

Norfolk & Norwich Festival 08

Press Release

29th February 2008

2008 Programme Highlights

The origins of the 200 year old festival are in **classical music** and this strong tradition remains at the core of the programme. 2008 highlights include *Zadok The Priest*, sung by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, The Hilliard Ensemble with music by Bach and Arvo Part and the UK premiere of *Kiss On Wood* arranged for cello and strings, by James MacMillan with Natalie Clien on cello.

This year's featured Festival composer is **Janáček** and his music can be heard in a variety of events including from the massed voices of the Festival Chorus with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, who perform the *Glagolitic Mass*. Composed in 1926 this piece received its UK première at the Norfolk & Norwich Festival in 1930, conducted by Sir Henry Wood and we are delighted to have it return nearly 80 years later! Janáček also features in the intimate classical accordion solo concert from James Crabb and Prague's exquisite Pavel Haas Quartet. Among the other musical themes explored this year are star crossed lovers - in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* and Fauré's *Pelléas and Mélisande*.

In addition to some huge names in the orchestral world – the Russian State Orchestra and the Philharmonia to name but two, the festival also offers some fascinating **chamber concerts**. The 'early music superstar' and viola da gamba expert Jordi Savall is not to be missed and John Williams teams up with John Etheridge for an extraordinary mix of classical and jazz guitar.

Contemporary music highlights include the only UK performance outside London of *Homeland* by New York performance art legend **Laurie Anderson** and the greatest funk artist in the world, the saxophonist **Maceo Parker** – joined by festival favourite Dennis Rollins.

Musically, the action packed two weeks is brought to a close with a World Premiere commissioned by the Norfolk and Norwich Festival from eminent American trumpeter and composer **Jon Hassell**. *In Tsegihí (The Night Chant)* will be performed by Hassell and his band, Maarifa Street with 100 strong local choir, The Voice Project (formerly Bigger Sky) at the Cathedral.

Dance (and Stravinsky) fans will be able to revel in the arrival to the city of the **Michael Clark Company** with a two night event, the *Stravinsky Project*, three astounding and challenging choreographic responses to Stravinsky's music for *Apollo*, *The Rite of Spring* and *Les Noces* - played live by the Britten Sinfonia and New London Chamber

Choir. The whole project has never been performed outside London and once it leaves Norwich, heads direct to the Lincoln Centre in New York.

Contemporary circus is really making a name for itself as an intensively creative artform and an immensely enjoyable and accessible audience experience. The Festival has co-commissioned a new show, *Tabu*, from the masters of this brave new artform, **No Fit State**. The audience stands and moves around the silver spaceship tent as the incredible performers leap around and among and above them in this exhilarating rush of a show. Based in Earlham Park for the duration of the festival, this is one that will stay in the memory for years to come.

Children are not forgotten in all the excitement and there is an extensive selection of low cost family entertainment. This year's **Children's Festival** includes a Baby Rave (yes really – a rave for babies!) an amazing and hilarious Spanish circus, puppets, monsters and an artistic treasure hunt, *City of Secrets*, that takes place all over the Norwich for just one day.

We know that a festival just wouldn't be a festival without **fireworks** and we have some large scale, **outdoor extravaganzas** that will make most bonfire nights look like damb squibs! Starting with a city centre masclata, a daytime pyrotechnic sound and light spectacular, the opening weekend also includes *Mephistomania*, the story of Faust, told by wild dervishes on stilts who lead you from the Cathedral, through the streets of Norwich to the fiery gates of hell!

The **Festival Finale**, for 3-6000 people in Earlham Park is made by Spanish masters of fire, **Xarxa Teatre** (pronounced Shar-sha) They literally turn water into fire in a sea inspired, firework filled spectacular show. So spectacular in fact that we choose their picture for the cover of the festival brochure this year.

The festival aims to be as accessible as possible and prices have been held or lowered this year and there are many free events.

Following the success of last year's **Under 26's £5 ticket scheme**, this is being continued for 2008. For 95% of Festival shows at least 5% and often more of the best available seats can be bought by under 26's *in advance only* for just £5 per seat. But they need to be quick, once they are gone they are gone!

For further information contact:

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Notes to Editors

Full event details available at www.nnfestival.org.uk
Picture downloads available in the press section, please email charlene@nnfestival.org.uk for the password and take note of crediting requirements.

Public Information:

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