

A Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance 2014 media item:

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND SUPPORTS 50TH BILLINGHAM INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL OF WORLD DANCE

Down the years, festivals come and go with very few sticking around for the long term to progress and flourish.

Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance (BIFF) defiantly bucks the trend – showing the importance of getting the local North-East community onside by delivering a varied and quality programme of arts, education and entertainment from around the world.

This has resulted in the Festival celebrating its 50th year in 2014, and being recognised as one of the most established and long standing cultural events in the region.

The passion and commitment being shown by the Festival organisers has been recognised by Arts Council England with a funding award being granted for £72,900 from their National Lottery funded Grants for the arts programme.

The money has been awarded to particularly explore the contemporary dance element of the Festival programme; enabling BIFF 2014 to exclusively deliver shows, events, workshops, public art, residencies and fresh commissions.

This includes a fortnights residency in Latin American and Brazilian contemporary dance by ELEMENTS ARTS COMPANY (UK / London) being delivered in schools across Middlesbrough with performances also to be staged in Billingham and Middlesbrough. Another aspect will see Newcastle-based ZENDEH creating a series of “Poetry in Motion” pieces, portraying poems from all over the world through the actions of dance. ZENDEH will be working with young people and staff from Billingham South Community Primary School.

An exciting component of this year’s Festival will be a fascinating fusion of contemporary dance and sculpture when *mima* hosts *ERHEBUNG* by the acclaimed company, ATMA Dance. The Dance-Sculpture-Sonic-Art-Installation is a combination of new classical Indian dance and abstract sculpture.

All three elements show the diversity in styles and content that will make BIFF 2014 a stand-out event.

Olga Maloney, Artistic Director for the Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance, said: “We are delighted to receive the continued support from Arts Council England, as without their involvement we wouldn’t be able to deliver the programme to the high standard the audiences deserve.”

Olga is also the secretary general of CIOFF (Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts) International. She added: “This year holds extra significance for us with it being our 50th anniversary celebrations. It symbolises just how much the Festival has grown and developed down the years. The secret of our longevity is being able to reinvent aspects of the programme,

and in this case it's the contemporary dance element. The creativity helps to add to our legacy that in turn will be passed on to future generations throughout our community.

“BIFF 2014 also has a valuable part to play in the Tees Valley tourism and business scene with the attraction of visitors and performers helping to contribute towards the local economy.”

The *Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance* will be hosting artistes from Chile, Cook Islands, Georgia, Italy, Ireland, Mexico, North Cyprus, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Thailand and from across the UK with the event taking place between 8th and 16th August 2014.

Grants for the arts is Arts Council England's Lottery-funded grant programme for individuals, arts organisations and other people who use the arts in their work. Grants are available for activities carried out over a set period and which engage people in England in arts activities and help artists and arts organisations in England carry out their work.

Everything you will ever need to know about *Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance* can be found at www.billinghamfestival.co.uk

This website contains the Festival programme in full, information about the artists and performers, and it even contains an archive of material covering the last five decades. People can also contact the team by calling 01642 553 220 or by emailing info@billinghamfestival.co.uk

For further information about other projects and organisations that receive support from Arts Council England please visit www.artscouncil.org.uk

The Festival also enjoys support from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

If there's only one Festival you attend this year to enjoy a host of cultural experiences then please make it BIFF 2014.

You can get up to date information from our Face Book and Twitter pages www.facebook.com/billinghamworlddancefestival and @BillFest

We look forward to welcoming everyone in August to enjoy the fun and entertainment!

ENDS

Support Images: If you require any images to support the above item then I can send over a selection of high resolution photographs on request.

Notes to Editor:

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2010 and 2015, we will invest £1.9 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1.1 billion from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

www.artscouncil.org.uk