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# MEMORIAL GROUND

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## **EAST NEUK FESTIVAL'S INNOVATIVE AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT FOR NEW WORK RECOGNISED IN SHORTLIST FOR 2017 RPS (ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY) MUSIC AWARD**

**4 April 2017: *Memorial Ground*** is a new choral work by American, Grammy Award winning composer, David Lang. It was co-commissioned by the **East Neuk Festival (ENF)** and **14-18 NOW** - the UK's arts programme for the First World War centenary - with the support of **Creative Scotland**. In 2016 it was performed by choirs in all four UK nations, and this achievement has been recognised by being shortlisted for a prestigious **Royal Philharmonic Society (RPS) Music Award** in the category of **Audiences and Engagement**. This represents ENF's third shortlisted nomination in this category, including winning the award in 2007. The shortlisted nominations were announced today on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* programme and the RPS Music Award winners will be announced at a ceremony in London on 9 May, presented in association with BBC Radio 3.

**Memorial Ground** is the latest in ENF's annual series of 'Big Projects' which aim to commission new work from major composers that bring together professional and community musicians, and reflect the shared history and heritage of the East Neuk of Fife where the Festival happens. It was commissioned with 14-18 NOW to mark the centenary of the start of the Battle of the Somme, and was premiered by singers from local Fife choirs, Scottish Chamber Orchestra Chorus and Theatre of Voices, conducted by Paul Hillier on 2 July 2016 at the East Neuk Festival (artistic director, Svend McEwan-Brown). It was attended by one of ENF's largest and most mixed audiences.

Lang has created an act of remembrance, and constructed his score to allow every choir that performs it to personalise it with their own choices of texts, duration, forces, and scale, thereby making it unique to their community and place. Following the premiere, the score and a wealth of online materials, including audio and video aids, were made available to choirs free, and a four month online and social media campaign was enacted to inspire and assist them in adapting the piece to their own skills and WW1 stories. The resulting concerts took place in schools, churches, cathedrals, schools, universities - even health centres - from Belfast to Skipton, Canterbury to Cumbria, Gosport to Glasgow around Remembrance weekend in November 2016. To date, 40 events have taken place, involving more than 1600 participants performing to over 5,600 people – a huge audience for a new work of this kind.

The project was originally intended to last the duration of The Battle of the Somme (i.e. to 18 November 2016) but David Lang has made *Memorial Ground* available for free until the end of November 2018 to mark the end of the Great War a century ago, as well as the final year of 14-18 NOW's major arts initiative. More performances are already planned for 2017. To create a piece and then let it go – to succumb to quite radical interpretation - is something he relishes, along with the emotional power of human voices; *"there's no instrument between them and us, and they're just telling us something. It's the closest thing to a memoir or personal statement that a musician can give."*

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*More/...*

## NOTES TO EDITORS

<https://www.1418now.org.uk/memorial-ground/>

Free resources available here for choirs until end November 2018

Memorial Ground was co-commissioned by East Neuk Festival and 14-18 NOW: WWI Centenary Art Commissions, supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England and by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, with the support of Creative Scotland.



East Neuk Festival was founded in 2004 to present world-class music in the beautiful coastal area of Scotland known as the East Neuk of Fife. Distinguished artists who have appeared there include the Alban Berg, Belcea and Tokyo String Quartets, Christian Zacharias, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, The Tallis Scholars and Paul Hillier's Theatre of Voices. A key feature of the festival is to commission work from leading composers for performance by amateur and professional musicians side by side. *Memorial Ground* stands in this tradition, while previous projects include 2015's successful *Across the Distance* by John Luther Adams and 2017's *De Profundis* celebrating the brass band traditions of the Fife mining communities. Other highlights this year (28 June - 2 July 2017) include a Schubertiad with, among others, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Belcea and Castalian Quartets, plus Sean Shibe, Julian Bliss and a special commission from Henning Sommerro. [www.eastneukfestival.com](http://www.eastneukfestival.com)

## 1418-NOW

WWI CENTENARY ART COMMISSIONS

14-18 NOW is a five-year programme of extraordinary arts experiences connecting people with the First World War. Working with partners all across the UK, we commission new artworks from leading contemporary artists, musicians, designers and performers, inspired by the period 1914-18. These new artworks bring stories of the First World War to life, offer fresh perspectives and connect a global conflict from 100 years ago with our world today. So far more than 30 million people have experienced our programme. <http://www.1418now.org.uk>.

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The annual RPS Music Awards, presented in association with BBC Radio 3, are the highest recognition for live classical music in the UK. Awards, in thirteen categories, are decided by independent panels consisting of some of the music industry's most distinguished practitioners. The awards honour musicians, composers, writers, broadcasters and inspirational arts organisations. The list of previous winners reads like a Who's Who of classical music. This year's RPS Music Awards celebrate outstanding achievement in 2016. [www.rpsmusicawards.com](http://www.rpsmusicawards.com)



**DAVID LANG** *composer* is one of the most highly-esteemed and performed composers writing today. His works are heard in concert halls and theatres around the world and also on film: notably he has worked with Peter Greenaway and Paolo Sorrentino. Vocal music has long been key to his work: he won the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in music for *the little match girl passion* and has created works for the world's leading ensembles including Theatre of Voices (whose recording of *little match girl passion* won a Grammy Award), Trio Medieval and Anonymous 4, and also numerous works for amateur performers including CROWD OUT for "1,000 people yelling." <http://davidlangmusic.com>