

PRESS RELEASE

Opening Night Festivities for 58th Wexford Festival Opera

(Monday, October 12, 2009) The Opening Ceremony of the 58th Wexford Festival Opera will take place on Wexford's Quay front on **Wednesday 21st October 2009**. The event will commence at 6pm with music on stage, with the official launch beginning at 7.15pm, followed by a spectacular fireworks display fired over Wexford harbour to music. It is estimated that the audience will be in excess of 20,000, as in previous years.

Wexford Festival Opera and Wexford Borough Council have entered into a joint venture arrangement for the hosting of the Opening Ceremony for the 2009 Festival Opera on the Quay. This is a free event for the public and families are especially encouraged to come out and celebrate one of Ireland's most established community integrated festivals.

The Quays will be closed to traffic from approx 5.30pm until after the event finishes. Diversions will be in place. People are advised to come early to enjoy the evening. The Quay front and Crescent will be barriered off for safety reasons and everyone is asked to obey the directions of the Gardai and the stewards.

Commenting on the Opening Ceremony, Chief Executive of Wexford Festival Opera, David McLoughlin, said, "The opening celebrations on the Quay have been a quintessential element of the Wexford Festival for generations and allow the local community to demonstrate its pride in, and sense of ownership of, the Festival. We are delighted that the Festival will be opened in such a spectacular way once again and are very grateful to the organising committee and the Borough Council for all their hard work and support."

Event Director for the opening ceremonies, Pat Whelan, extended his thanks on behalf of the committee to all the organisations who are responsible for making this event possible, in particular Wexford Borough Council & Staff, An Garda Siochana, Co. Wexford Fire Service, Co. Wexford Civil Defence, Wexford Order of Malta, Wexford RNLI, Reserve Defense Force and Irish Rail.

The 58th Wexford Festival Opera runs from Wednesday, October 21st – Sunday, November 1st. For tickets to the many daytime events visit www.wexfordopera.com or call the box-office on 053 912 2144 or Lo Call 1-850-4-OPERA.

If you do one special thing this year – visit Wexford Festival Opera.

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