



Billingham International *Folklore Festival*



Billingham International Festival – the Beginning of a New Era

Billingham International Folklore Festival which is now in its 47th year has just been awarded a generous grant by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, which will allow the organisers to expand the festival activities and introduce new contemporary ideas into the Festival.

Besides the International Dance and Music groups which this year will come from as far as Belarus, Costa Rica, Georgia, Egypt, Hungary, Panama, Serbia and South Korea the grant will make it possible for the festival organisers to create spectacular Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Festival, which this year will take place at the Festival Arena in John Whitehead Park in Billingham. It will also allow the organisers to extend festival activities to include British professional artists, musicians and dancers, which include “Misshaped Pearls” World Music Band; “Caliche” South American Music Band, Richmond Town Pipes & Drums and “Alma de Tango” Quartet with professional tango dancers Jenny Frances & Ricardo Oria who will present the UK Premier of the show “Tango!!! 100 year of passion!!” at the Arc Arts Centre in Stockton.

For the first time in its history, in cooperation with DanceCity, the National Dance Agency for the North East of England, the festival is commissioning a professional choreographer to work with International performers participating in the Festival and UK professional dancers and musicians, who using the combination of dance styles to accumulate the richness of traditional dance cultures from all over the World with modern contemporary dance, will choreograph three dance performance pieces, which will be premiered at the Opening Ceremony on Saturday, 6th August 2011 and Closing Ceremony on Saturday, 13th August 2011. One of dance pieces will be preformed to live music by World Music Band “Mishaped Pearls”.

The festival Closing Ceremony will start with an unusual music Concert presenting a unique combination of Richmond Town Pipes & Drums and South American Music by “Caliche”. The Concert will be followed by Spectacular Closing Ceremony, culminating in a Fantastic Fireworks Display in John Whitehead Park to live music by Richmond Pipe & Drums and Caliche.

“We are absolutely thrilled about being awarded this grant. In 3 years time the Billingham festival will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary and by introducing new contemporary styles and artists into the Festival programme, we are hoping to demonstrate to our existing and new audiences and supporters that traditional music and dance, although they are part of intangible cultural heritage of its country of origin, evolve with times and can be presented in new artistic ways,” – says Olga Maloney, Artistic Director of Billingham festival - “we are also hoping to inspire artistic dialog and provide new creative opportunities, for both UK and International artists, encourage a public debate about traditional music and dance as a contemporary arts form and make our festival attractive to much wider audiences”.



“Caliche” South American Music Group



Jenny Frances & Ricardo Oria – Argentinean tango Dancers



“Misshaped Pearls” World Music Band



LOTTERY FUNDED