

Festival
REPUBLIC.
Thomas Brooman &
Reading Borough Council
present



Heavenly Planet, Heavenly Place

**A brand new festival bringing culture, music and optimism
to the festival homeland of Reading**

**The UK's first all-weather festival, with fully covered arenas -
whatever the weather, the music shines on**

**Drummers of Burundi, Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, Sharon
Shannon Big Band, The Wonder Stuff, Toto la Momposina, Eliza Carthy,
Chase & Status featuring Plan B & Takura and Patrick Duff are just the
first artists of a full bill to be announced...**

Festival Republic, the organisers behind Reading & Leeds and Latitude and Thomas Brooman CBE, previously Artistic Director of WOMAD, have joined forces with Reading Borough Council to bring a brand new all-weather music festival to Reading. **Heavenly Planet** is a new international event that will take place in Reading, UK and Palermo, Sicily, in 2009; combining world-class music together with comedy, spoken word, participation and optimism for life, to create truly unique festivals.

The new **Heavenly Planet Festival** will take place over the weekend of **Friday 10th** until **Sunday 12th July 2009**, and will feature two days of music before ending on the Sunday with a special barbecue lunch event.

Heavenly Planet is a fresh, diverse and dynamic festival, promoting optimism, global awareness and an open-minded enthusiasm for music, culture and society. The festival will celebrate cultures from around the world, through music, spoken word, debate, food and fun; offering festival-goers a real stimulation of the mind and senses. With an area devoted to words and communication, offering comedy, debate and radio drama, as well as food

courts boasting food from around the world, the festival will aim to satisfy many tastes.

The **Heavenly Planet Festival** site is set in a stunning location right beside the River Thames with open frontage onto the river itself. The Reading Promenade is a truly beautiful place and the Thames-side location will welcome up to 10,000 festival-goers of all ages and from all walks of life. As the UK's first all-weather festival the site will boast at least three undercover arenas; meaning that come rain or shine the heavens are guaranteed to smile on the event! With camping, shopping, covered food court, a swimming pool and a beautiful promenade the site will offer a really different festival experience.

The **Heavenly Planet Festival** will feature artists from all over the planet, bringing an inclusive experience of music and culture to the heart of Reading. Festival-goers will be treated to an exclusive performance from a festival 'supergroup' – brought together for one completely improvised performance, anchored and chosen by one of the world's best drummers, Billy Cobham.

The **Heavenly Planet Festival** will have no musical boundaries, with performances from an eclectic mix of artists including **Drummers of Burundi, Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, The Wonder Stuff, Patrick Duff, Bassekou Kouyate & Ngoni Ba, Toto la Momposina and Chase & Status featuring Plan B & Takura** to name just a few. For those of you who like to party into the early hours of the morning, the festival will celebrate club and dance culture; with Beat*Reading club nights hosting the best in dance, drum 'n' bass, dub-step, UK hip-hop and live programming.



- The stunning Heavenly Planet Thames-side site location which will open onto the river and the Reading promenade
- A mock version of one of the all-weather outdoor tents at the Heavenly Planet Festival
- The fourteen strong Royal Drummers of Burundi from the Hutu and Tutsi tribes in Africa who will be performing at the Heavenly Planet Festival

Quote from **Thomas Brooman CBE**:

"This festival, with its concepts of music, optimism and positivity, will create an event entirely new and unique for Reading. It is a privilege to be able to work together with Melvin and Reading Borough Council on the Heavenly Planet project and we are wholly committed to a long-term and successful future for the festival in the town. Viva Reading!"

Quote from **Melvin Benn, Festival Republic:**

"For two years now the Council and I have been discussing the idea of a new, innovative, diverse and outward-looking festival. But it was only when I ran the idea by Thomas and established that it was possible to bring his ideas into the structure as Artistic Director and joint shareholder, it became a must. Thomas brings everything we were looking for to the table and the partnership is now complete. It will make for a very exciting future - a heavenly future I hope!"

Quote from **Reading Borough Council:**

Cllr Graeme Hoskin, Lead Councillor for Culture and Sport said:

"I'm certain that Heavenly Planet festival is going to be a fantastic festival experience. When WOMAD left Reading there was real disappointment in our town and many people were telling us they hoped we could introduce a new family-friendly, internationalist festival. This festival fits the bill. We have an incredibly strong partnership with Thomas Brooman and Melvin Benn with their huge experience and knowledge of festivals and international music and culture. Reading is already home to the greatest rock festival in the world and our ambition is to develop a similarly stunning, but very different, festival that celebrates the amazing diversity of music and culture across our plane."

Working closely with Reading Borough Council **Heavenly Planet** will build strong links with its local community, working to bring like-minded people together and solidifying the town's reputation as a leading festival destination.

Music and Optimism will go hand in hand at the Heavenly Planet Festival in 2009.

Tickets to Heavenly Planet will go on sale 1st December 2008.

Price:	Weekend Adult Ticket	£75
	Friday Adult Ticket	£35
	Saturday Adult Ticket	£45
	Camping Ticket	£15 per adult
	Campervan Ticket	£40

Children (15 years and under) – Free with a paying adult

16 years and above – Adult Ticket price

People with disabilities – Full Ticket price and a carer goes free

Your Reading Passport holders are entitled to a 15% discount on Weekend Adult Ticket purchases up to 31st March 2009

Telephone: 0118 9606060

On-line: www.readingarts.com

For the latest information, line up, news and tickets check out www.heavenlyplanetfestival.co.uk

Heavenly Planet will take place on Friday 10th & Saturday 11th July 2009 at Rivermead, Reading, Berkshire and Thursday 10th – Sunday 13th September 2009 in Palermo, Sicily.

Artist Line Up so Far:

Drummers of Burundi

Sharon Shannon Big Band

Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain

The Wonder Stuff

Bassekou Kouyate & Ngoni Ba

Oyster Ceilidh Band

Toto la Momposina

Boban & Marko Markovic Gypsy Orkestar
featuring special guests Frank London and Roy Paci

Eliza Carthy

Chase & Status featuring Plan B & Takura

The Bays

Bloco Electro

Billy Cobham in The Big Bang

The Fence Collective featuring The Three Crows – King Creosote, James
Yorkston, The Pictish Trail

Ku-Da-Mix Orchestra

Glass Half Full

9Bach

Patrick Duff

Sleeps In Oysters

Spiro

TC & Jakes

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Notes to Editors:

Heavenly Planet, Sicily:

Heavenly Planet Festival will take place on Thursday 10th September – Sunday 13th September in the unique Palermo city setting of a 16th century Church and its gardens. There will be four days and four nights of performances and events in the heart of Sicily's capital.

Biography of Thomas Brooman CBE:

Thomas Brooman was born in Bristol in the west of England in 1954. After attending schools in Bristol and in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Thomas went to Oxford University, reading English Language and Literature, graduating in 1976.

Returning to Bristol after graduation, Thomas decided to find a living through music, working firstly as a drummer with several Bristol bands during the heyday of punk music in the late 'seventies. In 1980, with a group of friends, Thomas established a unique record magazine publication called The Bristol Recorder, and it was through this project and its contact with the English artist Peter Gabriel that the concept of WOMAD was born.

In early 1981, together with Peter Gabriel and a group of colleagues, Thomas co-founded the first WOMAD Festival. He worked as Festival Director on this ground-breaking event, which took place in 1982, leading to the establishment of the fledgling WOMAD organisation and its affiliated charity, the WOMAD Foundation, in 1983.

From 1982 through until 2008, as Artistic Director of WOMAD, Thomas has programmed and collaborated in the production of more than one hundred and seventy five WOMAD Festivals and events in twenty-seven countries and islands, in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe and North America.

Thomas is also a co-founder of Real World Records, a label established in 1987. This internationally successful record company was conceived as a creative partnership between Peter Gabriel and the WOMAD organisation.

With music as his enduring passion, Thomas is married and is the father of three children. He lives in Wiltshire in the west of England. As well as music, his interests are drumming, cinema, photography, literature, writing and travel.

Described by The Times newspaper as a 'visionary artistic director' Thomas was recognised in 2005 by the BBC when he became the first recipient of the World Shaker Award as part of BBC Radio 3's World Music Awards.

In 2008, Thomas was honoured to be awarded a CBE (Commander of the British Empire) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his life services to music and charity.

Biography of Melvin Benn, Festival Republic:

Melvin Benn had a ten year background of producing political and campaigning festivals throughout the UK before creating The Festival Office Ltd in 1989 to work alongside Vince Power to create and produce festivals for the Mean Fiddler. This was the same year that the Mean Fiddler took over the Reading Festival, which has sold out ever since to daily audiences of 80,000 and featured bands ranging from The Manic Street Preachers to Blur and the Red Hot Chilli Peppers. In 1999, Benn took the three day camping event to the North of England: the Leeds Festival now takes place over the same bank holiday weekend as Reading and attracts 70,000 people each day.

1990 saw Melvin's first new festival with Mean Fiddler with the conception of the 'Fleadh' Festival in London, which has now become a global phenomenon, firstly travelling to Ireland and Scotland and then in 1997 to the USA. In 1999, Benn produced Fleadh Festivals in San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, New York and London. Van Morrison, Bob Dylan & The Corrs are just some of the past Fleadh headliners.

The Mean Fiddler's promotion of large scale live music events led to Melvin securing the first ever UK licences for outdoor dance festivals such as Tribal Gathering and Creamfields in the face of opposition from the Criminal Justice Act. In 1999, Homelands took place in England in May, as well as in Scotland and Ireland in September. In 2000, 90,000 people attended the three events. Dance festivals have featured DJs such as Fatboy Slim, Pete Tong and Paul Oakenfold and live acts like The Chemical Brothers, Lefffield and Underworld.

Benn was also behind the Phoenix Festivals, the UK's first ever four day music festival. In one year alone the line up included David Bowie, Neil Young, The Sex Pistols and Bjork. Other festivals in the Mean Fiddler portfolio have included dozens of one day outdoor shows in London parks, with acts as diverse as Madness, Pulp, Jamiroquai and Oasis and large scale New Year's Eve Parties at London's Alexandra Palace. The Mean Fiddler, under Benn's directorship have also produced indoor and outdoor events for brands such as Holsten Pils Beer and Nescafe, as well as for trade unions and fund raising bodies, in venues from Newcastle's Telewest Arena to London's Royal Albert Hall.

In 1996 Benn took 'The Festival Office' to be part of the Mean Fiddler Music Group and became Managing Director of the Group. In 1999 he became CEO of the group taking Mean Fiddler and its associated companies into a plc structure. This made Mean Fiddler the first publicly quoted music company on to the UK Stock Exchange.

In 2002 Benn became licensee of Glastonbury Festival and has been instrumental in turning around the fortunes of Britain's biggest outdoor festival. In recent years Benn has extended his portfolio to include National Adventure Sports Show events at the Royal Bath and West Showground and the annual St Patrick's Day Festival in London produced on behalf of the GLA.

Benn is also the licensee for all Finsbury Park outdoor shows and sits as a representative on the Concert Promoters Association (CPA). He was influential in re-writing the Guide to Health and Safety at Outdoor Events ('the Pop Code'), and regularly makes presentations to the Emergency Planning College, the police and other bodies.

On August 17, 2007 Benn sold the majority of the Mean Fiddler Music Group venues as well as the Mean Fiddler Music Group name to the MAMA Group Plc. The Astoria and the newly named Astoria 2 as well as the full festival portfolio; Reading, Leeds, Latitude, Rise, St Patrick's Day, Fleadh and the involvement with Glastonbury Festival were not part of the sale with the existing (now formally Mean Fiddler) management maintaining its superb stewardship of the greatest festivals in the world under the new name of Festival Republic.

On December 1st 2008 Festival Republic announces a new, innovative festival, Heavenly Planet. The festival is a two year-in-the-making creation from the partnership between Festival Republic, Reading Borough Council and Thomas Brooman CBE, previously Artistic Director of WOMAD. The concept of Heavenly Planet is to evoke ideas of optimism, global awareness and an open-minded enthusiasm for music, culture and society. The new festival will take place at the existing site of Reading Rock Festival. Heavenly Planet is an exciting addition to Festival Republic's dynamic and impressive festival umbrella.

Reading Borough Council:

Reading – Festival Capital of the South

Over the last two decades Reading has been transformed into a dynamic urban city with a European style culture of open spaces, public art and performance.

Reading Borough Council acknowledges the importance of culture in developing social inclusion, regeneration and education and its wide ranging cultural activity embraces music, drama, dance, performance and public art.

Reading has a well-deserved reputation as a regional cultural centre. It has been home to Reading Festival from the 1970s and, over the years, this annual Festival has become one of the most famous music events in the world, playing host to a long line of A list celebrities.

Reading also hosted WOMAD – The World of Music and Dance – for 20 years. It was a hugely successful family festival featuring international music, dance, food and craft.

Along with these internationally renowned events, Reading is host to a series of cultural community festivals, which bring in people from across the region.

Reading Water Fest is a long standing and hugely popular festival set up to celebrate Reading's rivers and waterways.

Reading Community Carnival has been celebrating Reading's multi cultural community for over 30 years.

Reading Children's Festival been running for 20 years and other well established events include the Real Ale and Jazz Festival, CAMRA Beer Festival and Reading International Festival.

Reading Comedy Festival, Dhoom Dhamaka – Asian Arts Festival Reading Pride and Reading Literary Festival all started in the past five years, adding to Reading's reputation as the Festival Capital of the South.

And at the heart of all these cultural celebrations is Reading Borough Council who working in partnership has developed Reading as a diverse, multi cultural and welcoming place to live and visit.

Heavenly Planet is pleased to confirm its media sponsor, Reading Evening Post, the sole local print media sponsor for the event in Reading.

Evening Post