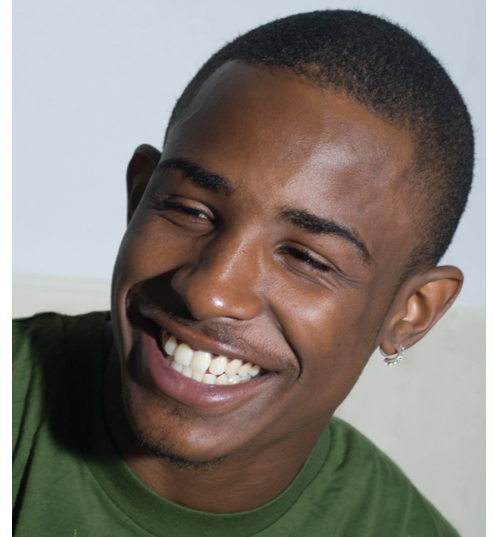


SLAMBassador Chris Preddie awarded OBE



Chris Preddie.
Photo: Hayley
Madden for the
Poetry Society

The **Poetry Society's** spoken word championship for young people, **SLAMBassadors UK**, will be celebrating its first decade in 2012. What better way to start the celebrations than with the news that former winner and now SLAMBassador Poet Mentor Chris Preddie has been awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List?

When Chris Preddie first performed at a SLAMBassadors UK event in 2006, he entered a piece called 'Insight', which detailed his history as a gang member, the murder of his brother and his commitment to not only escaping gangs himself but to



SLAMBassadors UK winners at the 2011 Showcase event, London, with Chris Preddie (centre).
Photo: Hayley Madden for the Poetry Society

offering others a lifeline too. He does this through his poetry performances and workshops, both for SLAMBassadors and Make Dreams A Reality, the company he set up in early 2011. Chris quickly established himself as a core member of the Poetry Society's SLAMBassadors' team, touring the UK and performing commissioned pieces.

Chris recently led a series of workshops for SLAMBassadors UK in west London and hosted the Paddington Arts Slam – and will be making a feature appearance at the **SLAMBassadors UK Finals** on 1 April 2012 at the 100 Club, London. Videos of his performances can be found via <http://slam.poetrysociety.org.uk>

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For further information

Eleanor Turney, tel: 020 7420 9880
marketing@poetrysociety.org.uk
or Alan Ward, tel: 020 7420 9886
award@poetrysociety.org.uk

The Poetry Society,
22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX
Tel: 020 7420 9880 Fax: 020 7240 4818
www.poetrysociety.org.uk

Joelle Taylor, Artistic Director of SLAMBassadors UK, said: "There is some serious air punching across SLAM and the Poetry Society! I am indescribably proud of Chris and his achievements and prouder still of the example he sets to younger people as an artist and as a human being."

The Poetry Society's SLAMBassadors UK championship celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2012. The current championship closes on 7 January 2012. It's open to young people aged 12-18 from across the UK. Entries are accepted online and through regional events – the winners then participate in a central London showcase final and receive intensive mentoring.

– ENDS –

For more information contact

**Eleanor Turney, tel: 020 7420 9880 or email: marketing@poetrysociety.org.uk
or Alan Ward, tel: 020 7420 9886 or email: award@poetrysociety.org.uk**

Notes to Editors:

- **Chris Preddie** entered the Rise Slam (now known as SLAMBassadors UK) in 2006, when the theme was 'Gun and Knife Crime'. He won the title of London Champion with a piece detailing his life in London gangs and the murder of his brother. He quickly established himself as part of the SLAMBassadors team, alongside artists such as PACE and Jay Bernard, and toured the UK, delivering workshops and taking part in performances, with Joelle Taylor as coach and mentor. He has appeared at SLAMBassadors events at the Royal Festival Hall and Royal Court Theatre, London, on a pontoon in the middle of the Cornish sea, and the Word Cup, impressing crowds not just with his poetry but also with his irreverent humour. Since then he has become a poet mentor for SLAMBassadors, most recently mentoring students in North Somerset and west London. He recently set up his own company Make Dreams a Reality, which facilitates creative workshops with young offenders.

- **Slam** is the competitive art of performance poetry before a loud and lively audience and the **Poetry Society's SLAMBassadors UK** championship, which is open to 12-18 year olds nationwide, showcases some of the best up and coming performance poets the UK has to offer. SLAMBassadors UK is run in partnership with local youth groups and regional and national arts organisations and has featured prestigious judges and mentors such as Benjamin Zephaniah and Scroobius Pip. Winners take part in a Masterclass weekend at the Poetry Society with Joelle Taylor, then perform live at a prestigious venue in London each year. <http://slam.poetrysociety.org.uk>

- **Joelle Taylor** is the Artistic Director of SLAMBassadors UK. She is based in London, and has worked extensively as a performance poet, spoken word artist and storyteller since 1986. She also has a background in theatre. She has led numerous writing and performance workshops in schools, theatres and art centres. She has toured nationally both as a solo artist and as a member of Atomic Lip, a polyphonic performance poetry group which fused spoken word with popular culture.

- **The Poetry Society** was founded in 1909 to promote a "more general recognition and appreciation of poetry". Since then, it has grown into one of Britain's most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally. Today it has nearly 4,000 members worldwide and publishes the leading poetry magazine, *Poetry Review*. With innovative education and commissioning programmes and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, the Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages. To find out more about the Poetry Society visit www.poetrysociety.org.uk.

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