

In celebration of Sir John

Tuesday, June 16, 2009, 15:03

PADSTOW is to host its first arts festival celebrating the lives and works of former eminent residents Sir Malcolm Arnold and Sir John Betjeman (pictured).

The three-day event in October will celebrate the achievements of the former Poet Laureate Sir John and renowned composer Sir Malcolm.

Both had an affinity with Padstow and lived nearby. Sir John is universally recognised as one of the finest English poets of the 20th century and lived for many years across the Camel Estuary at Trebetherick.

Sir Malcolm was a towering figure of 20th century music, known throughout the world for his compositions for orchestra, film and brass band. He lived at Trevone and was made a bard of the Cornish Goresdd in 1969.

Festival producer Edward Clark, who worked with Sir Malcolm, came up with the idea to mark the lives of the two great men.

He said: "When Sir Malcolm was living in Cornwall, it was one of the happiest times in his life with his young family growing up.

"In 1967, he wrote the *Padstow Lifeboat: March for Orchestra* which has been performed all over the world and has put Padstow on the map worldwide."

Sir Malcolm wrote 132 film scores, including music for *Bridge on the River Kwai*, for which he won an Oscar in 1958. He died in 2006, aged 85. Sir John, who was made Poet Laureate in 1972, died in 1984 at his home in Trebetherick and was buried in the nearby church of St Enodoc.

The festival will be opened by Truro Cathedral Choir, celebrating the anniversaries of Mendelssohn, Purcell and Haydn and singing a rare choral work by Malcolm Arnold.

Other entertainment will be provided by Cornish-born international opera singer Benjamin Luxon, British composer John McCabe and the Salieri String Quartet. The Mount Charles Band will perform a range of works for brass band by Sir Malcolm including his famous march.

Venues include St Petroc's Church and Prideaux Place.

Chairwoman of Padstow Area Tourism and Business Forum Tina Evans said: "I think it is wonderful that we are celebrating the lives of two important figures. Padstow is already known for events such as May Day but this will appeal to other people who may not have visited the town before, especially at a quieter time of year for us. Hopefully it will not only provide a pleasurable experience but help give the local economy a boost."

The Festival has been produced with the help and co-operation of Padstow Town Council, Peter and Elisabeth Prideaux-Brune, Katherine Arnold and Rick and Jill Stein.

It will take place from October 2 to October 4, more details will be provided in the coming weeks.

