



PRESS RELEASE

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Caption - the picture shows young performers from Tapshoes and Tutus dance school, with their teacher Amy Cairney, left, and dance festival artistic director Olga Maloney.

YOUNG DANCERS TO PERFORM AT WORLD DANCE FESTIVAL

YOUNG dancers are gearing up for their moment in the international spotlight.

Performers from Teesside dance school Tapshoes and Tutus are taking part in this year's Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance.

Under the guidance of teacher Amy Cairney, the dancers aged between three and eleven will perform two routines.

The first is based on this year's festival theme of Three Feathers in the Wind, while the second takes its inspiration from the countries taking part.

Amy said: "As a young dancer I always wanted to be involved in the festival so to have the opportunity now with my young dancers is fantastic.

"They're all so excited to be performing on such a big stage, and to see how dancers from around the world gear up for their routines. They'll also get the chance to spend time with some of the international troupes which will be invaluable to their development.

"I'm so proud of them and know they'll do me, their parents and Billingham proud."

The Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance takes place next month and will see talented performers from across the world entertain audiences for a weeklong programme of events.

Troupes from Brazil, Chile, China, Mexico, the Philippines, Serbia, USA and Sicily are set to arrive in the coming weeks ahead of the festival, which has become a highlight of the region's arts and culture calendar.

Around 10,000 people attended last year's festival and organisers are confident this year's packed programme of events will attract even more.

Artistic Director Olga Maloney said: "As much as the festival is an international celebration of world dance, it's also about giving young dancers from the area the opportunity to perform on such a high profile stage and we're delighted to have Tapshoes and Tutus involved.

"There's just a few weeks to go until the dancers start to arrive and already there's been a huge amount of interest. We're certain this year's event will be the best yet."

Core funding for this year's festival, which takes place from August 8 - 15, has come from Stockton Borough Council, while Arts Council England is funding the contemporary elements of the festival and Awards for All funding a programme to take dancers into care homes in the area.

Cllr Bob Cook, Leader of Stockton Borough Council, said: "The festival is one of the highlights of the area's events programme and we're delighted to once again be funding it. It really puts Tees Valley on the map and brings performers and visitors from all corners of the world, which puts us in the international spotlight for all the right reasons."

Most of the festival concerts and events will be held at the Festival Arena, which this year will be right in the middle of Billingham Town Centre, with other events being held in Middlesbrough Town Hall Crypt, Middlesbrough Theatre and Billingham Forum.

To find out more visit www.billinghamfestival.co.uk or call 01642 553220.

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