**Durham Streets Summer Festival 2012**

Once more, thousands of people were treated to a packed weekend of fun, laughter, daring and one incredible concert as the Durham Streets Summer Festival took over the streets of Durham city for the August Bank Holiday weekend.

The headline show of the weekend was the much anticipated appearance of **The Futureheads at Durham Cathedral**.

With the ‘crossing tower’ bathed in coloured lights, and the magnificent acoustics of the nave used to their fullest effect, three north east acts filled the Cathedral with a sound very different from the usual choral voices, but no less beautiful and powerful in their impact.

The supporting acts, South Shields’ **Natasha Haws** and Martin Longstaff from Sunderland who goes by the name **The Lake Poets** described the experience as ‘daunting’ and ‘something I’ll remember for the rest of my life’. Their simple, melancholic songs accompanied each time only by a single acoustic guitar rang out through the cathedral and produced both emotion and universal acclaim from the audience of almost 1,000 packed into the venue.

Barry Hyde, lead vocalist of **The Futureheads**, described their appearance as ‘a privilege’ and band member Ross Millard also thanked the organisers for ‘the opportunity to play such a stunning venue’. The band played songs from their ‘a cappella’ and acoustic album “Rant”, with some reworked songs from their back catalogue, covers of Kate Bush and Black Eyed Peas songs, and some shanties and madrigals thrown in for good measure.

The complex and powerful vocal harmonies were a perfect match for the surroundings, and the show was the perfect uplifting antidote to the inclement weather the audience had endured on their walk to the cathedral.

Kate James, Festivals and Events Manager for Visit County Durham said:  
“When we were putting together the programme for the 2012 Streets Festival, we knew this would be something special, but it exceeded even our expectations. We owe a massive thank you to the acts that performed on the night, and to Durham Cathedral and all our partners in helping to make it happen. “Streets” has always been about delivering something different to the usual festival experience, something that is unique to Durham. This was the epitome of that aim.

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“We’ve had 1,000 people in the Cathedral and thousands more over the weekend enjoying the free street performances around the city centre. This hasn’t been the greatest summer for weather, but it takes a lot to dampen the spirits of people and we’ve been really pleased with the turnout. Now, as with all annual events we’ll turn our attention to making sure that 2013 will be just as good a year for “Streets”, maybe even better.”

**Sing-a-long-a Rocky Horror** was back by popular demand, as the kick-off event on Friday evening, with hundreds treated to a pre-show cabaret outside the Gala Theatre, before taking the party into the auditorium for a raucous celebration of all things Transylvanian.

On Saturday and Sunday afternoons**,** buskers, fools, acrobats, jugglers and daredevils, the very best in street performance wowed the crowds with agility, stunts, skills and nerve.

The **Circle Shows** took place in Millennium Place and the Market Square, with acts as diverse as Herbie Treehead, a performer from Consett, who before this weekend had performed around the world but never in his native Durham, and Jaardu, with a cobra-choosing-card trick that had the crowd enthralled and surprised in equal measure.

Festival goers were encouraged to reward the performances by dropping money into the hat, but also to choose their favourite act of the weekend by making their selection on a voting form.

The eventual ‘People’s Choice’ winner was Fat Matt. Not at all fat, Matt demonstrated amazing feats of balance, bizarre magic and peculiar body contortions. Trained by Chinese and Russian masters, Fat Matt came out on top thanks in no small part by being able to juggle and play the ukulele simultaneously while standing on his head.

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IMAGES OF THE FUTUREHEADS AT DURHAM CATHEDRAL, AND FAT MATT, WINNER OF THE PEOPLE’S CHOICE AWARD ARE ATTACHED.

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