

INTERNATIONAL DANCE AND POETRY PUTS YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PICTURE AT A BILLINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

In its 50th year, the Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance (BIFF 2014 / 9-16 August) has looked to commission a host of exclusive cultural projects that aims to inspire young people, communities and encourage new audiences for traditional and contemporary dance.

The young people of Billingham South Community Primary School have been given the opportunity to work closely with Newcastle-based National Touring Theatre Company, ZENDEH - on a project entitled "Poetry in Motion".

The Festival enjoys support from Arts Council England's Grants for the arts programme, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund; with elements of the creative residencies being delivered by *dancemiddlesbrough*.

During the exploratory workshops the young people have been encouraged to develop their creativity through learning poetry writing skills, and by also enjoying a variety of creative movement and drama techniques.

The pupils used the various participating countries being represented at the Festival as the focus of their poetry.

Steven Gaythorpe, Associate Writer of ZENDEH, said: "We always value and celebrate creative collaboration, sharing and the use of imagination during every project we deliver. Our approach has always been to listen, breathe and transform through the exploration of arts and culture with partners and the public.

"The children have been developing their performance, character, teamwork and vocal skills all inspired by the internationally inspired poetry they've been creating."

The pupils and staff at Billingham South Community Primary School have really embraced this year's Festival by delivering a host of different projects. The international theme was used to motivate the young people into drawing a selection of pictures that were later compiled into a major gallery exhibition for friends and family to enjoy.

Two of the countries concentrated upon were France and Belgium as the young people also planted the symbolic flowers from each country in the School's garden –namely the Gordon Iris (France) and the Poppy (Belgium).

The other countries they could've chosen from the Festival line up included Chile, Cook Islands, Georgia, Italy, Ireland, Mexico, North Cyprus, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Thailand and the UK.

The gallery exhibition contained 430 pictures which represented one picture for each young person in the school, as the project was experienced by children from nursery through to Y6.

Christine Charlton, Teacher and Art Co-ordinator of Billingham South Community Primary School, said: "The whole school has been alive and active with the visiting creative workshops,

and also in anticipation for this year's International Festival. The projects have enabled us to incorporate a wide selection of learning opportunities into the classroom that cover a multitude of curricula areas, from art through to geography. The skills the young people have picked up will be very beneficial during their primary and secondary school journeys, as learning different ways to articulate and communicate are very valuable attributes for young individuals to have."

In addition to the poetry being delivered by Billingham South Community Primary School, BIFF will also be working with the visiting dance groups to choose poems associated with every country involved with the Festival. The poems will be specifically dedicated to friendship, world, love and peace.

Once the poetry has been chosen, Nadia Iftkhar a professional contemporary choreographer (Artistic Director of Red Road Dance Theatre) collaborating with ZENDEH will then create several pieces portraying each of the poems through music and dance. 'Poetry in Motion' will be made complete as international performers will be invited to read the poems on stage during the show.

Poetry in Motion will be taking to the stage during two major Gala Festival Nights at Middlesbrough Theatre on Thursday 14th August and at the Forum Theatre in Billingham on Friday 15th August. Both shows will commence at 7.30pm.

Also the resulting poetry produced by the young people of Billingham South Community Primary School will also be performed on Saturday 16th August at the 'Farewell Gala' event being hosted at the Festival Arena (Billingham Forum).

People interested in purchasing tickets for both International Gala events that includes ZENDEH's "Poetry in Motion" on the bill - can either contact the relevant venues or call the Festival's dedicated ticket office situated in the heart of Billingham Town Centre.

People can buy their tickets in person / address – 5 West Precinct with the office being open Monday to Saturday, 10:30am until 2pm.

All of the tickets are really competitively priced to ensure that as many people can watch the Festival as possible – please see the website for all price details.

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

This website contains the full Festival programme, 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 about the Festival programme or about tickets by calling 01642 553 220 or by emailing info@billinghamfestival.co.uk

There will be a host of free and paid for events in August (9th-16th) spread across various venues including BILLINGHAM - Billingham Town Centre, The Forum Theatre (The Festival Arena), The Bandstand, The Ramp, St Aiden's Church Hall and John Whitehead Park;

MIDDLESBROUGH - The Empire Theatre, The Crypt, mima and Middlesbrough Theatre; and
NEWCASTLE - Dance City.

You can get up to date information about BIFF 2014 from the Festival's dedicated Face Book and
Twitter pages www.facebook.com/billinghamworlddancefestival and @BillFest

Also for further information about ZENDEH please visit www.zendeh.com

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