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media release

The Arts Centre's Mix It Up and FULL TILT in association with Multicultural Arts Victoria present
CAFE REBETIKA! An epic story of the heart.

Cafe Rebetika! is an epic story of the heart; a passionate and uplifting theatre production which tells a dramatic love story set in the slums of 1930s urban Greece amongst the rise of *rebetika*, the "Greek blues". The world premiere season of *Café Rebetika!* will fittingly take place in Melbourne, Australia's most Greek city.

Rebetika is a musical form and defiant philosophy that arose from the struggles of Greece's displaced and marginalised people in the 1920s and 1930s. The darkly beautiful songs of *rebetika* tell the raw and often bawdy hard-luck stories of outcast people in turbulent times.

Cafe Rebetika! vividly captures the characters at the heart of the Greek blues - drug addicts, prostitutes, anarchists, refugees, prisoners, Communists, drifters and mangas (men of integrity in this underworld). The stories of the play are strong and dark, like the thick smell of hashish smoke permeating the air of the cafe in which the characters create a utopia, despite their many trials.

Cafe Rebetika! features a stellar cast of seven, including award-winning actor Tony Nikolakopoulos (*Head On, The Wog Boy*), together with Katerina Kotsonis, Laura Lattuada and Thomas Papathanassiou, plus the internationally acclaimed band *Rebetiki*, led by musical director Achilles Yiangoulli.

The production is conceived and directed by Stephen Helper who has numerous Australian and Broadway credits, and the design team is led by Tony Award winning lighting designer, Nigel Levings.

This new-form, original performance hybrid is at the forefront of contemporary Australian theatre. It is certain to strike a chord with its deeply moving depiction of the underbelly of Greek urban-folk culture, the birth of an enduringly popular musical form and a searing love story which resonates into our times.

Cafe Rebetika! is proudly supported by Neos Kosmos and Laiki Bank. The Arts Centre's MIX IT UP program celebrates the cultural diversity of Victoria through music, dance and theatre from around the world.

Café Rebetika!

22 April - 9 May, 2009 @ the Arts Centre, Fairfax Studio

Previews 22 & 23 April

**Ticket prices \$30 - \$50 on sale now at theartscentre.com.au,
1300 136 166 and ticketmaster outlets.**

Free post show talks:

Tuesday 28 April, following 8pm show

Saturday 2 May, following 4pm show

Tuesday 5 May, following 8pm show

Saturday 9 May, following 4pm show

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