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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CANTERBURY FESTIVAL AND CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY
ANNOUNCE NEW PARTNERSHIP**

Kent's International Arts Festival, Canterbury Festival, is delighted to announce a major five-year partnership with its Principal Sponsor.

Canterbury Christ Church University, a significant supporter of arts and culture in Kent, is the Festival's Partner and Principal Sponsor from 2010.

The five-year sponsorship agreement will help to ensure the Festival continues to deliver quality arts events to Kent and UK audiences, including the University's well established programme of Canterbury Festival concerts and performances.

This important partnership will see the Festival support Christ Church in the development of its cultural activity across its five-campus network in Canterbury, Folkestone, Broadstairs, Medway and Tunbridge Wells.

Professor Janet Druker, Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor at the University, explained: "With the opening of St Gregory's Centre for Music in 2012, and our fast growing reputation for arts and culture provision and education across Kent, we are ideally placed to develop this important partnership."

"In sharing our expertise and resources, our aim is to further strengthen Kent's arts and cultural programming to audiences across the South East and UK."

The partnership comes at a time when the University is preparing to open its unique centre for music and concert hall in Kent. Its internationally-renowned music department has secured partnerships with Classic FM, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Southbank Sinfonia in developing the centre as a South East venue for national performance.

Its opening will provide a prominent and valuable venue for the Festival's future growth.

Festival Director Rosie Turner commented on the new cultural partnership:

"Canterbury is an international destination – now linked to London by rail in under an hour. It's a fabulous city to visit and an even better one in which to live or work.

For Music students to study within view of the Cathedral World Heritage Site, to interact with international artists and performers during the Festival fortnight and to enjoy on-going relationships with leading performers and ensembles adds up to a unique offer.”

“Once St Gregory’s Centre for Music is complete Canterbury Christ Church University will justly claim its position as a national centre for musical excellence.”

This year’s Canterbury Festival will take place from 16 – 30 October 2010. The programme will be open for general booking from 9 August on www.canterburyfestival.co.uk

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Notes to the Editor

Canterbury Festival

Canterbury Festival is Kent's International Arts Festival, the largest festival of arts and culture in the region, and one of the most important cultural events in the South East.

Revived in 1984, the Festival attracts an audience of nearly 80,000 people of all ages to free and ticketed events, drawn from across Kent, London and the South East. With over two hundred events in two weeks there is something to suit everyone from classical music to contemporary dance, comedy to world music with theatre, walks, talks, visual arts and much more.

In 2010 the Festival takes place in venues across Canterbury and the surrounding areas between Saturday 16 and Saturday 30 October. Full details of all Festival events will be announced in July and will be available on the website www.canterburyfestival.co.uk and Festival brochures. General booking opens 9 August 2010 online and Box Office 01227 787 787.

Canterbury Christ Church University

Canterbury Christ Church University has, since its foundation by the Church of England as a teacher training college in 1962, developed a wide range of taught programmes, research and educational services. It continues to be the largest centre of higher education in Kent for the major public services.

The University now has approximately 16,700 students across five campuses: Canterbury, Broadstairs, Folkestone (in partnership with the Creative Foundation and the University of Greenwich), Medway (in partnership with the Universities of Greenwich and Kent with Mid-Kent College) and Tunbridge Wells.

Its reputation as a major supporter and provider of regional arts and culture continues to grow with our internationally-renowned Music Department, a first class city centre art gallery, and Kent's prestigious St Gregory's Centre for Music due to open in 2012.