



FESTIVAL OF THE ELEMENTS

WAITANGI DAY

6 February 2007
Te Rauparaha Park
www.elementsfestival.org.nz

MEDIA RELEASE

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SIZZLING ELENA HEADLINES ELEMENTS FESTIVAL

The extraordinary talented and sensational NZ violinist, named by Wellington Mayor Kerry Prendergast last year as a cultural icon, will headline the annual Festival of the Elements in Porirua on Waitangi Day.

Elena will perform on the Festival's evening programme with the accomplished trio Simply Fantastic in an exciting musical feast that will cross cultural and ethnic boundaries.

Elena promises a dash of jazz, Latin, the classics, gypsy, Irish and electric.

In what has become her own unique musical signature, she will also combine Kapa haka with classical music in a performance that should delight Festival audiences. This elite musician particularly excites when she combines evocative Maori waiata with European and Latin influences.

Elena describes her music as 'energetic, funky, passionate and fun'. Her client list includes the Prime Minister and the Governor General. She's performed at a banquet dinner for the Queen and at an Oscars dinner for Lord of the Rings.

Elena and Simply Fantastic come to the Festival of the Elements fresh from presenting her Cultural Symphony at the prestigious China Shanghai International Arts Festival (CSIAF).

"We received standing ovations by a usually very conservative festival audience. This is the first time the festival has ever experienced this audience reaction," Elena said this week.

Previous guest artists at the Shanghai Festival have included the Kirov Ballet, Andrea Bocelli, Placido Domingo, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Cirque du Soleil, the New York City Ballet and the Sydney Dance Company.

The Festival of Elements is an event arranged and managed by the
Porirua Community Arts Council (Inc)
PO Box 52 011, PORIRUA CITY

Elena said she and Simply Fantastic were delighted to celebrate Waitangi Day this year by performing closer to home in the Wellington region after celebrating Waitangi Day with two performances at the Treaty grounds last year.

"Our programme for the Festival of the Elements will include Mozart with a drum kit to Tea for Two with a teacup!" Elena said.

Elena grew up with her grandparents on the Mahia peninsula where she was immersed in Maori culture and waiata, before moving to Hastings where her Dutch stepfather introduced her to the violin and classical music.

She trained with the Schola Musica (the NZSO training group) in Wellington, and at Trinity College in London.

Her Simply Fantastic colleagues include Steffen Goeres on guitar, George Packard Bass, and Tim Whitta percussion.

What others have said about Elena:

"It was an exhilarating experience that frequently sent shivers down the spine and brought an emotional tear to the eye... an uplifting, magnificent occasion."
Garth Wilshire, Capital Times.

"Elena's message was clear and entertainingly presented in this colourful concert." □Lindis Taylor, The Dominion Post.

"Elena's concert at the MFC has created a milestone for NZ music." □Alick Shaw, Deputy Mayor of Wellington.

The Porirua Festival of the Elements, on Tuesday, 6 February, runs from 10am through to a Fireworks Finale at 9.30pm. It is a free festival, with more than one thousand artists and performers. The Festival programme is available on the Festival website at www.elementsfestival.org.nz

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