



*'With Fizcarraldo in the Gobi...'*

# MONGOLIA'S

## Roaring Hooves festival

*Founded by musician **Bernhard Wulff**, 'Roaring Hooves' is an international music festival with a difference. Each year, over the past decade the festival, has kicked off in Ulan Bator opera house before travelling to the middle of Mongolia's Gobi desert. As its tenth birthday approaches, Wulff describes 'Roaring Hooves' first ten years*

The Mongolian music festival Roaring Hooves was established in 1999 in Dshingis Khan's country and presents music in Ulan Bator and the Gobi desert in wonderful locations in the country. The festival has become the biggest and most important platform in Central Asia for cross-cultural meetings between musicians and artists from Europe, Asia and Central Asia. Through its' unusual and unique artistic concept the festival has gained a high profile within contemporary music's international scene. In the Mongolian language Roaring Hooves means 'go ahead, on the move' and its establishment underlines the determination and wish of its young Mongolian organisers to become partners in the cultural developments in the wider world, after the political changes which began in the 1990's. The unique artistic concept was initially developed and is

today produced by the Mongolian New Music Association, in cooperation with myself as its artistic director.

The festival draws together contemporary music from all parts of the world with that of traditional Mongolian music, which continues to play a very important role in both Mongolian culture and Mongolian identity: Historically Mongolians have developed two unique vocal techniques: the throat singing technique known as Choomeij, which is performed mainly by men and which is a kind of dialogue with the natural world through a form of meditative concentration. The strong and powerful Urtiin Du (Long song) is performed mainly by women and is a dialogue with the magic blue sky of the empty Gobi desert, where the 'roaring' silence invokes special powers. They woman use the extremely soft sounding horsehead fiddle, the *morin khur*, and is known for being able to make camels weep. Mongolians have always had a special relation with their animals, and with the camels they sing to both mother and baby animal soon after birth to protect the animal's life in the extreme climate conditions they will inevitably meet. They sing for the animals to survive.

The festival features concerts by the State Philharmonic orchestra, Shamans fire-dances and performances by Mongolia's famous acrobats. After the opening concert at the opera house of Ulan Bator the