



Thursday, July 24 2008

## **HOT acts announced to spice up SAMA festival**

The sound of tuk-tuks and rickshaws will be rumbling onto Tyneside as part of the biggest South Asian music and arts festival in the UK. SAMA (South Asian Music and Arts) has turned up the heat to bring the hottest acts straight from the warmth of Bollywood to the chilly north east.

Headliners such as Radio 1s Bobby Friction will be hitting the town at the Nitin Sawhney Sound System club night as well as performances in the city centre from the Rajsthani Folk Musicians who have teamed up with the Northumberland Folk Musicians to offer an east meets west folk band.

The festival, which is the biggest celebration of South Asian music and arts in the UK is now in its second year and will run from October 6 to October 12 at handpicked venues across the north east. International acts such as Habib, a world-renowned Bangladeshi folk singer and Angika, a contemporary British Indian dance company, will be performing alongside more mainstream acts including *Britain's Got Talent* finalists, Signature.

SAMA is part of EAST'08, a world-class celebration of contemporary Asian culture in NewcastleGateshead, managed by culture<sup>10</sup> at NewcastleGateshead Initiative. The festival is a collaborative initiative organized by GemArts, Kalapremi and Pakistan Cultural Society, three major arts development organisations profiling the very best of South Asian Arts in the North East.

Director of SAMA, Vikas Kumar says: "This is a great feat for the north east and I'm ecstatic to be able to confirm so many outstanding, world class acts as part of the SAMA festival.

"I'm from the north east and love to see the mix that South Asian culture can bring to the already lively music and arts scene. Some of these acts are internationally renowned among both South Asian and arts communities and I can't wait to see them in action.

Tuk-tuks and rickshaws will add to the hustle and bustle of a traditional bazaar at the grand finale of the festival on NewcastleGateshead quayside. The finale aims to re-create the colour, vibrancy and fun of a south-Asian carnival with a bazaar selling traditional food, art and clothing alongside street theatre, Indian head massage and stage performances from Rahat, a renowned vocalist from hit Bollywood films.

And film and literature have not been forgotten: writers at SAMA will launch at the Sage Gateshead on October 10, exploring the contribution of South Asian writers to world literature, including appearances by literary heavyweights including Leela Gandhi, Imtiaz Dharker, Hardeep Singh Kohli and editor Simon Prosser. Meanwhile Film at SAMA will screen cinematic offerings providing insight into cultures from Tibet to Bhutan.

Stella Hall, creative director for NewcastleGateshead Initiative, added: "We are delighted to support SAMA, a welcome return to our world class festivals and events programme this year, as we look east and celebrate contemporary Asian culture.

"We hope as many people as possible will sample the wide range of events on offer, particularly the fantastic finale which will bring a South Asian carnival atmosphere to NewcastleGateshead quaysides."

Please visit [www.samafestival.org](http://www.samafestival.org) or see attached document for a full programme of events.

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### **Editors Notes**

SAMA is part of NewcastleGateshead's world-class programme of festivals and events in 2008, managed by culture<sup>10</sup> at NewcastleGateshead Initiative. Culture<sup>10</sup> is an annual curated programme of exceptional cultural events and festivals across

NewcastleGateshead and North East England. Established in 2004, it is managed by the culture<sup>10</sup> team based at NewcastleGateshead Initiative and is funded by Newcastle City Council, Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council, One North East, Northern Rock Foundation and Arts Council England, North East. For further details see [www.NewcastleGateshead.com](http://www.NewcastleGateshead.com)

The festival is a collaborative initiative organised by GemArts, Kalapremi and Pakistan Cultural Society, three major arts development organisations based in region who organise culturally diverse arts by creating and developing high quality concerts, events, festivals, workshops and commissions with regional, national and international artists.