



Arts Festival has something for everyone

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Thomas Monckton performs in *The Pianist* a solo, wordless circus piece being brought to Invercargill for the Southland Festival of the Arts.

It's the day Southland art lovers have been waiting for.

The 2015 Southland Festival of the Arts starts tonight with the first showing of *Once on a Chunuk Bair*.

For the next month, towns throughout the region will be abuzz with arty activities to suit the whole family.



Jon Trimmer and Helen Moulder perform in *Meeting Karpovsky*, coming to Invercargill with the Southland Festival of the Arts.

The festival programme is chock-full of theatre, dance, art exhibitions, comedy and a community arts project set to transform Esk St in Invercargill.

Festival director Angela Newell said she was excited about the opening of the month-long event.

"I've known about it for a very long time because it's been on the horizon for so many months, so it's exciting that it's finally here."



Tablo Theatre Company's life-sized puppet from the show *In Absentia*, coming to Invercargill with the Southland Festival of the Arts.

The festival is a chance for Southland audiences to see shows and have experiences they would not normally have, she said.

"Many of these shows wouldn't come here on their own steam because it would be a risk for them.

"We try and choose things that are a little different and of really high quality. They are definitely arts festival shows, they are quite special."

One of the shows making sure no one in Southland misses out is the Sharu Loves Hats production of *A Boy Wonder*.



The hour-long comedy show, set in the South Island, sees a return to his Southern roots for writer, performer and co-producer Ryan Richards.

The one-man show tells the story of an epic battle to save the local legend, Jimmy's Pies.

Set in Roxburgh and full of references South Island residents will understand, the show is touring Southland, with dates in Te Anau, Lumsden, Tuatapere, Tokanui, Gore and Stewart Island.

Co-producer Sharu Delikan said the show was suitable for the whole family.

"It's a high-energy show and it's very fast-paced.

"People need to be ready to be on an amazing

fantastical journey that is unique and different from what they have seen in the past."

It was important the festival got out to all areas of the province and was accessible for all Southlanders, Newell said.

"All the shows this year are very accessible and nothing is too weird.

"There are things that people can go to that won't cost them money."

The yarn bomb project, *A Bit of a Yarn* on Esk St, is an example of people being exposed to the creative world without having to change their routine.

The Southland Museum and Art Gallery is also hosting a free concert, *The Strait Shooters*.

The band is based in Wellington and Queenstown, hence the name, and offer a mix of funk, blues and soul.

In the dance world, the Java Dance presentation of *The Wine Project* explores use of space and aromas at Waxy O'Shea's on May 6.

"Anything that's involved in the festival is of a high calibre and we believe it is worth people going to go see," Newell said.

The seventh annual Southland Festival of the Arts opens on April 22, with performances in Invercargill and throughout Southland, and runs until May 21.

Information about the festival is available [here](#).

HIGHLIGHTS:

Once on a Chunuk Bair - April 22 to 25, 7:30pm
The Pianist - April 29, 7:30pm
The Jews Brothers - April 30 to May 2, 7:30pm
Pecha Kucha - May 1 and 2, 7:30pm
The Wine Project - May 6, 8:00pm
Meeting Karpovsky - May 7, 7:30pm
In Absentia - May 8 and 9, 7:00pm
The Strait Shooters - May 10, 1:30pm and 3:00pm
A Bit of a Yarn - May 10 to 17
A Boy Wonder - May 15 to 21, 7:30pm

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