



BILLINGHAM

INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL



BIFF NEWSLETTER No 7, April 2008

**44th BILLINGHAM FESTIVAL - 26th July - 2nd August 2008
Final Stages**

The 44th Billingham International Folklore Festival is nearly upon us and the programme of all the festival is published in the Festival Leaflet and on our website www.billinghamfestival.co.uk

From Saturday 26th July to Saturday 2nd August, Billingham will be playing host to groups from Colombia, Germany, Italy (flag throwers), Malaysia, Malta, Martinique (French Indies), Romania, Russia (Bashkiria), Sri Lanka and on the Opening Day the Dhol Blasters and Bangra Blasters from Birmingham.

New Features for 2008:

- Evening Concerts in the Outside Arena
- Uncle Biff Club
- Drumming workshops for Children
- Drumming Workshop for Young Adults
- World Dance Experience
(Learn to Dance like they do!)
- Special Guest appearances!

Please read the details below

44th
**BILLINGHAM
INTERNATIONAL
FOLKLORE
FESTIVAL**
26th July - 2nd August 2008

SUPPORTED BY:

- Heritage Lottery Funded
- Stockton-on-Tees
- YEMELIA
- SRC Beck's South Farm Billingham
- THE COMPTON GROUP
- BOYES
- FORUM THEATRE BILLINGHAM
- bede
- ConocoPhillips
- DEVEREUX

passionate about
**ARTS
DANCE
AND
MUSIC**

TEL: (01642) 553220
www.billinghamfestival.co.uk

Opening Ceremony & Concert - Saturday, 26th July 2008

Specially invited for this year's Parades and Ceremonies to add colour and the WOW factor, we are proudly playing host to the Italian Flag Throwers and Drummers, who promise to entertain the audiences at the Spectacular breathtaking Opening Ceremony which will include all the International and British Participants of this years Festival. The New Ceremony will be rehearsed as the International Groups arrive, in true Billingham style, straight off the bus into rehearsals during the two days leading upto the festival Opening.



The Opening Ceremony will be followed by a Concert, featuring all the International Groups, Corryvreckan Scottish Dancers and our Special Guests for the Opening Festival Day - Dhol Blasters & Bangra Blasters from Birmingham, representing India, who have performed at most of the major arenas and festivals all over UK and abroad.

Dance of Light - Sunday, 27th July 2008 - 8pm Festival Arena

For the first time this year we will be holding two evening concerts in The Festival Arena. The first concert on Sunday entitled "Dance of Light" will include a breathtaking Finale with Fire Dancers from Sri Lanka. This is a rare opportunity to see this dance, as it cannot be performed indoors because of Fire regulations. Other groups performing on this special night will be Italy, Malta and Martinique who also dance with fire and lights



The main reason we are holding the two concerts outside and not in the Forum Theatre are the costs. Rental Costs from Riverside leisure who run the Theatre on behalf of SBC have

substantially been increasing for some years from just £2000 in 1999 to £8500 in 2007, unfortunately cutbacks have to be made, as the Grants and sponsorship we receive do not increase. To ensure we are able to continue with this unique event, and bring to Billingham the standard of groups you deserve, hard decisions have to be made and decisions like this are not taken lightly. For the very same reason we also have to cancel the afternoon concert transfers in cases of bad weather (except for Opening & Closing Ceremonies - which will be

transferred). So, let's hope & pray the sun shines for us. Anyone who knows and SUN Dances, keep practicing.



Canes, Clogs & Basket Weaving - Monday, 28th July 2008 - Forum Theatre - 7:30 pm

How many times have you seen International groups using shawls, flowers, stools, umbrellas, pots etc in their dances.



Now imagine your on holiday in a Market place somewhere nice and hot, where you can buy all those souvenirs like shawls, clogs, canes, baskets, anything you can think of...

When the stallholders start dancing with merchandise. Put those two together and you will understand why we called this concert "Canes, Clogs & Basket Weaving"...



**Special Guest Appearance By - Dojo Taiko Drummers
Wednesday, 30th July at Forum Theatre, 7:30 pm**

For the first time for one night only we have the special Guest Appearance of the spectacular Dojo Taiko Drummers. Experience the thundering and exhilarating rhythms of Taiko and gain a unique insight into this amazing ancient Japanese art.



The thundering drums of the first half will be followed in the second half by "Kruzheva" from Bashkiria, Russia. With their vigorous movements kaleidoscopic colourful patterns you have to see to

believe, (we have watched this over and over and still can't work out how they do this particular dance), accompanied by extremely soothing music in complete contrast to the 1st half,



A powerful mix of primal rhythm, fusion of colour, in a spellbinding display of precision steps and athleticism from both performances that will captivate and entertain audiences of all ages.

Uncle Biff Club for Children

Some of you will remember the Uncle Biff who used to be a major part within the Festival for Children.

Unfortunately, we have been unable to find anyone who would play the role of Uncle Biff, so we have revived him in the form of an extremely large Teddy Bear. Uncle Biff Club has now replaced the former Children's Club.

Is there anybody out there who thinks they could fill these famous boots? If

so, please come forward, we are waiting to hear from you!!!



Uncle Biff Goes Drumming...



Most of the groups invited to this year's Festival are accompanied by accomplished musicians with years of experience of playing drums. With this in mind, we decided to create Drumming Workshops for children, to encourage

fun whilst learning a new skill, which will take place at Bede College over the course of the Festival week. The children will work alongside the participant's and learn rhythms from all over the world, culminating hopefully in a performance on stage on the final Saturday, with all international drummers and course participants, (depending on the success of the grant application). We hope this will be a regular additional feature of the Uncle BIFF Club with regular practice sessions through out the year.

Taiko Drumming Workshop for Young Pleople

Using the unique opportunity of Taiko Drummers performing at our Festival we will be holding Taiko Drumming Workshop at the Forum Theatre on Wednesday, 30th July between 2pm and 4pm. For young people age 14-18. This ancient Japanese art, requires a lot of skill, dedication and energy, so this is why we have the age range for young adults to enjoy. They will be taught by professionals in Taiko drumming on a very intense course, again culminating in a performance with all participants of the course, with a chance to record the

finale, a piece of Billingham Festival History.



World Dance Experience

Anyone who has ever sat in the stands at one of our concerts and said to the person next to them. "How do they do that?" well here is your chance to find out.

You do not need any dance experience to enjoy this unique opportunity with expert tuition in dances from all over the world.

This was formally the Adult Dance Course, for experienced Dance Teachers, however we have decided that everybody should have a chance to have fun whilst they learn. Now there is no excuse, come along make friends from home and abroad. Everyone is welcome. No specialist dance clothes or shoes are required, just yourselves and a big smile.



Host Nights at Bede College

All the Festival Friends and Members are invited to Host Nights at Bede College, which will take place from 9pm till 11pm. Each Night different "Friends" from abroad will play host to Festival Friends, Members, Volunteers and international groups.



We don't know what will happen, they might decide to teach us some of their dances with musicians backing them or they might decide to play some of their own music and have a party. Who knows it's up to them. Whatever happens it's always a memorable fun evening, when everyone lets their hair down and relaxes after busy days. Lifelong friends are made at these events, so don't miss out.

If you would like to become a Patron, Member or Friend of the Festival you can download the application form from our Website:

www.billinghamfestival.co.uk

or ring (01642) 553220 and we will send you all the details by post.

Festival Website

Our Festival Website have now been fully re-vamped and updated to include a lot of presentations and slide-shows of past Festivals and even, for the first time, the video preview of the groups coming to the Festival 2008.

Please take a look and, let us know what you think. Leave us a message on our Message Board, we would like to hear from you all with any ideas etc or maybe just to say hi.



BILLINGHAM FESTIVAL BOX OFFICE & ONLINE BOOKINGS

The festival Box Office will open at the Forum Theatre on:

Saturday, 31st May 2008

(tel: 01642-552663).

Meanwhile, **you do not have to wait**, as for the first time the Festival tickets can now be booked and paid for **online**

using credit/debit cards at our Festival Shop:

www.billinghamfestival.co.uk/store

Friends, Members & Patrons of the Festival can book their tickets at the discount rates starting from 30th April 2008.

BILLINGHAM FESTIVAL ONLINE SHOP

Our On-line shop is now well underway, selling dvd's of previous festival's with a special DVD filmed at last year's Gala Night by Mr Edward Croot a professional from BBC Television. The results are stunning. If you were at Gala Night last year and enjoyed the show, please visit our On-line shop.



Also available to purchase are professional Photographs by our Official festival Photographer Alex Wilson, who has managed to capture the true atmosphere of the festival on film. Pictures are available in all different sizes from snap to poster size, collections are also available. Why not wow your friends with something different for your home.



We also have limited edition t-shirts (limited numbers), badges and coming soon some Cd's of festival music throughout the year's. As you will appreciate the festival every year struggles for money, so we have decided to sell on-line some of the souvenirs given to us over the years from different groups and items we have collected along the way. It is very difficult for us to part with them as every item holds special memories for us, of friends made and never forgotten, but to ensure the festival continues money has to be found, and if this means by parting with treasures new friends over the coming years can be made, it's a sacrifice we are willing to take.

If you have any items that you would be willing to donate to the festival On-line shop, please contact us, or send it to the festival Office, your donations will be greatly appreciated.

We also have a number of volunteers who will be holding Car Boot sales, so if you have any items lurking in your loft, again please contact us.

Sonia Lawson has kindly offered to hold a coffee morning on Friday 31st May 2008 at her house, to make some money for the Festival, please come along and join in the fun, cakes and biscuits.

Unfortunately the Festival Grand Draw this year will not be held, so your support on our On-line shop is vital. If you love the festival as much as we do, please help us to ensure it continues definitely until we at least hit the big 50.

We have also registered Billingham Festival Charity on e-bay so if you are a fellow e-bayer, you can give a percentage of your sales to biff through e-bay. We have made a start by producing a CD of Russian phrases for the UEFA Cup Final in Moscow, which is on e-bay now, all

proceeds go to BIFF. Even if your not a footy fan, this CD is perfect for holidays in Russia or to talk to your Russian guests at the Festival. It has been Englishized!!! With me sitting down and pronouncing the English version in Russian, the amazing thing is I was understood, but ended up with a headache, (not a vodka in sight) What a difficult language, and I thought Spanish was hard.!!!



Our Website will be expanding after the 2008 festival. So please keep popping back to see what we have been up to!!!

BIFF NEWSLETTER

If you would like to make any comments regarding the Newsletter, or receive the previous edition of the Newsletter by e-mail, please contact us on:

billingham.festival@virgin.net

If you do not wish to receive our Newsletter in the future, please e-mail us back with a word “**unsubscribe**” and we will delete your e-mail address of our mailing list.

Billingham International Folklore Festival Ltd
Stockton Business Centre, 70 Brunswick Street, Stockton on Tees, TS18 1DW
Tel: (01642) 651060; Fax: (01642) 602839
e-mail: info@billinghamfestival.co.uk; www.billinghamfestival.co.uk