



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Festival numbers bigger and better than ever

With nearly 2500 tickets sold, 520 local students taking part in the new schools program, more than 900 visitors to Oscar winner Shaun Tan's exhibition and about 1000 people attending the opening night free fireworks... it's a wrap for this year's Woodend Winter Arts Festival!

And it's not quite over – ABC Classic FM recorded key musical events as they happened over the weekend, and will broadcast them locally and internationally exposing the Festival to an even wider audience.

The performers have since left Woodend, which experienced a tripling of the population over the Queen's Birthday Long Weekend thanks to international and interstate visitors, Melbourne suburbanites (who congregated longingly around local real estate windows) and regional neighbours.

But mostly it was the locals who turned out to support the events and helped create the buzz that everyone has since raved about. It was, as promised, a weekend offering the best of international classical musicians, visual arts and literary talent. And then there were the locals who billeted performers and volunteered to keep the festival running smoothly.

Some of the key facts and figures for 2011 include:

- Filled to overflowing... we packed them in for Mozart's Requiem, the Joe Chindamo Jazz Trio Cabaret Dinner, An Exacting Heart, screening of *The Lost Thing* with Shaun Tan, Writing Politics Panel, and the Faust Silent movie
- Nearly 2500 tickets sold (up from the previous year)
- 114 people attended the poetry slam with Emilie Zoey Baker (EZB) – who was brought back to the Festival by popular demand after her 2010 slam. EZB was also a part of our new schools program
- 520 local students – 120 primary school and 400 secondary school students were exposed to the Festival in their own schools (and schools have been ringing the Festival office ever since!)
- 934 people visited Colenzo Gallery for the Shaun Tan exhibition – and 19 prints were sold
- 140 gathered at Woodend Library for the storytelling event for 3 – 8 year olds.

The Festival generated extensive publicity for the performances, Woodend and the Macedon Ranges, thanks to engaging with local and mainstream media, social media (via Twitter and facebook), relaunching the Festival website and general promotion which included:

- 144 new 'friends' of the Festival via facebook
- 6876 'post views' by fans and non-fans of the facebook page in the month leading up to (and including) the Festival - between 275 and 425 views each facebook posting by the Festival
- 40,000 brochures printed and distributed throughout Victoria and Australia
- 700 Festival programs printed and distributed to visitors over the weekend
- The new website peaked at 2136 unique visitors between 1 and 14 June, who visited an average of 1.4 times each and checked around 9000 pages
- Articles appearing in local and regional news outlets showcasing all that was on offer.