



BALANCING ACT: The acrobatics and Afro-jazz rhythms of Cirque Kalabante from Guinea are coming to HMT.

International season of performance returns to city 'bigger and better'

Aberdeen Performing Arts are to host performers from around the world once again as part of their international season.

Artists from Australia, Denmark and Guinea will perform at His Majesty's Theatre and the Lemon Tree in July and August.

Aberdeen Performing Arts chief Sharon Burgess said: "Introducing the International Season in 2024 was a milestone moment for Aberdeen Performing Arts.

"We were treated to a thrilling programme of shows from truly incredible performers who had never before made Aberdeen a stopping point while visiting the UK.

"After a wonderful reaction and warm welcome from audiences last year, we are coming back bigger and better this

year, broadening our horizons and enjoying performances that inspire, entertain and spark curiosity in equal measure.

"We are so excited to once again see the Granite City sparkle under the lights of a global stage."

The 2024 International Season marked a milestone in the north-east cultural calendar.

After wowing crowds at His Majesty's Theatre in 2024 with Humans 2.0, trailblazing Australian circus company Circa return from July 23 to 26 this year with Wolf.

Cirque Kalabante bring their unique show Afrique en Cirque to HMT from Guinea on August 27 to 30.

Tickets are available at www.aberdeenperformingarts.com (01224 641122), His Majesty's Theatre or the Music Hall.

Plan for lithium battery site brings out worried residents

BY JAMIE SINCLAIR

Dozens of Rothienorman locals voiced concerns over plans for a lithium energy plant near the village.

Blackford Against BESS hosted a meeting at Rothienorman Bowling Club on the issue.

Battery Energy Storage Sites (BESS) enable renewable energy to be stored for when needed.

Speakers at the meeting voiced concerns over fire safety, noise pollution and environmental impact.

Organisers encouraged those in attendance to get their objections in as soon as possible before plans are approved.

Six site proposals for the area are being developed by third-party organisations not affiliated with SSEN or the Scottish Government.

One of the proposals, a 500mw site at Blackford, is the size of 21 football fields, or 32.8 acres.

Speakers at the meeting are expressed concern that, should a BESS catch fire, it will rapidly release large amounts of energy.

It's incredibly hard to contain lithium battery fires, which spread quickly.

The fires release harmful toxic Hydrogen cyanide, Hydrogen chloride and Hydrogen fluoride.

The meeting heard that safety has improved on BESS units, reducing the risk of a major fire.

However, citing safety concerns, Jan Alder said: "Knowing that there is that risk only five minutes away from our village, where there is a school, it is just a horrible thought. Why would we take this risk?"

Resident Frank Richards said: "Safety of local people seems like a secondary concern."

On the issue of noise from the site, Athol Duckett said: "We all love this area because it's quiet. There's

going to be a consistent hum from the 1104 air conditioning units."

There are also fears that a run-off of contaminated water could be catastrophic should containment measures fail.

There is one-quarter of a million litres of water needed on site for containment.

This means there is an increased flood risk in Blackford and the run-off could contaminate ponds in Rothienorman.

Despite Aberdeenshire Council asking for an environmental impact assessment for the site, the Energy Consents Unit decided this was unnecessary.

The infrastructure needed for the construction of the site is also of concern.

With HGV movements, around 200 construction workers on site and daily deliveries, it is estimated there will be at least 500

extra journeys on the roads around Rothienorman.

Rothienorman resident Barry Duncan said: "It's up to us to make sure we get enough objections for them to take notice. If we don't, there's no way this doesn't happen."

The developers, Blackford Energy Park, highlighted a recent report they released addressing concerns about water contamination, saying it had updated its plans to include an impermeable membrane that prevents contaminated fire water from leaking into the environment.

On claims about noise they said: "On guidance from Aberdeenshire council, a noise report will be submitted with the full planning application."

The group also plan to submit a fire risk assessment along with the planning application when the time comes.



Marguerite Fleming of Blackford addresses the meeting.



Frank Richards spoke of the fire risks to the village.