

NEAT celebrates 21st birthday with jam-packed programme



North East Arts Touring (NEAT) is coming of age this year with its biggest ever programme of professional touring theatre and exciting new services. From now until the end of December, the organisation will host nearly 50 performances of drama, music, dance, and children's theatre at venues across Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen and Moray Councils.

Thanks to NEAT, Northeast residents have been enjoying live professional theatre in their local communities since 1984, when arts enthusiasts across Grampian pooled their efforts to fill the region's cultural gap. They created NEAT to access funding from local authorities and the Scottish Arts Council, which allowed them to bring drama, music, visual arts and dance to venues throughout the Northeast.

In 2005-06, NEAT is turning up the temperature on this exciting tradition with over 100 performances set to thrill local audiences. Most of these will be hosted by NEAT's growing network of community promoters, over 25 hall committees, arts clubs, and other voluntary groups who bring NEAT shows to their local village halls, schools, and other venues.

Details of upcoming shows are available on www.neatshows.org.uk (which offers online ticket booking via theBooth.co.uk) and www.aberdeenshirearts.org.uk. Users can join the NEAT mailing list to receive news of upcoming shows via email or post, and read the events diary to see when NEAT will come next to their local hall.

Tickets for all NEAT events also can be bought at the venues and local ticket outlets (watch posters and adverts for details).

In the near future, NEAT hopes to add cinema screenings to its programme, thanks to a new partnership with Hi-Arts, Eden Court Theatre and funding from Scottish Screen.

Matt Lloyd, Rural Cinema Development Worker for the project, is working to help local promoters to access equipment, funds, marketing, and the films that communities would like to see. Contact NEAT for more information.

Voluntary groups or venues looking to provide events for their local communities are welcome to become NEAT promoters. Co-ordinator Sandy Maxwell spends a large part of his time supporting the network promoters, many of whom are very new to hosting touring companies.

Sandy's years of experience at staging theatre across Scotland helps promoters through their first NEAT events and helps them book future ones. A Guarantee Against

Loss scheme and Go and See funds give promoters a financial cushion to stage NEAT events and help them travel to gain promotion experience in other settings, such as at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Sandy's post and the network schemes are supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Scottish Arts Council. NEAT is also funded by Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and The Moray Council. Aberdeenshire Council Arts Development team work in close partnership with NEAT, and hosts the co-ordinator post.

For further information contact:

Sandy Maxwell

t. 01569 768359 / 0141 576 6663

m. 07766 380 663

e. sandy@neatshows.org.uk

w. www.neatshows.org.uk