

# The maestro returns

He left Liverpool in 1980 as a prodigious talent with the world at his feet. He returned in 2008 as a bonafide classical music superstar, a living legend in the genre.

And when he arrived in the city in September for a one-night-only show as part of the '08 celebrations, he brought with him the world's finest orchestra.

It's little wonder then, that what followed was a performance that put the seal of greatness on Capital of Culture.

Sir Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmoniker saw the return of one of the city's most famous sons. Liverpool's own uberconductor led a wondrous musical feast at the Philharmonic Hall – the place where his incredible career began.

Impassioned, compelling and memorable, the performance had all the hallmarks of what makes Sir Simon a revered conductor throughout the world.

The collective sound of the Berlin Philharmonic was flawless - gentle chords, rumbling percussion and blistering crescendos echoing through the Hall in a stirring programme which included Wagner Prelude and Liebestod; and Tristan and Isolde Messiaen Turangalila Symphony. It was an incredible return – but Sir Simon's involvement in '08 wasn't done. He returned to the city once more a month later to conduct the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra – even making time to drop in at the Town Hall where civic leaders conferred the city's most prestigious honour on him, the Freedom of Liverpool.

Sir Simon Rattle was assistant conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic from 1977-1980. He spent 18 years with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, before being appointed principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic in 1999.



As I live in London now, my main experience of '08 was coming to work on the various drama workshops I led in the city during the year.



I also took part in a fabulous Gospel festival that stretched the length of Hope Street and flowed into both cathedrals. That experience lifted my spirits and inspired me to have more faith. I will never forget the opening ceremony and the people that turned out. I felt so proud - I also felt like Elizabeth Taylor in the film of Cleopatra as she entered Rome! I wish Liverpool continuing success in the months ahead - it's only just beginning.

**Cathy Tyson, Actor**

## '08's Operatic overture

Liverpool kicked-off its year as Capital of Culture in fine style, as St George's Hall played host to a truly breathtaking opera.

Opening on New Year's Eve 2007, Emilia Di Liverpool was the curtain-raiser for a packed-year of events in the city - a sweeping opera of tragedy and humour, matched by the splendour of the recently restored Concert Room at the Hall.

Donizetti's rarely performed work, composed in Naples in 1824, tells the story of Emilia, daughter of Claudio of Liverpool, who after being seduced and abandoned by a faithless lover, dedicates her life to stranded travellers.

Performed by the European Opera Centre, Emilia Di Liverpool was critically acclaimed in both local and national press, with accolades such as: 'the highlight of Capital of Culture has already happened!'

Following its six performances at St George's Hall, Emilia di Liverpool travelled to Liverpool's 'Cities On the Edge' partners, Bremen, Istanbul, Gdansk, Naples and Marseille.



# Pop Powerhouse!

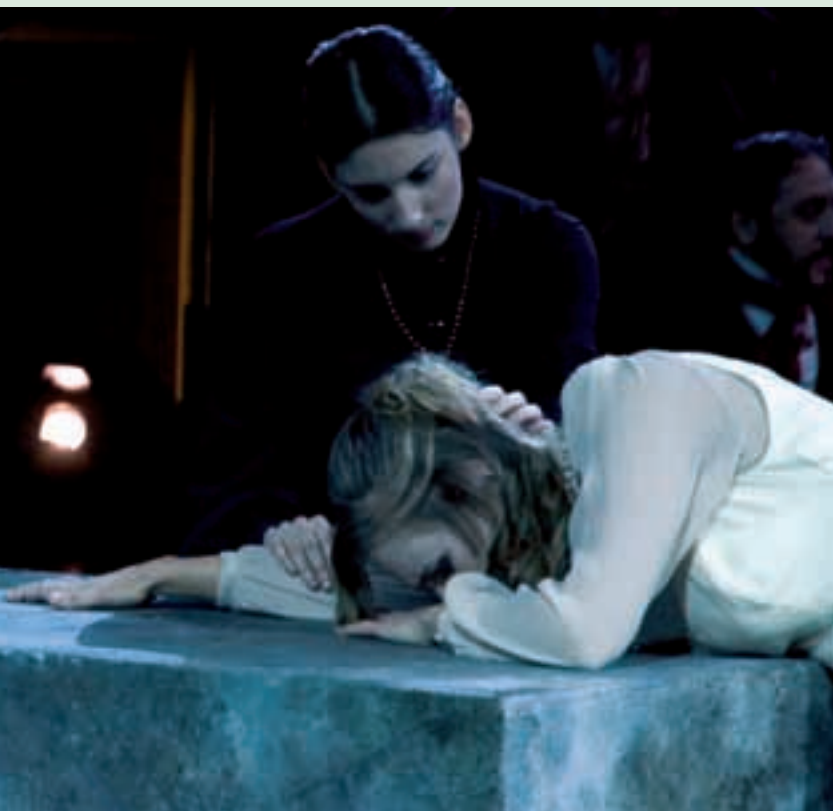
**Where should one hold Europe's biggest pop party of 2008?... Liverpool – where else?!**

The biggest names in pop music converged on Liverpool's waterfront in November for the MTV Europe Music Awards. It was a massive boost to the city's 08 music programme, with around 10,000 music fans attending and an estimated 30 million TV viewers tuning-in.

The Echo Arena hosted a stunning live show – hosted by Katie Perry – featuring superstars such as Kanye West, Pink, Take That, Beyonce and The Killers.

And the awards came to a perfect climax when U2 front man Bono awarded Sir Paul McCartney with the final gong of the night - the MTV 'Ultimate Legend' award.

Yet another highlight of a momentous cultural year, the MTV awards reflected the new found confidence in the city. Liverpool has long been considered the World Capital of Pop, but the arrival of such a prestigious event proved that the city is once more a pop concert-powerhouse, able to attract the world's biggest and best music events. And we attracted the world's biggest chap stick too!



## East meets North West

**Two musical cultures collided in Liverpool in July – with explosive results.**

Jah Wobble's Chinese Dub at the Carling Academy was unlike anything heard before - an intricate and exhilarating mix of electronic music and Eastern melodies.

It saw cutting-edge dub star Jah Wobble team-up with Chinese musicians - including Liverpool's own Pagoda Chinese Youth Orchestra - for an audio visual spectacular, fusing traditional Oriental music with Wobble's experimental electronic sound.

The groundbreaking show featured singers from Tibet and Yunnan Province, dancers from Hangzhou, and an Anglo-Chinese dub band.

Jah Wobble has collaborated with everyone from The Sex Pistols to Bjork - and this latest collaboration showcased the unique ability of music to cross boundaries and bring different cultures together.

Jah Wobble – Chinese Dub, set off on a 10-date tour following its Carling Academy premiere.

