



PRESS RELEASE

SEVERN PROJECT: STURGEON MOON

A celebration of local distinctiveness and sense of place

PRESS LAUNCH: Tuesday 31 July, 7pm, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

Shropshire County Council and Desperate Men launch the Severn Project, an ambitious and exciting series of Street Arts events and performances, in Bridgnorth on Tuesday 31 July 2007.

Barbara Craig, Shropshire County Council's Cabinet member for Community Services said 'The Severn Project is creating three years of activity along the River Severn with the aim of inspiring and motivating individuals and communities to participate in the arts. We're very excited about this project because it builds on the work we've been doing to support festivals and events across Shropshire. Shropshire County Council is leading the Severn Project in partnership with eight local authorities.'

Sturgeon Moon, the 2007 event programme takes place in Gloucester; Upton Upon Severn, Worcester; Bewdley, Bridgnorth and Ironbridge in August and September.

Artistic Directors Desperate Men will be working with pyrotechnic specialists Pa-Boom, street theatre companies Avanti Display, and The Whalley Range All Stars, poet Alice Oswald, recently nominated for the Forward Poetry Prize, and the people of the towns and villages along the River Severn to stage a series of performances which examine our relationship to the river. Performances focus on the journey of a party of River Inspectors as they travel up the Severn in search of the fabled Sturgeon which breed there. They are hotly pursued by a dastardly Sturgeon Hunter who wants to get his hands on the fish, and of course, its valuable caviar!

The three year development will also see the project engage with communities at the source of the River in Powys, Wales and Bristol City as the river joins the sea.

The Severn Project is funded by Arts Council England West Midlands, the European Regional Development Fund, Shropshire County Council, Bridgnorth District Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, Wyre Forest District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council, Worcester University, Tewkesbury Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Gloucestershire County Council.

For further information, please contact Matthew Austin, Press and Marketing Co-ordinator, on 07989 500732 or mp.austin@gmail.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

EVENT TIMETABLE

Friday 3/Saturday 4 August	Gloucester
Thursday 9 August	Worcester
Friday 10/Saturday 11 August	Upton Upon Severn
Friday 17/Saturday 18 August	Bewdley
Wednesday 22/Saturday 25 August	Bridgnorth
Saturday 22/Sunday 23 September	Ironbridge

KEY PERSONNELL

Creative Producer:	Sue Goodwin, Shropshire County Council
Artistic Directors:	Jon Beedell and Richard Headon, Desperate Men
Project Manager:	Hannah Ashwell

www.severnproject.com

2007 LEAD ARTISTS

The Severn Project has been working in collaboration with selected artists over the last eighteen months to create the 2007 programme of events and to plan the future of the project. This year's lead artists are:

DESPERATE MEN

Desperate Men are widely recognised as one of Britain's premier Street Theatre companies. It has established a fine reputation for high quality, original, provocative and daring street theatre. Desperate Men is an artist-led theatre company producing original, company devised, accessible shows and performances, community events and educational projects in a variety of settings, indoors and out. Desperate Men are Artistic Directors of The Severn Project, working alongside Shropshire County Council, other local authorities and artists to deliver the project between 2007 and 2009.

ALICE OSWALD and TAURUS VOICE

Alice Oswald is a poet with a strong interest in ecological and topographical literature. For the Severn Project, she is collaborating with the vocal group Taurus Voice on a multi-vocal poem about the tidal reaches of the River Severn. Autobiography of the Moon is a series of 'moon hymns', accompanied by the mutterings of an obsessive cyclist who follows the tides back and forth between Gloucester and The Severn Bridge. The poem is a 'tidal poem', to be performed backwards and forwards for as long as possible. Oswald's poem will be performed in disused railway tunnels along the river. Alice Oswald has recently been shortlisted for the Forward Poetry Prize 2007.

AVANTI DISPLAY

Avanti Display create street theatre with shows that combine comedy, surrealism, farce and spectacle. Utilising their skills in creative engineering and their trademark of using

water in unexpected ways they produce shows with dramatic, often beautiful and comic effects. They recently developed a large scale, site specific, collaborative project, Hydro-manial, for the National Theatre, Trafalgar Square and Manchester Town Hall. The company has toured the length and breadth of the U.K and Europe, appeared at festivals as far a-field as Korea, Noumea and Australia and have taken part in British Council tours to Thailand and China.

PA-BOOM

Pa-Boom is a collection of artists, sculptors, designers and technicians producing work, shows and projects using the medium of sculpture and theatre animated by fire, light and pyrotechnics. Previous work in Shropshire includes the breathtaking Light Horse sculpture, created with members of the community. For the Severn Project, they are collaborating with Desperate Men to realise the climax of the 2007 events in Bridgnorth in August.

WHALLEY RANGE ALL STARS

The Whalley Range All Stars are 25 years old this year. They have created over 60 different shows, installations, events and exhibitions. They have received popular, critical and public acclaim for their work which has toured to 20 countries over 5 continents. For the Severn Project they are developing a project which involves a puppet figure walking on water. The narrative will be developed for the 2008 programme. The company's current installation "Living Room" is a commission from the Manchester International Festival and the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester where you can see it until 30th September.

PROJECT FUNDERS

The Severn Project is part-financed by The European Regional Development Fund Objective 2, through the Celebrating Shropshire project, supporting festivals and events in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors across Shropshire.

