

World Cultures Festival on Nordic arts offers 30 per cent off early bird discount until September 4 (with photos)

The World Cultures Festival (WCF) will be held from October 18 to November 17 to showcase the artistic gems of five Nordic countries: Finland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland. An early bird discount of 30 per cent off all full-price tickets on stage programmes will be offered from today (August 5) to September 4.

Organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the WCF programme encompasses music, dance, drama, literature, circus arts and more to engage audiences on the past, the present and the future through inclusive, people-oriented themes and a focus on key social issues.

An operatic version of Ingmar Bergman's noted film "Autumn Sonata" will open the festival. Enthrallingly converted into a two-act opera, the work by Finnish composer Sebastian Fagerlund adds an intense musical angst to the raw truths bared in the tale of an inharmonious relationship between a concert pianist and her daughters.

Human nature is examined in an unconventional Norwegian ballet, "Ghosts", which reinterprets a play by Henrik Ibsen for modern times. With original music by Sigur Rós, the Icelandic contemporary dance production "The Best of Darkness" wrestles with the inner vulnerabilities of humans. In "Breath", two masterly avant-garde Finnish performers, Tero Saarinen and Kimmo Pohjonen, showcase breathtaking dance, music and visual effects, while hearing-impaired Finnish rapper Signmark voices out themes of equality and inclusiveness in his songs and music.

Sweden's "Limits" by Cirkus Cirkör brilliantly deploys the techniques of cirque nouveau, stretching physical frontiers and soaring beyond borders to reflect on the global refugee crisis. The Danish multimedia production "NeoArctic" takes audiences to a visual-music journey addressing an ecosystem emergency. Renowned theatre director Eugenio Barba directs the acclaimed Odin Teatret in "The Chronic Life", in which the Danish-based acting lab delves into the disoriented times of 2031.

Finland's "Arctic Odyssey" is a spell-binding encounter with the eclectic arts of indigenous people from diverse regions of the far north. "The Sounds of Finland" connects innovation and tradition in a concert centred on the zither-like kantele, an instrument with a history of more than 1 000 years. In addition, Nordic and local groups will present an upbeat sonic celebration spotlighting women singers in the "Nordic & Hong Kong Band Sound Gala".

The WCF will have a refreshing "Nordic Café" series that will turn the Hong Kong Cultural Centre's Studio Theatre into an informal salon for the enjoyment of chamber music, play reading and improvisational theatre while attendees comfortably enjoy snacks and drinks.

Tickets for the WCF early bird offer are available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk) from today until September 4. For credit card telephone bookings, please call 2111 5999.

For programme enquiries, please call 2370 1044 or visit www.worldfestival.gov.hk.

