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IT'S ALL ABOUT OXFORD: UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS FROM OXFRINGE 2008 Oxford's new fringe festival: 29 March – 6 April

Oxfringe 2008 - Oxford's first full fringe festival – is coming up soon, and brochures are now being distributed across the city. "Although this year's fringe is only a taster for things to come, with around 40 different shows across nearly 60 performances, there's lots to enjoy – and much of it is the work of members of the local arts community," says one of the fringe's four directors, Sarah Jones. Among Oxford-based performers are:

A MUSICAL FEAST AT THE ASHMOLEAN

Blackbird Leys Choir has already shot to fame on Channel Five and performed at the Sheldonian Theatre, Royal Albert Hall and Buckingham Palace. Now, for Oxfringe 2008, it has teamed up with the newly formed Oxford-based Afropean Choir, featuring a celebration of voices and rhythms in a fusion of western and African sounds. The two choirs will be performing at 7pm on Friday 4 April in the unique and prestigious setting of the Ashmolean Museum's Randolph Sculpture Gallery.

LESSONS IN SHELF-AWARENESS

A highlight of one of Oxfringe's three stand-up comedy nights, Minty Fresh at Port Mahon on Saturday 29 March (8pm), is performance poet George Chopping. George is a hugely popular reader, who will be supporting John Hegley at London's Poetry Cafe on Easter Monday, but modestly describes himself as a "shelf-replenishment technician" - his day job is stacking shelves in an Oxford branch of Sainsburys.

OXFORD ON STAGE

The Oxford Playhouse Writers' Group has three shows on at the Burton Taylor Studio for Oxfringe: the award-winning *Blue* by Oxfringe co-director Heather Dunmore, which exposes the effects of depression on family life; the moving *Irene* by Gwilym Scourfield, telling the story of a feisty woman of 95 reminiscing about her years on the stage; and *Late at Night* by KL Productions, a tale about friendship set in Oxford. Meanwhile, over at Wadham College's Moser Theatre, Roundham Lock Theatre will explore some racy goings on in Wolvercote!

These are just a few of the dozens of Oxford-based performers helping to put Oxford firmly on the fringe map at Oxfringe 2008 – full details are available at www.oxfringe.com. **Members of the press are invited to a special photocall on the steps of the Ashmolean Museum at 6pm on Wednesday 19th March to meet the team, main sponsors Borders, and enjoy the lively sound of Oxford's unique and exciting performers Opera Anywhere.**

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Oxfringe is a non-profit organisation, financially supported by main sponsors Borders and other local business. Oxfringe and Borders have received an investment from Arts & Business to develop their creative partnership. The A&B Investment Programme is funded by Arts Council England, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Scottish Executive.
2. The team can be contacted via info@oxfringe.com, www.oxfringe.com or 0870 803 3475 (answer-phone). Oxfringe began with just two events in 2007. In 2008 there are 39 shows across around 60 performances, and the festival is expected to grow larger still for 2009. The Oxfringe printed brochure is available across the city. Further press information and photographs are available at www.oxfringe.com/press.php
3. For details of Opera Anywhere see www.operaanywhere.com.