

NEWS RELEASE: JANUARY 2012

The Sage Gateshead is to spearhead a pioneering digital music project to reach wider audiences in the North East of England, working with regional venues and orchestras across the UK.

The project will involve streaming concerts by Northern Sinfonia, orchestra of The Sage Gateshead, as well as Manchester Camerata and London-based Aurora from February through to May this year. The concerts will be streamed to a network of North East venues - Alnwick Playhouse, Northumberland, The Maltings Theatre & Cinema, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Gala Theatre, Durham with a ticket price of just £5. They will also be available to view live online during and for a limited period after the event.

It was one of just eight out of almost 500 applications to be successfully awarded part of the £0.5 million Digital Research and Development Fund for Arts and Culture run by the Arts Council England, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and NESTA. The fund aims to support arts and cultural projects that harness digital technologies to connect with wider audiences and develop new business models.

Working with technology partners Aframe and Videojuicer, the project will produce new data and research insights into audience reach through digital innovations that can be shared with, and benefit, other organisations in the arts and culture sector.

Anthony Sargent, General Director, The Sage Gateshead, said: "We're tremendously excited to have won the funding to use the latest technology to bring the music of Northern Sinfonia to new audiences across the North of England. Innovation and pioneering are at the heart of The Sage Gateshead's DNA, from our landmark building to our ground-breaking Learning and Participation Scheme, and this latest digital project marks another exciting new chapter in the work of Northern Sinfonia."

David Peto, Chief Executive, Aframe, said: "It's brilliant to see such an innovative project idea being recognised and granted funding. Pulling together the technical expertise of firms already entrenched in the video market and combining it with spectacular cultural content is a great way to add value to the arts community."

Steve Jelley, CEO of Videojuicer said "Videojuicer is delighted to be building a new network for cultural broadcasts, beginning with the finest of England's orchestras. We are looking forward to building on our reputation for producing stunning classical music films, founded in Plushmusic, and hope to develop the network further through 2012."

John Harte, General Manager, Aurora Orchestra, said: "The prospect of using technology to improve access to live orchestral music is enormously exciting, and we're thrilled that this project will enable Aurora to connect directly with audiences in the North East."

Bob Riley, Chief Executive, Manchester Camerata, said: "We're delighted to be part of this extremely exciting and forward-looking digital venture. Manchester Camerata's mission is to transform people's lives through the inspirational power of live music, and this project will allow us to extend our reach to people who would otherwise have limited opportunity to experience the Camerata live."

Jo Potts, Arts Centre Manager, Alnwick Playhouse, said: "This is a very exciting project which will benefit our venue in a variety of ways including the development of new audiences for classical music concerts and enhancing our existing programme of live classical music concerts delivered by The Alnwick Music Society."

"The opportunity to work with the digital partners Aframe and Videojuicer is a key part of the project for the Playhouse as it will help us identify and implement the digital updates required to successfully deliver on this project."

Robin Byers, Programming and Operations Manager, Gala Theatre, said: "We are always looking for new ways of developing our programme and bringing exciting new experiences to our audiences. So we are delighted to be able to harness the latest technology to bring the beauty and power of some of the country's finest orchestras direct to Gala".

Matthew Rooke, Chief Executive & Artistic Director, The Maltings Theatre & Cinema, said "We are delighted to be part of this ground-breaking project, which blends the latest digital technologies with virtuoso classical performance. This is without doubt an important component of the digital revolution which will influence the way regional theatres work throughout the next decade and beyond. And above all, it's about bringing great art to our audiences in Berwick who would otherwise not be able to experience it."

Culture Minister Ed Vaizey said: "There is a huge amount of scope for bringing the innovative use of technology into cultural organisations. The number of applications for funding shows there is a tremendous appetite in the sector for digital innovation, with some very impressive and forward-thinking ideas emerging. It is great to see the cultural sector looking forward and striving to be at the forefront of digital innovation."

-ENDS-

For further information please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

THE CONCERTS THAT WILL BE STREAMED:

1. Aurora live from Camden Roundhouse, London – February 25, 7.30pm

Love Song for the City- featuring Nicholas Collon, conductor

Strauss *Metamorphosen*

Michael Gordon *Gotham*

Bernstein (arr. Iain Farrington) *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*

Streamed to:

The Maltings Theatre, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Feb 25)

Gala, Durham (Feb 25)

Alnwick Playhouse, Northumberland (April 21)

<http://www.auroraorchestra.com/event/love-song-for-the-city/>

2. Manchester Camerata live from RNCM Concert Hall, Manchester - April 28, 7.30pm

Portrait of Love – Featuring **Gábor Takács-Nagy**, conductor

Webern *Langsamer Satz (Slow Movement)*

Brahms arr. Hermann *Liebeslieder Waltzes Op.52*

Dvorák arr. Matthews *Love Songs Op.83*

Tchaikovsky *Souvenir de Florence*

Streamed to:

Gala, Durham (April 28)

The Maltings Theatre, Berwick-upon-Tweed (April 29, 3pm)

Alnwick Playhouse, Northumberland (May 28)

<http://www.manchestercamerata.co.uk/concerts/portrait-of-love>

3. Northern Sinfonia live from The Sage Gateshead – May 6, 7.30pm

Northern Sinfonia with Christian Vasquez (part of the Classic FM series)

Prokofiev Classical Symphony

Shostakovich Piano Concerto no.1

Rachmaninov Vocalise

Bizet Symphony no.1 in C

Streamed to:

The Maltings Theatre, Berwick-upon-Tweed (May 6)

Alnwick Playhouse, Northumberland (May 6)

Gala Theatre, Durham (May 12)

<http://thesagegateshead.org/event/classic-fm20999/>

VENUE DETAILS

The Maltings Theatre, Berwick-upon-Tweed
www.maltingsberwick.co.uk Box Office 01289 330 999

Alnwick Playhouse, Northumberland
www.alnwickplayhouse.co.uk Box Office 01665 510 785

Gala, Durham
www.galadurham.co.uk Box Office 0191 332 4041

ORCHESTRA BIOGS

About Northern Sinfonia

Northern Sinfonia was formed in 1958 and in 2008/9 celebrated its 50th Anniversary Season. It is one of Europe's most exciting orchestras. Under its Music Director Thomas Zehetmair Northern Sinfonia's repertoire covers the full range of Western classical music from early baroque, through the classical and romantic periods, to specially commissioned new work.

Northern Sinfonia is noted for its dynamic approach to programmes and performances, ranging from small-scale ensembles in intimate locations to the full orchestra in major concert halls. It is delighted to be Classic FM's orchestra in the North East.

Players take an active part in The Sage Gateshead's wide-ranging Learning and Participation programme, where people of all ages and abilities can learn from or play alongside the professionals in many ways and listen to Northern Sinfonia in community venues.

www.thesagegateshead.org

About Manchester Camerata

After 40 years of performing around the globe, Manchester Camerata is acknowledged as one of the UK's leading chamber orchestras. Based in Manchester, with an annual series at The Bridgewater Hall and the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), the orchestra also performs throughout the North West region and enjoys flourishing residencies in Stafford, Ulverston, Doncaster and Colne.

The orchestra recently appointed the great Hungarian musician Gábor Takács-Nagy as Music Director, a post he took up in September 2011. Venezuelan/Italian violinist and rising star Giovanni Guzzo was appointed as Leader in July 2010.

A central part of Manchester Camerata's work is an innovative, vibrant and award-winning learning and participation programme. Often inspired by the orchestra's work on the stage, the off-stage work uses music as a way of enabling creative learning in many different educational and community settings. Each year, over 300 education activities take place across the North West.

www.manchestercamerata.co.uk

About Aurora Orchestra

Aurora Orchestra aims to inspire, challenge and astonish new audiences with great music, brilliantly performed. It seeks to be the UK's most versatile orchestra, combining world-class performance with eclectic and innovative programming, a commitment to adventurous collaboration across perceived frontiers of musical genre and artistic form, and a refusal to be bound by convention.

www.auroraorchestra.com

THE DIGITAL R&D FUND FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

The Digital R&D Fund for Arts and Culture aims to support arts and cultural organisations to work with those with digital expertise to understand the potential offered by new technologies to connect with wider audiences and explore new ways of working.

The eight selected projects will be undertaken over the next 12 months and each will be rigorously evaluated to produce new data and research insights that can be shared with, and benefit, other organisations in the arts and culture sector.

For further information about the projects being supported by the Fund, visit

www.nesta.org.uk/digital-rnd, www.artscouncil.org or www.ahrc.ac.uk

FUND PARTNERS

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England works to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of artistic activities from theatre to music, literature to dance, photography to digital art, and carnival to crafts. Great art inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves, and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2011 and 2015, we will invest £1.4 billion of public money from government and a further £0.85 billion from the National Lottery to create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

www.artscouncil.org.uk

About AHRC

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC): Each year the AHRC provides approximately £100 million from the Government to support research and postgraduate study in the arts and humanities, from languages and law, archaeology and English literature to design and creative and performing arts. In any one year, the AHRC makes hundreds of research awards ranging from individual fellowships to major collaborative projects as well as over 1,100 studentship awards. Awards are made after a rigorous peer review process, to ensure that only applications of the highest quality are funded. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides social and cultural benefits but also contributes to the economic success of the UK.

About NESTA

NESTA is the UK's foremost independent expert on how innovation can solve some of the country's major economic and social challenges. Its work is enabled by an endowment, funded by the National Lottery, and it operates at no cost to the taxpayer.

NESTA is a world leader in its field and carries out its work through a blend of experimental programmes, analytical research and investment in early-stage companies. For further information, visit www.nesta.org.uk