



FESTIVAL GEARS UP WITH ONE MONTH TO GO

With only one month out from the opening of the Castlemaine State Festival, the township and artists are abuzz with activity and preparations for the 10 days of festivities about to ripple across the region.

Festival Director Martin Paten says, "this is both an exciting and crazy time leading up to the festival. It's when all the big ambitious ideas come together, when sets are built, artists prepare for exhibitions and technical rehearsals start – it's when final artistic decisions are made, and the energy in Castlemaine is palpable."

Launched on the 12.12.12, the response to the Festival program has been electric. Seven shows are already fully booked, and many more are close to selling out. Clearly this is a hugely anticipated festival.

Paten commented, "I am overwhelmed by the positive reactions from people I speak with across the region. Everyone is responding very encouragingly to the festival program. It has broad appeal and is full of the unexpected. Easy access to booking shows through the box office - both online and in person at the Castlemaine Market Building – together with mail order ticketing options have helped our festival audiences to get in early. It's a great feeling after two years of build up and careful planning to see it taking flight now."

The festival is estimated to bring in an audience of close to 50,000 people, with Australian and international performers and companies mixing and mingling with regional communities and audiences it is a truly celebratory arts festival.

Highlights of the Festival include the premier of the George Fairfax Theatre Award piece by Dan Mitchell *The Republic of Trees: a tale between earth and sky* created in the trees at Vaughan Springs; the Visual Art Biennial curated show *Periscope* located over three venues, *Our Collective DNA* literature program, Australia's hippest rock-electro-fusion group The Raah Project performing with over 26 musicians, indigenous work *Blak Cabaret* and its stellar line-up of artists, French singer Caroline Nin and much, much more.

A recent post-program printing addition is a remarkable new dance piece all the way from Spain: "Entomo", to be presented as a free event on the final weekend of the Festival. *Dance Magazine* described the work as "An insect dance to end all insect dances created and performed by two very cool guys from Madrid: Elías Aguirre and Alvaro Esteban. The duet is sharply observed, ingenious, playful, and stunningly cruel."

The Castlemaine State Festival is about experiencing the arts in one of Victoria's vibrant regional towns. A celebration of music, theatre, visual arts, literature and community, don't miss out on the festivities and come along!