

East Neuk Festival

27 June - 1 July 2012 | www.eastneukfestival.com

FURTHER PRESS INFORMATION:

Debra Boraston
T. +44 (0)20 7483 1950
M. +44 (0)7989 434388
E. debra@henrymoorestudio.co.uk
www.eastneukfestival.com

ROAMING PILGRIMS, MUSICIANS, ARTISTS AND WRITERS... ACROSS THE SEAS, SANDS AND ROLLING HILLS

"this is a festival that knows what it's about and does it well... the tiny church venues dotted around the East Neuk's fishing villages are classy in a soft-spoken, east-of-Scotland kind of way. The festival's ethos suits its landscape nicely. Evidently, the formula works for musicians as well as audiences, because this year earned a string of strikingly intimate performances."

The Guardian 4 July 2011

The East Neuk of Fife is a place steeped in history, its seascapes and landscapes rich in natural beauty. It's this spirit of place that continues to inspire East Neuk Festival director Svend Brown's programming in much-loved venues and ever more new and imaginative spaces. Entwined with the music, there's definitely a feel of roaming and travel in 2012, with a Pilgrimage theme and a major new writing and ideas strand which begins this year with, among others, Britain's foremost nature writer **Richard Mabey**.

MUSIC

As ever, music is at the heart of the Festival, performed in venues of both intimate and enormous proportions by distinguished musicians from all over the world, including the legendary **Leipzig** and **Hagen String Quartets**, celebrated Beethovenian **Llŷr Williams**, choral maestro **Paul Hillier** and his **Theatre of Voices**, harpist **Andrew Lawrence-King**, prizewinning young guitarist **Sean Shibe** and violinist **Alexander Janiczek** with the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** (SCO). Octets – by Mendelssohn, Mozart, Haydn, Schubert and Stravinsky – are in the spotlight, it being the Festival's eighth birthday, while the continuing exploration of Beethoven focuses primarily on the composer's late period.

Over the years the Festival has introduced its audiences to a remarkable range of international quartets, both upcoming and well-established. This year, two of the world's most celebrated chamber ensembles, each with its own highly distinctive sound, pick up the Beethoven strand. The



Hagen Quartet is travelling the world with the Beethoven cycle for its 30th anniversary and East Neuk is the very first venue (ahead of New York, Tokyo, Paris, London, Vienna and Salzburg). The quartet opens the festival on 27 June with the middle-period 'Razumovsky' and the late Op.132, and on the following day contrasts the early, Op.18 with the late Op.135. The players of the **Leipzig Quartet**, founded in 1988, embrace Beethoven (his supremely lyrical Op.127) along with Mendelssohn (a speciality for them as natives of Mendelssohn's city), as well as Shostakovich, Widmann and Schubert in a second programme.

Beethoven's final three piano sonatas are played in one sitting by pianist, **Llyr Williams**, who is now well entrenched in his personal exploration of Beethoven's piano works. He is currently journeying on his third different Beethoven cycle and has never before played this trilogy in this way. Williams also appears in two of the 'Octet' programmes, sharing the bill with special festival ensembles directed by his sometime duo partner, violinist **Alexander Janiczek**.

While Crail and Kilrenny churches provide the warm acoustics for this core programming, the smaller churches at Dunino and Kilconquhar are an atmospheric setting for the more intimate strings of young guitarist **Sean Shibe** in the *Rising Star* spotlight and mesmerising harpist **Andrew Lawrence-King** with a programme of Medieval and Renaissance music. The tiny clifftop church overlooking the sea at St Monans is entirely appropriate for **Paul Hillier's** *Seafarer* programme for **Theatre of Voices**. In keeping with the *Pilgrimage* theme of the Festival, these concerts feature rapturous medieval songs by the celebrated visionary, composer and polymath Hildegard of Bingen, whose music worshipped the church and the saints, along with other songs of wandering and pilgrimage.

At the other end of the size and beauty spectrum is the cavernous, acoustically remarkable **Potato Barn** on the Cambo Estate just north of Crail. With lights and cinematic imagery and a double bill of Janiczek and the SCO followed by Hillier and Theatre of Voices in the late night slot, it will be transformed into an evocative space for strikingly contrasting sounds – the fanfares of MacMillan, the reflections of Arvo Pärt's *Fratres*, the searing sounds of Shostakovich's *Chamber Symphony*, Barber's transcendent *Adagio for Strings*, and finally the chants of Hildegard of Bingen. Audiences are invited to come early for what has become the traditional Friday night 'big event' of the Festival, to wander the beautiful grounds of Cambo and enjoy the open-air music entertainment provided by **Live Music Now** – groups of talented young musicians playing at various outdoor locations throughout the Festival in specially erected East Neuk 'bandstands'.

LITTORAL

2012 sees the introduction of a new literary programme that fits snugly with the character of the East Neuk and will grow over the next three years. Curated by the formidable duo of **Catherine Lockerbie** and **Jenny Brown** (both former directors of the Edinburgh International Book Festival), the *Littoral* agenda will feature walks, readings and discussion with Scottish and international writers inspired by nature and landscape. Leading walks and talks will be famous pioneer and doyen of nature writing **Richard Mabey**, renowned author and former Bishop of Edinburgh **Richard Holloway**, East Neuk-born poet and novelist **Andrew Greig**, poet **Tom Pow** whose latest work is about dying villages and settlements, **Sara Maitland** whose celebrated *A Book of Silence* rooted her very firmly in the landscape, and **Kathleen Jamie**, the highly perceptive and sensitive nature writer famed for her prose work *Findings* and, more recently, *Sightings*.

PILGRIMAGE

There were never travellers more at one with the rawness of nature than the pilgrims of the middle ages who flocked to St Andrews and the East Neuk in their thousands every year, enduring great hardship on their journeys in search of spiritual salvation and revelation. The poignant echoes of place names like Earlsferry and Queensferry (named after the crossings that brought the pilgrims across the Forth), the abbey ruins, and the empty swathes of landscape where once there was a

huge tourism infrastructure of inns, traders and hostelrys, resonate throughout the region to this day. A special exhibition, curated by **Ian Gray**, will explore the impact in the East Neuk of both the development of the pilgrimage phenomenon from the 10th century and its subsequent destruction by the Reformation. Following the narrative of a fictional guide book of the time, the exhibition is free to visitors in Crail Community Hall for the duration of the Festival.

Labyrinths are also symbolic of journeys or pilgrimages, as well as representing man's involvement with nature: East Neuk artist **Hilke MacIntyre**, whose original designs have enlivened the Festival's promotional material since its beginning, will design a huge labyrinth for the floor of the main Crail Community Hall, detailing landmarks of the region in her own inimitable style.

SAND SCULPTURE

Another popular highlight of the East Neuk Festival is the giant sand sculpture created each year in Crail High Street by **Jamie Wardley** and the **Sand In Your Eye** team. In past years, visitors and paparazzi have flocked to see a surging steam engine and the huge bust of a brooding Beethoven crafted entirely from sand and water. The subject of this ephemeral work of art in 2012 is 'Pilgrims', to complement the exhibition. The team will also engage the community in various other sand drawing and sculpting projects during the festival.

EAST NEUK FESTIVAL Box Office: Hub Tickets T. 0131 473 2000 www.hubtickets.co.uk
Festival information: www.eastneukfestival.com

The East Neuk Festival gratefully acknowledges support from Creative Scotland, Fife Council, Reed Foundation, The Binks Trust, The Cruden Foundation Ltd, The Russell Trust, The W.M.Mann Foundation, The Misses Barrie Trust and its many individual patrons and supporters.



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

*Year of Creative
Scotland 2012*

Press Release: 12 February 2012