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CLASSICAL MUSIC STARS ON EUROPA

Hapag-Lloyd Cruises' 5-star, Berlitz-guide favourite ship *MS Europa* will be hosting two classical music festivals in 2012.

Featuring internationally acclaimed classical music stars, the sixth annual Ocean Sun Festival will be held in August – a 12-day music fest on the high seas – and will include performances on board and at historical sites ashore as the ship sails through the majestic fjords of Norway.

And as part of *Europa's* 18-day itinerary through the Middle East and Africa in November, top talent from international opera houses will battle it out for prizes and audience affection in the Stella Maris International Vocal Competition, with a €15,000 (AU\$18,517) grand prize going to the performer most loved by the crowd.

P&O CRUISES CELEBRATES 175 YEARS!

P&O Cruises in the UK has released a new book to celebrate the legendary line's 175 years of cruising. Written by maritime historians Sharon Poole and Andrew Sassoli-Walker, *P&O Cruises: Celebrating 175 Years of Heritage* is the official story of one of Britain's oldest and most beloved cruise companies.

Covering a sweep of history from the earliest days of cruising to the present, and on to what the future holds, the book delves into everything from milestones in the company's growth to its role in world events and the logistics of running a major cruise line. It's peppered throughout with the personal anecdotes of cruise passengers that provide evocative glimpses into the P&O cruise experience then and now.

"We are delighted that this fascinating book will be part of our anniversary celebrations in 2012," said P&O Cruises UK Managing Director Carol Marlow. "We can trace our roots back 175 years and, during that time, our ships and crews have been at the cutting edge of maritime and cruising innovation, served with distinction in several conflicts and, most importantly, offered our customers a cruising experience they have loved, year in and year out.

"We have seen countless weddings, honeymoons and proposals on board along with all manner of other remarkable events. It's excellent to have a book that sheds some light on some of these personal stories, as well

as the current-day operation of our brand and our ships."

P&O's first 'press trip' in 1844, a free voyage for William Thackeray (celebrated author of the satirical classic *Vanity Fair*) in exchange for a literary account of his experience, and the requisitioning in 1981 of the cruise ship *Canberra* for the Falklands War are two of many intriguing tales in this varied and interesting historical account. The book is available at most online bookstores.

Do you have photos to share or a story to tell about your experiences on P&O ships over the years? Check out pocruises.com.au, where you'll find an intriguing time line with a distinctly Australasian flavour.

