

A Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance media item:

Dancing on Ice superstar blows Billingham away with Folklore Festival routine

Support Photography: A set of superb full colour images of Mark Hanretty in action during rehearsals at the Billingham Forum Theatre have been attached to this press release (photo credit – Cast Photography UK). There is also some stunning video footage available.

This week, Mark Hanretty, of ITV's Dancing on Ice 2018 fame, wowed onlookers at the Billingham Forum Theatre as he rehearsed part of his stunning skating and aerial silks routine in preparation for this year's Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance.

Mark, who partnered with Geordie Donna Air in the hit TV show earlier this year, was in Town to put the finishing touches to the world premiere performance of Japanese inspired show, *'Ikebana, the Journey in Quest of Harmony'*.

'Ikebana, the Journey in Quest of Harmony', funded by Arts Council England, is a fusion of art and sport, presented by 300 international performers, world-class ice skaters, dancers, actors, musicians, dramatic Japanese Taiko drummers and a large community cast.

Mark will be joined by a host of other world ice skating stars including Gary Beacom, Zoe Jones, Chris Boyadji, Phil Harris, and Yebin Mok.

The show takes place on the 11th and 12th of August and the spectacular event will be opening the 54th Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance.

The unique aspect about Ikebana is that the audience get more than they bargained for, as the show is split into two venues. The Billingham Forum Theatre and the Billingham Forum Ice Rink. People will get two shows for one price...one on the stage and one on the ice!

"I think people can expect something entirely new in my performances in Ikebana. I have never seen someone perform silks and off ice skates before, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to showcase something unique...I'll do my very best to prepare something special for this amazing festival!" said Mark Hanretty.

Another wonderful thing about Ikebana is the way local people and talented young skaters are being given the chance to take part. Mark went on to say: "I've been fortunate enough to be invited to Billingham regularly to work with the local skaters. It's always been such a pleasure to work with such a great group of youngsters who demonstrate both passion and enthusiasm for skating! This will be a delightful chance to perform alongside some of them!"

Olga Maloney, Artistic Director for Billingham International Folklore Festival, said: "Our special performance, Ikebana, the Journey in Quest of Harmony, promises to be a spectacular and unique experience for our audiences.

“Ikebana conjures up a feast of dance, skating, music and digital art – all mixed together to create a spectacular show on both ice and treading the stage. It even showcases the talent of choirs and singers from across the North East.

“It is an unmissable performance that is suitable for all the family, and Ikebana is a wonderful way to kick off our 54th year of bringing international dance to Billingham.”

Ikebana will include visiting dancers appearing at Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance from countries such as Argentina, Chile, Egypt, Mexico, France, Ukraine and the UK. They will be putting on other shows in and around Billingham Town Centre.

For a full list of shows and ways you can purchase your tickets for ‘Ikebana, the Journey in Quest of Harmony’ please visit www.billinghamfestival.co.uk/store

Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance runs from Saturday 11 August to Sunday 19th August 2018 with an opening Parade of Nations followed by a week of individual shows.

Billingham International Folklore Festival 2018 is sponsored by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council; Arts Council England; Billingham Town Council; Youth Social Action Fund; The Billingham Legacy Foundation; Boyes & Co Ltd; K W Deveraux & Sons; St. Mowden; Tees Active; Croft Coaches; plus Big Lottery Fund

Social media platforms: Facebook at @billinghamworlddancefestival and Twitter @BillFest

ENDS

Media Contact:

Olga Maloney
Artistic Director
Billingham International Folklore Festival

07766953472

info@billinghamfestival.co.uk