

Hostry Festival announces exciting line-up for 10th anniversary 2021 festival

Norfolk's Hostry Festival has announced an exciting and packed programme of high-profile guest speakers, concerts, poetry readings, drama, dance and art displays for its 2021 autumn season – which will also celebrate its 10th anniversary.

Set in the stunning surroundings of Norwich Cathedral's Hostry building, the 'Autumn Festival of Norfolk' makes a welcome return from October 17 to November 7, after postponing its programme in 2020 due to the pandemic. Plans are in place to adapt should restrictions and social distancing be required.

A brand new, user-friendly website has also been launched at www.hostryfestival.org and tickets are on sale now. See the website for more information and book via the Festival Box Office on 01603 598676.

To mark ten years of successful programming, several original festival commissions have taken the theme of Beethoven's Tenth, with signature projects including the Norfolk premiere of a Peter Ustinov comedy drama, a breath-taking movement theatre piece and the colourful and stirring sounds of an African choir, as well as the creation of a striking sculpture by leading Norfolk sculptor Rachael Long.

Key speakers guaranteed to be a hit with festival goers include actresses Stephanie Beacham and Haley Mills, and actress and author Carol Drinkwater.

Stephanie Beacham has a long list of film, stage and television roles to her credit, such as in the BBC drama Tenko and ITV's Connie, and she enjoyed infamy as the glamorous Sable Colby in the ABC soap operas The Colbys and Dynasty with an onscreen rivalry with Joan Collins. Her theatre roles have included Maria Callas and Princess Margaret. She will be in conversation on October 30 with festival patron Peter Wilson MBE.

Oscar-winning actress and also a festival patron, Hayley Mills makes a return to the Hostry on October 31, following her previous appearance in 2016, and will be chatting about her new autobiography Forever Young, with artistic director Stash Kirkbride. Hayley's memoir is of a British child star of the 1960s (and daughter of Sir John Mills and Mary Hayley Bell) who won an Oscar for Pollyanna and went on to make other Walt Disney hits such as The Parent Trap, as well as the iconic 1961 film Whistle Down the Wind.

Carol Drinkwater is a multi-award-winning actress best known for her portrayal of Helen Herriot in the BBC's All Creatures Great and Small. Her quartet of memoirs set on her olive farm in the south of France have sold over a million copies worldwide, while her most recent novel, An Act of Love, has just been published to critical acclaim. She will be talking about her dual careers on October

31 to Total Ensemble artistic director Rebecca Chapman.

Other speakers include Joel Young - inspirational speaker on Non-Personal Awareness and host of The Be A Brilliant Human Podcast (October 31); House of Music author Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason - the inspirational mother of a talented family of musicians including her son Sheku who was Young Musician of the Year in 2016 and performed at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle (October 30); Barnaby Phillips – author and former BBC journalist of 25 years’ standing who reported from hotspots in Mozambique, Angola, Nigeria and South Africa (October 22); and Captain Enid Outun – the first female Chief Pilot in Nigeria who will be sharing amazing stories from her popular podcast (October 28).

The festival’s signature project Central Production of the Norfolk premiere of Beethoven’s Tenth will run from October 25-30. This comedy drama was penned by one of the country’s favourite actors, renaissance man the late Sir Peter Ustinov. Originally planned for the 2020 festival, it is reprogrammed for 2021 retaining its cast who will be joined by new additions.

Alongside the production and performed nightly as a prologue, Egmont: A Valiant Stand is written by Rebecca Chapman, of Total Ensemble Theatre Company (one ticket covers both performances). Created over an extensive programme of theatre workshops and rehearsals, it blends media and art forms, original soundscape, music, song, poetry, dance and physical theatre, set to the strains of the music composed by Beethoven for Goethe’s play Egmont.

Total Ensemble celebrates its own 10th anniversary this autumn having produced original *ensemble* productions with large, fully integrated disabled and non-disabled casts since 2011. For the festival, it will also host a workshop (October 29) led by Rebecca Chapman.

The most recently created signature project, The African Choir of Norfolk will launch with a concert led by the inspirational Anna Mudeka (October 22). Described as a blend of Imbube singing, made famous by groups such as Lady Smith Black Mambazo and Black Umfolosi, combined with Yoruba women’s choir, expect a memorable evening of movement, drumming, dancing, ululation and lots of audience participation. The African Choir will also host a free ticketed workshop on October 29.

Two exciting piano concerts also feature on the programme. With a range from classical to avant-garde and everything in between, pianist and composer William Fergusson will intrigue and tantalise with an original Hostry Festival commission called TENTH, an improvisation based on Beethoven’s unfinished symphony, to be performed at the UEA Music Centre (October 17); while Christopher Ellis will be at The Chapel in Cathedral Close (November 7) demonstrating Beethoven’s legendary abilities as an improviser with a piano concert which will include taking the composer’s themes as a starting point and then re-exploring them.

Also inspired by the great maestro is the beautiful festival commission from leading Norfolk sculptor Rachael Long which links with this year’s Central Production. Her 6ft-tall sculpture will be on show to those attending the production, plus a daily exhibition of the works surrounding this commission will be available to view by visitors to the Dippy On Tour spectacular in Norwich

Cathedral.

Presented as a gala performance at this year's Hostry Festival, *Rufus Rank: The Case Of The Fallen Angel* (October 31) is a 1930s-style radio play which includes live sound effects and some truly sumptuous frocks. A Murder Mystery set in and around Norwich Cathedral, it was written especially for the 10th anniversary by Eve Stebbing and includes singing cameos from The Voxettes and Nina Taylor. Festival goers are invited to come in their own vintage outfits (optional) with a prize for the best dressed.

There is more drama from director Miche Montague, of Norwich's MoCo Theatre which returns with a new project. The one-woman show *Who The Who, Who* will be performed by Mandy Kiley at The Chapel in Cathedral Close (October 28-30). Rich in comedy and high in emotion, it looks at family, grief and loss.

As well as quizzing Stephanie Beacham, festival patron, theatre producer and Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk Peter Wilson will take centre stage at The Chapel, Cathedral Close, with a 'semi-performance' of T S Eliot's *Four Quartets* (November 6) which were written under the looming shadow of the Second World War. The recital is given in aid of the Hostry Festival.

A young poet in the making, Beatrice Williamson, has also been invited to recite her poem. Also *Being Ten* was commissioned by the festival after Beatrice was seen performing a poem at a service in Norwich Cathedral. It is a reflection on her own 10th birthday and Beatrice will recite it at the official Festival launch night on September 6, on BBC Radio Norfolk on October 1st, and at the Norfolk Arts Awards on October 23.

International pianist Gloria Campaner returns as artist in residence for the 10th anniversary and will perform two concerts and a masterclass. Her recitals are at St Andrews Church, Eaton (8-10pm November 6), and The Chapel, Park Lane, Norwich (November 7). Her *See Sharp* Masterclass takes place at the Blake Studio, Norwich School, Cathedral Close (November 7). For young musicians and performing artists and instrumentalists of all classes and levels aged 16+, it is open to students from across Norfolk.

St Andrews Church, Eaton, also plays host to regular festival guest coloratura soprano Lisa Cassidy for a specially commissioned concert celebrating hope, love and light through words and music on a stroll through Elysium, inspired by Richard Strauss's 'Das Rosenband'. Lisa is joined by Norfolk pianist Gareth Williams (6-7pm November 6).

'Paint Out Norwich', another signature project, returns once more to redefine the joys of outdoors painting in the alleyways and lanes of the city during the bicentenary of one of the best-known artists of the Norwich School of Painters, John Crome (1768-1821). Previous years have seen over 50 plein air artists out in the city centre, their endeavours watched by thousands of onlookers. Details of the October event will be on the festival's website and at www.paintout.events, while past event galleries can be revisited at www.paintout.org/gallery

Artist James Colman, who founded Paint Out Norwich eight years ago, is to auction the pencil drawing he created of the Hostry building for the anniversary brochure cover, with 50% of the highest bid going to festival funds. Also up for auction is Gregory, the 10th anniversary mascot teddy bear. Just one specially commissioned teddy bear, handmade by Hermann of Germany, is going to a new home with the highest bidder, having been donated by The Bear Shop in Elm Hill and kitted out by Norfolk material artist Cilla Slater. The auction will run from July 20 to September 6, with the successful bidders for both items announced at the Festival Launch night on September 6. Bids on both fundraising auction items can be submitted by email to info@hostryfestival.org

Other events include a debate with BBC Radio Norfolk's Chris Goreham and a panel of alternative practitioners and thinkers from across Norfolk who will discuss 'embracing positivity to life post the pandemic' at The Forum (October 18 - tickets are available to be part of the audience with an early 8.30am arrival); and new Open Door free access quarterly workshops will be held for those interested in joining the festival either on-stage or behind the scenes, led by festival artistic director Stash Kirkbride and actress and singer Milly Jupp (starting November 10 at the Newmarket Room, the George Hotel, Norwich, for ages 18+ to 65+).

The Norfolk Arts Awards Ceremony, in association with the Eastern Daily Press, which honours the county's arts and cultural organisations, is also one of the festival's signature projects running in conjunction with its principal sponsor, the University of East Anglia, and will take place at The Hostry on Saturday October 23.

Stash Kirkbride, artistic director and co-founder of the festival, said: "We are, of course, so happy to be announcing our line-up of events celebrating the arts in Norfolk. Our five signature projects not only engage with the community during the festival, but now more than ever throughout the year. This has proven so important during these extraordinary times we are all living through. For this year, we have taken extra care and attention to ensure safety at events is paramount, with social distancing and adaptability being key. We remain optimistic that, come October, we will be in the position to share with everyone all that has been in the making over this last year."

Reflecting on the past ten years, Peter Barrow, co-founder and executive producer, said the festival had "grown through the kindness of strangers" and had remained "fully independent". "To our credit we have commissioned over 100 projects, worked with nearly 1,000 volunteers, hosted over 200 events, engaging and affecting individuals' lives for the better on so many occasions. Our thanks go to all the trusts, charities and fellow philanthropists who've helped us realise our ambitions, and to the Cathedral Chapter and Diocese who have made us so welcome from the moment we suggested turning the Hostry building into the home of the Autumn Festival of Norfolk each year."

Ahead of the Festival and to celebrate a decade of creativity in the arts, BBC Radio Norfolk will broadcast live from The Hostry at Norwich Cathedral with popular presenters Stephen Bumfrey and Anna Perrott from 2pm to 6pm on Friday October 1st. The four-hour live broadcast will be

brimming with guests, including many of those scheduled to perform and those from behind the scenes who help make the festival a success. This free ticketed event will be a real taste of the programme on offer.

Events take place at The Hostry building, unless otherwise stated. For more information see the festival's new website at www.hostryfestival.org. Tickets can be bought from the Festival Box Office by calling 001603 598 676 or in person at Norwich Theatre Royal.