

9 May 2017

MEMORIAL GROUND

EAST NEUK FESTIVAL WINS ITS SECOND RPS MUSIC AWARD FOR AUDIENCES AND ENGAGEMENT

LONDON 9 MAY 2017: The highly prestigious **RPS (Royal Philharmonic Society) Music Award for Audiences and Engagement 2017** was presented last night to *Memorial Ground*, 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** to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme. World premiered on 2 July 2016 at the East Neuk Festival in Fife by singers from local choirs, Scottish Chamber Orchestra Chorus and Theatre of Voices conducted by Paul Hillier, it was then performed by choirs across all four UK nations. The RPS Music Awards, presented in association with BBC Radio 3, are the highest recognition for live classical music in the UK and East Neuk Festival is proud to have now won the same award twice (previously in 2007) and also to have been in the company of such auspicious contenders as Chineke! Orchestra and #DnA/Birmingham Opera.

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.

ENF Artistic Director **Svend McEwan-Brown** commented: "*Looking back over the decade since ENF last won this award, it gives me great pleasure to see how the Festival's audience has grown so dramatically and how its work has evolved. We're inspired by Benjamin Britten and Peter Maxwell Davies, two composers and festival founders who showed how 'community' music can also be world class music in its own right, and deserves its place on the main stage of our festival. We aim to draw our audience into the commissioning, creating and performing of new work, to build understanding and a powerful relationship that enriches everyone's experience. This work is far more demanding than simply putting on a concert and I would especially like to thank composers like John Luther Adams and David Lang who show such inspiring generosity of spirit and have given us such memorable, enduring and meaningful music.*"

While ENF Chairman, **Donald MacDonald** added: "*We are delighted to win this award, particularly bearing in mind the category of Audience and Engagement which are crucial components of artistic activity. The Pulitzer Prize winning composer David Lang has produced a moving piece to which individual choirs, not just in the East Neuk of Fife but all over the country, have been able to put their own perspectives. We are most grateful to our supporters - 14-18 NOW and Creative Scotland - who helped make this project happen.*"

Jenny Waldman, Director of 14-18 NOW, said: "*It's fantastic that East Neuk Festival has won this well-deserved and prestigious award. David Lang's Memorial Ground was a highlight of 14-18 NOW's season of new commissions marking the centenary of the First World War. The nature of the work called for a very personal response exploring the tragedy of the Somme, engaging many local communities and bringing people together.*"

Janice Kelly of Creative Scotland said: "*Memorial Ground is an excellent example of the cultural collaborations that have so vividly brought into public consciousness the personal sacrifices, stories, and memories inspired by WWI. As one of the high-profile projects supported through Creative Scotland's relationship with 14-18 NOW, Memorial Ground makes a significant contribution to activity in Scotland. We congratulate East Neuk Festival for its ambitious partnership with David Lang, and on winning this RPS Music Award.*"

With *Memorial Ground* David 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. A four-month online and social media campaign was also 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, and 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.

And, last but not least, composer **David Lang**: “*Wow! This is so exciting! Working on Memorial Ground was so meaningful to so many people - my deep thanks to all the amateur and professional singers who participated in these performances. And thanks to the Royal Philharmonic Society for recognizing our commitment, our passion, and our hard work.*”

A special programme dedicated to the RPS Music Awards will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 at 19.30hrs on Sunday 14 May.

The East Neuk Festival's '**Big Project**' for 2017, devised to embrace both local musicians and audiences, is entitled *De Profundis* and pays tribute to the Fife mining communities and their legacy of brass band music.
www.eastneukfestival.com

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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 and the Belcea and Castalian Quartets, plus Sean Shibe, Julian Bliss and a special commission from Henning Sommerro. www.eastneukfestival.com

More.../

14-18-NOW

WW1 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



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>