

PRESS RELEASE

Alexander McCall Smith brings his Really Terrible Orchestra to New York

1 APRIL 2009 NEW YORK TOWN HALL 8PM

It's really true, the original Really Terrible Orchestra, created by best-selling author Alexander McCall Smith, is coming to New York for a one-off, one-date tour in what promises to be their most ear shattering performance ever.

The self-styled musicians of the RTO will play in New York Town Hall under the distinguished baton of Sir Richard Neville-Towle (source of knighthood unknown) on April Fools' Day - this is no joke!

Favourites from the Edinburgh-based band's repertoire may be performed; new works may be trialed; classics may be revisited. With the RTO, nothing is guaranteed except the quality of the music. The tuneless wonders, who regularly entertain captive audiences at home, will appear as part of the 2009 New York Tartan Week celebrations.

The RTO has cowed crowds from Pittenweem (an extremely small town in Scotland) to the Cadogan Hall (an inappropriately prestigious venue in London). Now it's America's turn. McCall Smith, principal contra bassoonist of (one) note and occasional sousaphonist, will attempt to explain why a writer with *The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency*, *44 Scotland Street*, *The Sunday Philosophy Club* and much more, to his credit can succeed so spectacularly in one art form and fail so miserably in another.

He will also try to justify the rationale behind the RTO and why, even in the early days, he thought people would pay to listen to his friends doing what they did worst.

There will be a real modern Major General reprising Gilbert and Sullivan's legendary number from the *Pirates of Penzance* to really terrible new lyrics, a bagpipe serenade, cannon fire and the New York premiere of a musical saw concerto. There may be encores but only on request.

'Where standard amateurs may be incidentally bad, the Really Terrible Orchestra is fundamentally bad' – New York Times, August 2007

'As there was no likelihood of ever being accepted into an existing ensemble, we decided to create our own. There's a concept of asylum in the RTO. It's therapy' – Alexander McCall Smith

'Why this group of (very) modestly talented musicians should presume to perform in public is beyond anyone' – Edinburgh Festival Program

NOTE TO EDITORS:

* Founded in 1995 by Alexander McCall Smith and his wife Elizabeth, the Really Terrible Orchestra has provided a refuge for the cream of Edinburgh's musically disadvantaged.

*The RTO has spawned a number of tribute bands in the UK and in the US, including The Really Terrible Orchestra of the Triangle (RTOOT) and the RTO Pennsylvania.

*The RTO performs sell-out concerts every year at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and have succeeded where the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra has failed, by selling out London's equivalent to Carnegie Hall - Cadogan Hall.

*All profits from the show will go to two American charities - the Children's Orchestra Society, founded by Dr Yeou-Cheng Ma, and National Tartan Day New York Committee.

*The 10th novel in Alexander McCall Smith's No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency series, *Tea Time for the Traditionally Built*, will be published by Random House on April 21 2009. The television adaptation of the books will air on HBO in spring 2009.

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