



Media Release

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Fire Water relives the tale of Sydney Cove



Sydneysiders and visitors are invited to experience four nights of flame, food and spectacle as fire sculptures, live performance and local restaurateurs transport you back in time.

Each evening on Friday 11, Saturday 12, Sunday 13 and Monday 14 June, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will present Fire Water, a free performance event that incorporates fires on and around the harbour of Campbells Cove.

Fire Water is part of Vivid Sydney (27 May-21 June) a festival of light, music and ideas featuring the spectacular illumination of the Sydney Opera House sails.

This year, Fire Water is based on the incredible voyage of the Sydney Cove which was sent to Australia from Calcutta by merchant Robert Campbell – of Campbells Cove name.

The contemporary interpretation of this remarkable story is told from the perspective of an 11-year-old Indian-Australian girl, using live performance and multi-media to create a theatrical spectacle.

The story will be told through giant pop-up book style set design incorporating animation and You Tube style projections. On the water there will be traditional and whimsical water craft and performers re-creating the crew's arduous journey to Sydney.

Internationally renowned tabla player, Bobby Singh and established composer and multi-instrumentalist, Shenzo Gregorio, will collaborate for the first time to create a dramatic soundscape specifically for Fire Water that will echo around the Cove.

The show will end with a Bollywood-style spectacle featuring tall ships arriving with a glowing light installation, sailors descending down on aerialist tissus, cranes unloading glowing barrels into the harbour and billows of colourful smoke bursting from the ships in the style of the Indian Holi festival.

The warmth and magic will continue into The Rocks with the Fire Water Night Markets, where local restaurateurs will serve up hearty winter comfort food and local artisans will create a winter wonderland with candle making workshops and the sale of winter fashion, handmade gifts and original artworks.

Vivid Sydney is one of five anchor events in the NSW Master Events Calendar developed by the NSW Government through Events NSW.

What: FIRE WATER
When: 6–9pm on 11–14 June 2010. Performances at 6.15pm, 7.15pm and 8.15pm
Where: Campbells Cove, The Rocks
Cost: FREE
More information: www.therocks.com or www.vividsydney.com

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Background on the Sydney Cove journey

Fire Water creatively interprets the incredible voyage of the Sydney Cove which was sent to Australia from Calcutta by merchant Robert Campbell – of Campbells Cove name.

The Sydney Cove was loaded with 30,000 litres of rum from Campbell's distillery in Calcutta, as well as barrels of pickled pork and other foods, and was crewed by some British seaman and 44 Indian Lascars (sailors). The ship was wrecked on a small island in Bass Strait but most of the supplies and alcohol were salvaged. Thirteen crew then set off in a long boat determined to reach Sydney but were wrecked near Eden and they decided to walk.

The perils of the journey claimed all but three of the 13 crew, including the Captain, Gavin Hamilton, who died just days after reaching Sydney. After reaching Sydney two rescue boats were dispatched to pick up those left behind with the supplies. Up until the wreck of the Sydney Cove it was unknown whether or not Tasmania was joined to the mainland. In their long trek to Sydney, Hamilton and his crew made one other discovery that was to have far reaching benefits to Australia. Near Wollongong they noted seams of coal visible at what soon became known as "Coal Cliff". Robert Campbell himself accompanied another, this time on a successful voyage to Sydney and went on to become the "father of the mercantile community". The saw-tooth roofed, sandstone warehouse at Campbells Cove is a reminder of the mercantile empire built by Campbell, who is also accredited as being a pioneer of Canberra. It was there he retired in the 1830s, to the mansion Duntroon which still survives.

The contemporary interpretation of this remarkable story is produced by Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and told from the perspective of an 11-year-old Indian-Australian girl who is doing a school project.

Background on Bobby Singh

Bobby is an internationally renowned tabla player, both in traditional Indian classical music and cross cultural genres. Spending most of his time between India and Australia, Bobby has received numerous awards and accolades and has performed with some of the finest musicians in Australia and overseas including Slava Grigoriyan, Greg Sheehan, Ben Walsh, David Hirschfelder, John Butler Trio, Sandy Evans, Pandit Ashok Roy, Aneesh Pradhan, Shuba Mudgal, Purbayan Chatterjee, Joseph Tawardros, Kim Sanders, Ian Dixon, Charlie McMahon, Jeremy Allsop, Sandipan Samajpati, Partho Sarathy, Tony Gorman and Adrian McNeil amongst many others. He has performed at many festivals including Womadelaide, Woodford Folk Festival, Bellingen Global Carnival, Sydney Festival, Worlds Fair Bonn, Livid, Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony Melbourne and Singapore Arts Festival and Arts, amongst many others where the demand for his exciting, soulful and inspiring playing has become a highlight in many consecutive years. Outside of the milieu of Indian classical music, Bobby's projects have included the formation of his own fusion group DHA, becoming a permanent fixture in the hugely popular and highly acclaimed electronic/fusion group 'The Bird' and most recently a member in the high energy percussion trio the Circle of Rhythm.

Background on Shenzo Gregorio

Shenzo is one of the most versatile and in demand musicians in Australia. His performances with two-times ARIA award-winners Monsieur Camembert have seen him perform at the Montreaux Jazz Festival, Paris, Hong Kong, Singapore and major festivals across Australia. Shenzo is also the creator of Shenzo's Electric Stunt Orchestra – a group for the 21st century that fuses extreme musical virtuosity and aerial stunts – and a member of the electric string quartet Four Play.