

18 people came to watch the performance, which was judged by the Town Mayor of Dover, Mrs. Donna Sowerby and Nina Atkinson, Director of Loop Dance Company. The event was won by a team of dancers from Footsteps in Deal, who presented a dazzling interpretation of a routine from the show, Lord of the Dance.

Other events included visits to Market Square by the KCC Beach Bus and street performers on both Saturdays, the annual Teddy Bears' Picnic at Kearsney Abbey (which attracted over 1000 people), free tours for local residents on the Guide Friday bus, a record number of participants in the Fun Kids Triathlon, an environmental music and craft project with Vale View Primary School (with finale concert in Market Square), open air drama at the White Cliffs Experience and various exhibitions at seven different venues.

De Bradelei Wharf was once again the principal sponsor of the Festival, in the second year of their three year partnership with Dover District Council. Their generous investment provides £30,000 of additional funding to the programme, enabling the majority of activities to be provided at no charge to the general public. The Festival is also funded by a range of other local business and supporters, notably Pfizer, Dover Harbour Board, Sea France and Dover Town Council, and for 1998, the event was awarded a special funding grant of £4000 from South East Arts in recognition of the audience development work achieved by the festival projects (namely Music Lab '98, Century's Ebb, Celebration of Dance and Twelfth Night).

We believe that our annual arts festival continues to provide Dover with a package of quality and value for money events, which

would not otherwise be seen in the town. The programme clearly contributes to developing the quality and variety of arts opportunities in the area, while providing additional attraction to those visiting the town. It also provides good publicity for the area, contributing to both social and economic regeneration initiatives. This year's environmental theme encouraged a number of innovative, imaginative and creative projects to emerge, generating new partnerships and developing new audiences for several art forms.

For 1999, the arts and events programme will focus on the past and reflect on issues relating to key dates in local history, entitled "Echoes of an Era". The proposed dates for the Festival of Dover are Bank Holiday Saturday 29 May until Saturday 5 June 1999, encompassing the schools' half term holiday.

The programme will again focus on meeting the needs of local children, while adding interest to those visiting the area. 90% of the activities will be free of charge to the public. This will be achieved by developing further partnerships and identifying new funding opportunities.

Proposed projects include a three day competitive dance festival and showcase, a three day residency of Music Lab '99, including an open air concert and a week long residential drama course. Strange Cargo will be working on "The Dreaming Sea", Part Two of a three-year schools combined arts project. A touring production will be offered to rural venues. Obviously further ideas for projects will emerge following consultation with supporters and partners.

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding next year's festival please contact me on 01304 872058.

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CENTURY'S EBB

Merril Lilley

While the audience at the castle enjoyed an evening of music, in the town hundreds of people flocked to De Bradley Wharf to watch the production called "Century's Ebb". This was the result of a two week combined arts residency by Strange Cargo Arts Company, working with schools and local residents. Also it was the first part of a trilogy called "Millennium Voyage", the other two parts to be completed in 1999 and 2000.

The event was staged on the wharf, with a stretch of water between the cast and the audience. The spectators were ranged, three deep, on the raised boardwalk of the De Bradley shopping

complex. The speaker system worked well and generally the actors could be heard across the water, although some voices carried better than others. Without a programme it was sometimes difficult to follow the train of events. Obviously we were getting a swift glimpse of Dover through the ages, with some scenes more successful than others. Where the action



The children's procession with their lanterns

flagged a little the children in the audience became restless, but the cast maintained the impetus through the hour-long performance, with dialogue, music and song.

As is usually the case in such productions, the finale was the most spectacular, with dozens of children, bearing delicate lanterns in the shape of ships, converging central stage as the ship set sail. I wondered whether it might have been possible to obtain or construct, or beg, borrow or steal, a larger ship for this event, as the one used seemed dwarfed by its surroundings.

When the show finished there were 30 minutes to wait before the fireworks display from the castle grounds, "best viewed from the promenade". So the crowd dispersed, to find rest and refreshments, and reassembled at 10.30 p.m. on the sea front, to be entranced by a fantastic display of fireworks, which must be one of the best we have seen in Dover. The fine evening attracted hundreds of spectators, crowding the promenade from the Churchill hotel to the Webb memorial. The organisers must have been delighted with the success of the first evening of the festival.

FESTIVAL FOLK AT THE CASTLE

Philomena Kennedy

The Keep of Dover Castle was an appropriate setting for this exciting evening of music, ranging from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries. Philip Martin, with his group, 'Codpiece Replica', performed on copies of antique instruments including a hurdy-gurdy, bagpipes, recorder and crumhorn (the last making a most astonishingly penetrating sound). Dressed for the part as a mediaeval trio they were a pleasure to look at as well as to hear.

A member of 'Codpiece Replica'



After refreshments we were entertained by Jean-Pierre Rasle who gave us a light-hearted and enchanting history of the development of the cornemuse, the bagpipes of France, with their evocative sound. Linked by short readings, he played pieces on a variety of the decorative instruments, accompanying each short piece by a quick change of costume - adding a hat, shedding a cloak, donning a shepherd's long tunic - to set the scene. Like the first group, he also sang. Jean-Pierre concluded with another French piece but played on an English instrument, the mellifluous Northumbrian pipes.

We then proceeded to the roof of the Keep to watch a spectacular display of fireworks, which sizzled, sparkled and exploded.

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JEAN-PIERRE RASLE
sketched at the concert

