovation and engineering are traditionally very strong British trademarks and the Bloodhound SSC is the result of the collaboration between some of the greatest visionaries in the UK today. We are very pleased to be able to share this knowledge and enthusiasm with local students, business leaders and decision makers."

Dr John Lanham, Associate Dean Partnerships, UWE Bristol, said: "As one of the five founder sponsors of the BloodhoundSSC project, UWE Bristol are very proud to be partnering with Richard and the team on this project. The core aim of BloodhoundSSC is to encourage more youngsters to engage and study STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Not because we need people to design fast cars – but because the skills, technology and capabilities used to design Bloodhound are the skills required to develop low energy, sustainable, resource efficient solutions to the challenges we all face in these early years of the 21st Century. These values align closely with UWE Bristol's aim to inspire and enable people to change their life and part of the world they live in".

## **Circle of Sound captivates Doha**

*The band launched its second album 'Anti Hero' in Qatar last night*

**Doha, 31 March 2014:** The acclaimed music duo Circle of Sound launched their second album, *Anti Hero*, last night at the Al Rayyan Theatre, Souq Waqif, as part of the British Festival 2014. The performance also marked the first stop on their international tour of their new album “*Anti Hero*”.

The concert lasted just over an hour, during which time the duo introduced its audience to material from their new album. In contrast to their first album which consisted primarily of Sarod and percussions, for this second album Circle of Sound has introduced orchestral strings, live electronics and several special guests including singer-songwriter Fiona Bevan, Laura Stanford, Rosabella Gregory and Daniel Keane.

The evening’s performance was a finely balanced mix of Oriental timbres with strains of classical Indian ambience, while seamlessly bringing Western melodies into the mix. The performance was not a clash of musical cultures, but more a case of musical distillation. Circle of Sound was very well received by the Doha audience and the band received an almost 5 minute long standing ovation from a very grateful audience.

Circle of Sound is a powerful collaboration between composer Soumik Datta on the 19-stringed sarod, and drummer Bernhard Schimpelsberger. Hailed as the 'vanguard of British Asian music' (*BBC*), their sound resonates with deep Indian ragas, urban beats, glockenspiels and a spirited rock attitude.

Martin Hope, Director of British Council Qatar said: “We are thrilled that Circle of Sound accepted our invitation to come to Qatar. It’s a great honour for Qatar to be the first stop on the launch of a new album and international tour. The performance captivated the audience by bridging musical styles and language barriers and we are very honoured to have welcomed Circle of Sound in Doha.”



## **British Festival 2014 Celebrates English Language Teaching**

*British Council hosted an inspirational seminar for English educators in Qatar*

**Doha, xx April 2014:** The British Council, as part of the British Festival 2014, recently organised and hosted a Teacher Development mini conference for English Language educators at the Tariq Bin Ziyad Independent Secondary School for Boys.

This event provided English Language Teachers, Coordinators and Academic Vice Principals in independent schools with access to high quality educational resources from the United Kingdom.

The British Council's ELT Network is a powerful resource for teaching professionals in Qatar to exchange teaching ideas and experiences and explore innovative teaching approaches and techniques. The ELT Network is a free service for practising English language teachers and teacher trainers in the Middle East region.

The guest speakers sharing their expertise are educational thought leaders. In her remarks, Dr Angi Malderez, a freelance education consultant, examined why teachers and education systems need mentors; Sam McCarter, whose educational career spans over 30 years, focused on techniques for improving writing skills in IELTS writing task 2 and academic reading; David Crabtree, education expert, discussed inclusive approaches to learning, including neurodiversity and working memory; and Wendy Arnold, education consultant, talked about developing literacy skills. These sessions were followed by workshops, held by the guest speakers, complementing the talks earlier in the day.

The day ended with an overview of how The British Council, celebrating its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, supports English teachers in Qatar through provision of top quality teaching collaterals and access to resources.

Martin Hope, Director of British Council Qatar said: "The British Festival 2014 aims to build a high-quality legacy programme for the immensely popular Qatar UK 2013 Year of Culture, which engaged over 175,000 people through an intense international programme of 80 events last year. The Teacher Development Conference at Tariq Bin Ziyad Independent Secondary School one was the latest of several ongoing programmes engaging Qatari educators and cementing a legacy of educational exchange between the two countries."

For the latest updates on the British Festival 2014, follow the British Council Qatar (@qaBritish) and the hashtag #BritFestQA on Twitter. The British Festival is sponsored by Qatar Shell and BAE Systems, and supported by many local partners such as Bhs, Debenhams, East India Company, Ezdan Mall, The Four Seasons, Grand Hyatt, Hackett, Hilton Hotel, Imperial Advertising, Intercontinental Doha – The City, Jo Malone, Molton Brown, LuLu Hypermarket Trading Group, Pizza Express, Renaissance Marriot Hotel and Spinneys.

## **British Festival 2014 announces free public parkour performances at Souq Waqif**

*British Council brings one-of-a-kind urban dance troupe to Qatar to perform and teach*

**Doha, 6 April 2014:** British Festival 2014 organisers today announced that The Urban Playground Team– the UK’s original and premier performance-parkour company – will give six free public performances in Doha starting on 10 April.

The Urban Playground Team’s performances will be the latest opportunity for individuals and institutions in Qatar to experience the unique cultural offering of the UK, as British Festival 2014 nears its finish.

The Urban Playground Team blend authentic Parkour – an urban art form also known as free running - with urban and contemporary dance for a unique act the group calls performance- parkour.

The group will perform their show, The Inner City, at Souq Waqif (Al-Souq Street near the main Souq Waqif car park) over three days. The show mixes parkour, hip-hop and contemporary dance to tell the story of inner city workers rebelling against their environment in a show the whole family will enjoy. Audiences will also be invited to try some of the moves after the performances!

The shows will take place as follows:

- **Thursday 10 April:** Shows at 19:00 and 20:30
- **Friday 11 April and Saturday 12 April:** Shows at 17:00 and 19:00

Whilst in Doha, the Urban Playground Team will also work with a number of different youth and community partners to offer workshops on Parkour – from basic Parkour movement skills for young participants to an advanced breakdancing masterclass.

Martin Hope, Director of British Council Qatar said, “This year the British Council is celebrating 80 years of bringing the UK’s unique cultural offering to the world. The Urban Playground has performed at many festivals in the UK and overseas and we are delighted to be able to bring them to Qatar for the first time, as part of the British Festival. Their performances and workshops will introduce this fun and engaging genre to a new audience in Qatar. Through performances such as these, the British Festival 2014 has cemented British Council Qatar’s reputation as a source for high-quality cultural and educational initiatives that appeal to a wide audience.”

UPG Team co-director Alister O’Loughlin, added, “Our work brings together the best elements of contemporary and urban dance with authentic parkour in a slapstick show for all the family. It’s really exciting for us to be working once again with the British Council and to bring the team for the first time to beautiful Doha.”



During the Friday performances, the UPG team will be joined by the internationally renowned artist **Rachel Gadsden**, who will create a “live” performance artwork based on the UPG Team’s show.

For the latest updates on British Festival 2014, follow the British Council Qatar (@qaBritish) and the hashtag #BritFestQA on Twitter. The British Festival is sponsored by Qatar Shell and BAE Systems, and supported by many local partners such as Bhs, Debenhams, East India Company, Ezdan Mall, The Four Seasons, Grand Hyatt, Hackett, Hilton Hotel, Imperial Advertising, Intercontinental Doha – The City, Jo Malone, Molton Brown, LuLu Hypermarket Trading Group, Pizza Express, Renaissance Marriot Hotel and Spinneys.

## **British Festival 2014 draws to a close**

*Month-long celebration strengthens bilateral relations between Qatar and the UK*

**Doha, 27 April 2014:** The British Council and the British Embassy celebrate the success of the inaugural British Festival, aimed at bolstering cultural and trade relations between the two nations. The month long festivities included a wide range of activities from music performances to technological innovations and educational events to performance parkour.

Focusing not only on cultural relations, the British Festival 2014 also teamed up with world-leading British shops and brands and major shopping malls in Qatar, with in-store events and promotions. Local hotels embraced the festivities with offers and promotions available for Qatar residents. Additionally the British Festival 2014 received strong support from HE Dr Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari, Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage.

Highlights from the British Festival 2014 include:

**Education UK Exhibition (10-12<sup>th</sup> March 2014):** The British Council held the Exhibition at the Radisson Blu and offered potential students, interested parents and local schools the opportunity to meet and engage with 21 of the leading UK higher education institutions, with the intention of growing educational ties between Qatar and the UK.

**English Language Teaching Conference (27<sup>th</sup> March 2014):** A Professional Development mini-conference was held for English language teachers, coordinators and Academic Vice Principals in independent schools, giving them an opportunity to learn about the latest UK language teaching methodology and reflect on their own practice.

**Circle of Sound (30<sup>th</sup> March 2014):** The acclaimed music duo *Circle of Sound* launched their second album 'Anti Hero,' at Souq Waqif's Al Rayyan Theatre, on their first official international tour date. The audience enthusiastically welcomed; Soumik Datta, the renowned sarod player and composer, Austrian drummer Bernhard Schimpelsberger, English singer-songwriter Fiona Bevan, Laura Stanford, Rosabella Gregory and Daniel Keane.

**BloodhoundSSC (2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014):** The University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) showcased the UK's world-class engineering and innovation expertise through their work supporting the Bloodhound SuperSonic Car (SSC) in Doha. The UWE Bristol team displayed a two meter scale model of the car to invited students from a number of schools in Qatar, who attended a lecture discussing the ground-breaking project's successes and challenges in attempting to break the land speed record and travel at 1000km per hour.

**The Urban Playground (10-12<sup>th</sup> April):** The UK's unique and admired performance-parkour company gave six free public performances to engaged and excited audiences at Souq Waqif. The group blends authentic Parkour - an urban art form also known as free running - with urban and contemporary dance, for a thrilling visual experience.

Martin Hope, Director of British Council Qatar, said: “The 2014 British Festival has been a roaring success and for that we are truly grateful to our partners and sponsors, as well as the residents of Qatar who participated in the festivities with such enthusiasm. As the British Council celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we will continue our longstanding work connecting local individuals and institutions with the UK through culture and education. We would like to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari, Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage for his continued support. We value our friendship highly and we very much look forward to future collaborations.”

Her Majesty’s Ambassador to Qatar, His Excellency Nicholas Hopton commented: “We are delighted and proud at how successful British Festival 2014 in Qatar has been. The events and activities have built on the tremendous success of the Qatar UK 2013 Year of Culture, by celebrating the strong ties between Qatar and the UK. This month’s festivities provided a platform to showcase some of the UK’s best talent and enterprise. A highlight for me has been the way in which members of the community have participated with great energy and initiative in the festival. I am pleased to announce the British Festival month will be an annual event, and plans for 2015 are already underway.”

Updates on the British Festival 2014 have been shared via the British Council Qatar and the British Embassy Doha official social media channels, under the hashtag #BritFestQA. The month’s festivities were kindly sponsored by Qatar Shell and BAE Systems, and supported by many local partners such as Bhs, Debenhams, East India Company, Ezdan Mall, The Four Seasons, Grand Hyatt, Hackett, Hilton Hotel, Imperial Advertising, Intercontinental Doha – The City, Jo Malone, Molton Brown, LuLu Hypermarket Trading Group, Pizza Express, Renaissance Marriot Hotel and Spinneys.

To celebrate the end of the British Festival 2014 British Airways have generously donated a pair of free return economy class tickets to London. The British Embassy will be running an online competition for a chance to win this exciting prize. Applicants must be Qatar residents and can enter the competition at the British Embassy Facebook site or Fashion Rocks Qatar. The lucky winner will be announced in June.

## Image Gallery

### The Urban Playground Team performances and Workshops







**Rachel Gadsden live artist performances and workshops**



**The British Paraorchestra performance at Katara**



**GREAT Britain campaign at Ezdan Mall**



**Bloodhound SSC schools workshop**



**Welsh National Opera workshops**





The Circle of Sound performing at al-Rayyan Theatre.