

AARHUS 2017 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE TO BE LAUNCHED WITH SPECTACULAR OPENING CEREMONY



Watermusic. Photo credit: Søren Pagter

The year-long programme of once-in-a-lifetime cultural events for **Aarhus 2017 European Capital of Culture** will be launched on the night of **21 January 2017** with one of the largest community participation events ever held in Denmark.

Setting sail from Musikhuset Aarhus at 19:00, six large Viking ships, lanterns, a thousand singers, musicians and several thousand citizens carrying illuminated ships, will transform Aarhus City Centre into a floating sea of people, music and epic scenarios.

The light procession through the city will involve more than 5,000 participants from across the region, who will walk, sing and have fun, accompanied by lur players, Faroese singer **Eivör**, Danish-Turkish singer **Luna Ersahin**, **Aarhus Jazz Orchestra**, **Aarhus Symphony Orchestra** and other orchestras, humming, singing and playing to the sound of sea and waves.

The opening ceremony has been created by artistic director, **Nigel Jamieson**, one of the world's leading creators of theatre and large-scale events. Nigel Jamieson is known for his direction of the iconic *Tin Symphony* for the opening of The Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, the closing ceremony of Manchester Commonwealth Games and the opening ceremony of the European Capital of Culture Liverpool 2008.

Highlights of the year-long programme feature some of the most exciting artists on the international stage. They include Aarhus 2017's Artist-in-Residence **Anohni**, who promises a vibrant interweaving of human identities in sound and vision; a unique presentation of two legends of contemporary music and dance, composer **Philip Glass** and choreographer **Lucinda Childs** with designs by Sol LeWitt; Australian actor **Cate Blanchett** imbues dramatic life into the text collages in the ground breaking project *Manifesto* by German artist Julian Rosefeldt; choreographer **Wayne McGregor** and the Paris Opera Ballet will transform US novelist **Jonathan Safran Foer's** *Tree of Codes* with music composed by **Jamie xx** and scenography by **Olafur Eliasson**; a concert featuring pianist and conductor **Daniel Barenboim** with the legendary **West-Eastern Divan Orchestra**, a project aimed at celebrating freedom, equality and coexistence through music; and internationally renowned American director

Robert Wilson breathes new life into Norse mythology in a powerful collaboration with **Jon Fosse** and **Arvo Pärt** in EDDA.

The programme also includes many works which are definitively Danish including a spectacular re-telling of Frans G. Bengtson's classic Viking legend *Red Serpent*, a brilliant Watermusic show around the harbour featuring singer and composer **Oh Land** and Oscar-winning director **Susanne Bier's** (of *The Night Manager* fame) celebrated film trilogy re-imagined as opera, dance and theatre performances.

Rebecca Matthews, Aarhus 2017 CEO, said: "Aarhus 2017 is going to be a creative tour de force, with new works, special commissions, premieres, major events and festivals. And it will encompass plenty of free as well as ticketed events - experiences that are huge and human scale all at once. We hope that the different perspectives and creative energy expressed by the outstanding artists assembling in Aarhus over the year will inspire people all over the world."

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