

PRESS RELEASE

'5,000 MORRIS DANCERS'

**An anarchic reinvention of the image of English Morris
by visual artist David Owen**

SOUTHBANK CENTRE, LONDON, 3-5th SEPTEMBER 2010

When **Lord Coe** was interviewed in Beijing about a possible opening ceremony for the 2012 London Olympics, he quipped that he would invite '**5,000 Morris Dancers**' to take part. He was making reference to the Morris Dancer as an iconic English image, but he was also taking the mickey. This offhand comment became the inspiration for Whitby-based graphic artist **David Owen** who now sets out to change the common perception of Morris. Subversive and fun, David also aims to challenge our notions on English traditional culture.

Much of **David Owen's** work is focused around traditional music themes, often juxtaposing folk song characters or established folk symbols with pop culture images and styles. Already known for his irreverent, challenging and humorous reimagining of established folk icons, with '5,000 Morris Dancers' David Owen takes on his greatest challenge to date; he sets out to revolutionise entrenched perceptions of that most maligned English folk art, morris dance.

The **3-day event** will consist of a large-scale art installation by **David Owen**, two special screenings of a new full-length documentary **Way Of The Morris** (directed by **Tim Plester** and **Rob Curry**), live music performances across several Southbank venues (including a concert on 5th September by the acclaimed **Imagined Village** ensemble) and, of course, dancing, with 100 of the finest morris dancers from across England assembled for what will quite possibly be the largest gathering of morris dancers ever seen in London.

'5,000 Morris Dancers' installation opens at 6.00pm on Friday 3rd September with live events across the weekend.

Friday 3rd September

THE DEMON BARBER ROADSHOW

Purcell Room, 7.45pm, Tickets £15

One of the most dynamic live acts on the circuit, *The Demon Barbers* bring their idiosyncratic and exhilarating blend of folk music and dance to Southbank Centre.

Saturday 4th September

100 MORRIS DANCERS FROM ACROSS ENGLAND

On The Embankment in front of The Southbank Centre, 12.00-5.00pm, free

LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCES PRESENTED BY FOLKLAHOMA/MAGPIE'S NEST

The Front Room of the Queen Elizabeth Hall, 12.00-3.00pm, free

SPECIAL SHOWING OF 'WAY OF THE MORRIS' FULL-LENGTH DOCUMENTARY

The Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall, 4.00pm, free

WAY OF THE MORRIS follows filmmaker Tim Plester on a journey from the English village green to the killing fields of The Somme, in search of a connection with the native dance traditions that run deep in his blood. Followed by a Q&A with filmmakers Tim Plester and Rob Curry

For all media enquiries, please contact:

Harriet Simms at Glass Ceiling PR – 07958 539951 / glassceilingpr@btconnect.com
& Siân Williams at Riotsquad Publicity – 020 7223 7456 / sian@riotsquadpublicity.com

Saturday 4th September cont

MORRIS ON

The Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.45pm, Tickets £17.50

Released in 1972, the album Morris On brought together traditional morris tunes and songs with a line-up that reads like a who's who of the 20th century folk revival - Ashley Hutchings, Richard Thompson, Dave Mattacks, John Kirkpatrick and Barry Dransfield with guest vocals from Shirley Collins. This acknowledged high point of British folk rock is performed live by an all-star line-up of young artists of the new folk revival - **Jim Moray, Sam Sweeney, Saul Rose, Sam Carter, Jon Fuller and Dave Burbidge** with guest vocals from **Jackie Oates**. The evening opens with **Ashley Hutching** in conversation with **Robin Denselow** discussing how the album came to be recorded and its place in folk history.

Sunday 5th September

100 MORRIS DANCERS FROM ACROSS ENGLAND

On The Embankment in front of The Southbank Centre, 12.00-3.00pm, free

LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCES PRESENTED BY FOLKLAHOMA/MAGPIE'S NEST

The Front Room of the Queen Elizabeth Hall, 12.00-3.00pm, free

SPECIAL SHOWING OF 'WAY OF THE MORRIS' FULL-LENGTH DOCUMENTARY

The Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall, 4.00pm, free

THE IMAGINED VILLAGE

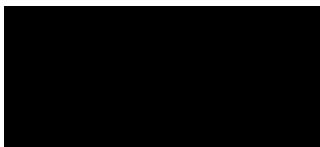
Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.30pm, Tickets £22.50 / £20

Led by **Simon Emmerson**, all-star folk collective The Imagined Village return to Southbank Centre following their sell-out concert at Queen Elizabeth Hall earlier this year. Featuring: **Martin Carthy, Eliza Carthy, Chris Wood, Simon Emmerson, Andy Gangadeen, Johnny Kalsi, Simon Richmond, Ali Friend, Sheema Mukherjee, Barney Morse Brown**

Southbank Centre Ticket Office: 0844 847 9910 / www.southbankcentre.co.uk

'5,000 Morris Dancers' at Southbank Centre will be followed by a full gallery exhibition by David Owen at **The Stark Gallery**, London SE12 with works previewed from August 31st to October 3rd 2010, and opening press reception at 6.30pm on 10th September.

Call 01795 533 551 to be added to the press list.



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