



**FOR IMMEDIATE
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**The 12th Annual Virginia Arts Festival
presents**

Black Watch

**May 24-June 1, 2008,
at Norfolk's Scope Arena**

The Virginia Arts Festival presents the critically acclaimed Scottish National Theatre production of *Black Watch*, May 24 through June 1 at Norfolk's Scope Arena.

Patron advisory: Black Watch contains profanity, strong language, loud explosions, and strobe lighting. Not recommended for children under 16.

Black Watch: Background

In the autumn of 2004, 800 members of the storied Scots regiment, the Black Watch, shipped out for Iraq. Their mission: to replace 4,000 American Marines. The story of their experience is told in this shattering play, inspired by interviews with members of the regiment upon their return to Scotland. Brilliantly utilizing sound, lighting, and video, spoken word, tightly choreographed movement, and searing stagecraft, *Black Watch* engulfs the audience in the experience of the war—and ushers us into the hearts of the young men who willingly went, valiantly fought, and returned to sort out the aftermath of the war on terror.

Premiered at the 2006 Edinburgh Festival, the Scottish National Theatre's production of *Black Watch* drew an overwhelming critical response, sweeping theater awards in the United Kingdom, and then played New York and Los Angeles to a chorus of praise. The show made the "best of" lists of major publications, including *The New York Times* ("Ben Brantley's Top 10 Plays of 2007"), the *Los Angeles Times* ("Best of 2007"), *Newsweek* ("Top 5 Plays of 2007"), and *New York Magazine* ("Theatrical Event of the Year").

Now Virginia Arts Festival patrons can see this unforgettable work of theater. On the floor of the Scope Arena, the audience will be seated within striking distance of the action on the stage—and as part of that intimate experience, will discover what critics have called a "landmark cultural event of the 21st century" (*Sunday Herald, Scotland*).

(more)

Critical Acclaim

“Thrilling, disturbing, transfixing...

a reminder of the transporting power that is unique to theater. In the final marching sequence, as the men moved forward and stumbled in shifting patterns, I found to my surprise that I was crying. For this was no anonymous military phalanx. It was an assembly of men who, while moving in synchronicity, were each and every one a distinctive blend of fears and ambitions and confusion. They were every soldier; and they were also irreconcilably themselves. This exquisitely sustained double vision makes *Black Watch* one of the most richly human works of art to have emerged from this long-lived war.”

-Ben Brantley, *The New York Times*

“Put simply, it’s essential that you see *Black Watch*...

It’s among the most compelling theater pieces you could wish to see. The production from Scotland’s National Theatre is magnificent, and its awesome reality and humaneness will overwhelm you.

-*New York Observer*

“There is poetry in *Black Watch*...

The cast of 10 splendidly conveys the profane roughness of the unit, a brave-face locker-room spirit that does not entirely mask the soldiers’ terror and tenderness of experience. Rarely has the torpor, the tension, the nerve-shattering randomness of this conflict’s violence been made so agonizingly real. *Black Watch* is like a dose of caffeine delivered directly to the bloodstream.

-Peter Marks, *The Washington Post*

Brimming with breathtaking theatricality, inventiveness, style, thought provoking intelligence, humour and heart, this is a show that should be seen by everyone who can and is sure to be lamented by those who can’t. An unmissable piece of theatre.

-*The Metro* (Scotland)

John Tiffany's storming, heart-stopping production is all disorienting blood, guts and thunder, threaded through with the history and songs of the regiment and intercut with lyrical moments of physical movement, like some great dirty ballet of pulsating machismo and terrible tenderness.

-*The Guardian* (London)

It's a superlative play . . . brimfull of theatricality, energy and style, and with its cast of 10, pipe music and huge video projections, it's almost a mini-Tattoo. But there's no flag-waving here, just a deeply humane examination of the culture of soldiering . . . a brilliantly realised piece.

-*Evening Standard* (London)

(more)

Scottish National Theatre Production: Creative Team

Written by Gregory Burke

Directed by John Tiffany

Associate Director (movement) - Steven Hoggett

Associate Director (music) - Davey Anderson

Set designed by Laura Hopkins
Costumes designed by Jessica Brettle
Lighting designed by Colin Grenfell
Sound designed by Gareth Fry
Video designed by Leo Warner and Mark Grimmer for Fifty Nine Productions Ltd.

Performance Schedule and Tickets

Sat, May 24, 8:00 pm
Sun, May 25, 2:00 pm & 7:30 pm
May 27 - 28, 7:30 pm
Thur, May 29, 2:00 pm & 7:30 pm
Fri, May 30, 8:00 pm
Sat, May 31, 2:00 pm & 8:00 pm
Sun, June 1, 2:00 pm
Prism Theater, Scope Arena, Norfolk

Scope Arena, Norfolk

Tickets starting at \$42, on sale now, by phone at 757-282-2822, in person at the Festival Box Office at MacArthur Center, or online at www.vafest.com.

Co-presented with Norfolk's Sevenvenues and Double M Management.

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The National Theatre of Scotland is supported by the Scottish Government.