

EMBARGOED UNTIL WEDNESDAY 2 APRIL 2008 at 10.30am

# EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 08 8-31 AUGUST

## Artists without borders. Festival reflects on an evolving Europe

- Jonathan Mills announces the programme for the 62nd Edinburgh International Festival – his second as Director.
- The Festival explores political, psychological, geographical, physical and cultural borders, and notions of contemporary Europe.
- World premiere of *Matthew Bourne's Dorian Gray* by New Adventures dance company.
- World premiere of Heiner Goebbels' new work with The Hilliard Ensemble *I went to the house but did not enter*.
- Valery Gergiev leads the London Symphony Orchestra in all seven of Prokofiev's symphonies and his violin concertos with Leonidas Kavakos, and conducts the Mariinsky Opera Company in a rare staged production of Szymanowski's *Król Roger*.
- Premiere of Scottish Opera's new production of Smetana's *The Two Widows*.
- World premiere of National Theatre of Scotland's *365* directed by Vicky Featherstone, written by David Harrower, with songs by Paul Buchanan.
- State Ballet of Georgia led by prima ballerina Nina Ananiashvili presents *Giselle* and a *Mixed Bill*.
- Celebration of Olivier Messiaen's centenary including organ recitals by Naji Hakim.
- Festival debuts include: HK Gruber, Andrzej Dobber, Elzbieta Szmytka, Mariusz Treliński, Andrzej Chyra, Palestinian National Theatre, TR Warszawa, East West Theatre Company, Abbas Kiarostami, Muziektheater Transparant, Vicky Featherstone, Nina Ananiashvili, State Ballet of Georgia, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Rosas, Chunky Move, Ohad Naharin, Whirling Dervishes of Turkey, Naji Hakim, Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Andrzej Seweryn, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, Philippe Herreweghe, Fabio Luisi, Jan Vogler, Hélène Grimaud, Gabriela Montero, Christiane Oelze, Susan Bullock, Christine Schäfer, Irvine Arditti.
- Sharing the Festival – *Class Enemy* by East West Theatre Company of Sarajevo tours to Rutherglen, Cumbernauld and Stirling after its Festival performances.
- Festival lectures by Neal Ascherson, Christopher Hitchens, Dr John Lennox, and Professor Graham Ward.

**Jonathan Mills** today announced his programme for the Edinburgh International Festival 2008, choosing as his theme for this year an exploration of some of the challenges, shifts and changes facing European communities in the 21st century.

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'The Edinburgh International Festival was founded in 1947 in the aftermath of a devastating war, as an optimistic expression of what Europe could be,' he said. 'The Festival owes its origins to an urgent imperative to rebuild a sense of community in a continent which had torn itself apart; to restore faith and to heal the heartache of shattered lives through music, opera, drama, and dance.'

'In the early 21st century, Europe is a very different place. Recently the European Union has expanded to encompass 27 countries from Estonia to Cyprus, with a combined population of some 500 million people. Political borders have been redrawn in every direction one cares to look. These borders are not just political or geographic but, more significantly, represent a profound shift of cultural, social and even religious identity and opportunity. These are exciting times in which to live in Europe; times which demand a commitment to our sense of community.'

'A festival is an expression of the creative ambition of the community it serves. At the same time it is a place where the personal and collective challenges we face as a society can be explored; explored by artists working across and beyond the very boundaries which often seem unable to be bridged.'

'Festival 08 invites you to embark upon an exciting and often confronting journey along these cultural borders and beyond. Artists from Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bosnia and Georgia are juxtaposed with work from Lebanon, Turkey, Palestine, Israel and Iran - all territories with particular challenges on their own borders. Music from orthodox Christian traditions is heard alongside devotional masterpieces from Islam. Most illustrative of all are the rich traditions of gypsy music, a source of inspiration to composers from Brahms to Bartók, which reject the idea of borders altogether.'

Edinburgh International Festival 2008 runs from **Friday 8 to Sunday 31 August** across the city in theatres and concert halls, attracting audiences from around the world to Scotland's beautiful capital.

Festival 08 features many unique concert collaborations in addition to **3 world premieres, 2 European premieres, 10 UK premieres** and new productions of well known works. The Festival has also commissioned an orchestral arrangement of Janáček's *On the Overgrown Path* by David Matthews which receives its premiere this year.

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**Dance** includes the world premiere of **Matthew Bourne's Dorian Gray** with music by Terry Davies; **State Ballet of Georgia** with its Artistic Director and prima ballerina **Nina Ananiashvili** dancing the lead role in **Giselle** and a *Mixed Bill* including the UK premieres of new works by Yuri Possokhov and Alexei Ratmansky; **Chunky Move** from Australia with the European premiere of its dance and special effect extravaganza **Mortal Engine**; UK Premiere of **Batsheva Dance Company** from Israel with **Deca Dance 2008**; Belgium's **Rosas** dance company choreographed by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, and with music from Ictus, performs **Steve Reich Evening** – seven works representing the 25 years she has worked with the composer; and the Istanbul Music and Sema Group's **Whirling Dervishes of Turkey**.

**Theatre** includes two productions by Poland's **TR Warszawa** – **Dybbuk** and **4.48 Psychosis**. Vicky Featherstone directs the **National Theatre of Scotland's 365** by **David Harrower** and with songs by **Paul Buchanan**, which looks at young people in practice flats about to leave care. **Barrie Kosky** returns with his adaptation of Poe's **The Tell-Tale Heart** starring **Martin Niedermaier**. The **Palestinian National Theatre** performs **Jidariyya**, a moving and beautiful look at mortality based on a poem by Mahmoud Darwish. **East West Theatre Company** presents a Bosnian take on Nigel Williams' play, **Class Enemy**. Renowned Iranian filmmaker **Abbas Kiarostami** produced a video installation with three simultaneous perspectives of a Persian passion play and its audience – **Looking at Tazieh**. Belgium's **Muziektheater Transparant** is joined by **Collegium Vocale Gent** for **Ruhe**, which sets Schubert songs against the testimony of SS veterans. **Muziektheater Transparant** also presents **Wolpe! Welche Farbe hat der Vogel** exploring the work of anti-fascist composer Stefan Wolpe. **The Hilliard Ensemble** join forces with **Heiner Goebbels** for the world premiere of **I went to the house but did not enter**.

**Opera** includes the world premiere of a fully staged production of **Smetana's The Two Widows** by **Scottish Opera**, starring **Jane Irwin** and **Kate Valentine**. The **Mariinsky Opera Company** performs a fully staged production of **Karol Szymanowski's Król Roger** under the baton of **Valery Gergiev** starring **Andrzej Dobber** and **Elzbieta Szymtka**. There will be concert performances of opera including the Opening Concert **Kurt Weill's Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny** conducted by **HK Gruber** and starring **Sir Willard White** and **Susan Bickley**. Valery Gergiev conducts the Mariinsky Opera and Orchestra in concert performances of **Aleko** by **Sergei Rachmaninov** and **Semyon**

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**Kotko** (act three) by **Sergei Prokofiev**, and **The Enchanted Wanderer** by **Rodion Shchedrin**.

**Music** includes performances from outstanding orchestras: the **Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra** under conductor **Gustavo Dudamel**, the **London Symphony Orchestra** with **Valery Gergiev**, the **Budapest Festival Orchestra** with **Iván Fischer**, the **Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra** with **Sakari Oramo**, **Staatskapelle Dresden** with **Fabio Luisi**, the **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra** under conductors **Gennadi Rozhdestvensky** and **Ilan Volkov**; the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Sir Charles Mackerras**, **Oliver Knussen** and **Emmanuelle Haïm**; and the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** under **Stéphane Denève**. Guest soloists will include **Karita Mattila**, **Hélène Grimaud**, **Sir John Tomlinson**, **Tatjana Vassillieva**, **Alfred Brendel** and **Jan Vogler**. The centenary of the birth of Olivier Messiaen is marked by two organ recitals at St Giles' Cathedral by **Naji Hakim**, and an Usher Hall concert by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Other artists include **Dmitri Hvorostovsky**, **The Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir** with **Paul Hillier**, **The Monteverdi Choir** and **Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique** with **Sir John Eliot Gardiner**, **Les Arts Florissants** with **William Christie**, **Anne Sophie von Otter**, and **Gabriela Montero**. The Song and Civilization series at Greyfriars Kirk will feature choral ensembles including **Dialogos and Sequentia**, **Kudsi Erguner Ensemble**, **Sister Marie Keyrouz** and **L'Ensemble de la Paix**, **A Cumpagnia** and the **Anchiskhati Choir**. The Queen's Hall Series includes appearances from **Ysaÿe Quartet**, **Belcea Quartet**, **Pavel Haas Quartet**, **Jerusalem Quartet**, **Beaux Arts Trio**, **Susan Bullock**, **Mischa Maisky**, **Malcolm Martineau**, **Keith Lewis** and **Melvyn Tan**.

The Festival culminates in the **Bank of Scotland Fireworks Concert**, Europe's largest annual firework display to live music, performed by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra with the stunning Edinburgh Castle as the backdrop.

**Jonathan Mills** added: 'I believe that festivals are journeys; journeys to inspire us about our place in the world and our role as human beings. I hope that you will find your own way through this Festival, charting your own path and creating your own journey.'

'There is no place like Edinburgh in August. I look forward to welcoming you and I urge you all to join this celebration of big ideas; of art, humanity and community.'

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**Culture Minister Linda Fabiani** said: 'Scotland's diverse and vibrant cultural life is a defining feature of our successful and confident nation. It is the energy, commitment and creativity of Edinburgh's Festivals which together make Edinburgh the world's pre-eminent festival city, attracting many tourists and showcasing Scottish talent on the international stage.'

'Our Edinburgh Festival Expo Fund, launched last week, will help to ensure that the global competitive edge of the Festivals is maintained. I am delighted that the Edinburgh International Festival has successfully bid for Expo Funding for Scottish Opera's new production of Smetana's opera *The Two Widows*. I am sure this will prove to be a great opening to this year's Festival.'

**Richard Holloway, Chairman of the Joint Board of Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen** said: 'It is not an exaggeration to say that every August for over half a century the best of the world's artists from across all disciplines have been drawn to Edinburgh as though pulled by a gigantic magnet. The magnet, of course, is the Edinburgh International Festival. From near and far, the most creative people on the globe become a part of the life of Scotland's capital; and for three mad and glorious weeks they challenge and inspire us. And that magnet seems to be more powerful than ever.'

**Cllr Jenny Dawe, Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council**, said: 'The Edinburgh International Festival is central to our reputation as a world class place to live, work, study and invest. The economic benefit of festivals to the city has long been recognized and I am delighted that we are able to support an event that helps promote Edinburgh as a leading cultural capital. Jonathan Mills has put together a stimulating and challenging programme which stretches artistic boundaries and has yet again secured much of the best artistic offerings from across the globe.'

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Public booking opens Saturday 12 April 2008

Hub Tickets: +44 (0)131 473 2000

Online booking and information: [www.eif.co.uk](http://www.eif.co.uk)

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A brief biography of Jonathan Mills is available from the press office.

**We would like to make a request for your support:**

**Corporate sponsorship of the Edinburgh International Festival is crucial to its future. As arts supporters yourselves we hope you will help us in maintaining this important portion of our income and healthy relationships with sponsors by crediting them in print. This makes a real difference to the Edinburgh International Festival. Mentions are counted and used as an evaluation of projects. A credit at the foot of an article can make all the difference to us. Please credit our sponsors where you can.**

***The Edinburgh International Festival is supported by The City of Edinburgh Council, the Scottish Arts Council, and The National Lottery through the Scottish Arts Council.***

**Event Sponsors are:**

**Baillie Gifford**

*Giselle* - State Ballet of Georgia  
Saturday 9 August and Sunday 10 August

**Bank of Scotland**

Bank of Scotland Fireworks Concert  
Sunday 31 August

Bank of Scotland Connecting to Culture Series

**Classic FM**

Dmitri Hvorotovsky  
Saturday 9 August

**First ScotRail**

*The Two Widows* - Scottish Opera  
Saturday 9, Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 August

**Lloyds TSB Scotland**

*Prokofiev The Seven Symphonies*  
London Symphony Orchestra, conductor Valery Gergiev  
Friday 15 – Sunday 17 August

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**Lumison**

*A Child of Our Time* - BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, conductor Gennadi Rozhdestvensky  
Saturday 30 August

**Scottish and Newcastle plc**

The Opening Concert – *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, conductor HK Gruber  
Friday 8 August

**Standard Life**

*Deca Dance 2008* - Batsheva Dance Company  
Thursday 28 – Saturday 30 August

**Event Supporters are:**

**The Bacher Trust**

*Ruhe* - Muziektheater Transparant, Collegium Vocale Gent  
Thursday 21 – Sunday 24 August

**The Binks Trust**

*Dybbuk* - TR Warszawa  
Saturday 9 – Monday 11 August

**The Director's Circle**

Messiaen 100 – Naji Hakim  
Saturday 9 and Monday 11 August

*Eclairs sur l'au-delà*

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, conductor Ilan Volkov  
Sunday 10 August

**Dunard Fund**

Alfred Brendel  
Thursday 21 August

Scottish Chamber Orchestra with Sir Charles Mackerras and Alfred Brendel  
Wednesday 20 August

Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and the Monteverdi Choir, conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner  
Tuesday 19 August

*Le Roi David*

Royal Scottish National Orchestra, conductor Stéphane Denève  
Monday 18 August

**The Edinburgh International Festival Patrons and Muses**

*Król Roger*  
Mariinsky Opera Company, conductor Valery Gergiev  
Monday 25 and Wednesday 27 August

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**Léan Scully EIF Fund**

*Israel in Egypt*

Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conductor Emmanuelle Haïm

Wednesday 13 August

**Donald and Louise MacDonald**

Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conductor Oliver Knussen

Friday 29 August

**David McLellan**

Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, conductor Paul Hillier

Monday 11 August

**Scottish Government Expo Fund**

*The Two Widows*

Scottish Opera, conductor Francesco Corti

Saturday 9, Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 August

**The Stevenston Charitable Trust**

*Aleko and Semyon Kotko Act III*

The Mariinsky Opera Company, conductor Valery Gergiev

Sunday 24 August

**For further information please contact the EIF press office on 0131 473 2020 or [press@eif.co.uk](mailto:press@eif.co.uk)**