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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **PRS for Music Foundation announces 20 winning commissions for New Music Biennial 2017**

### **2nd Edition of New Music Biennial to contribute to Hull UK City of Culture 2017**

PRS for Music Foundation today announces the twenty commissions selected for the **New Music Biennial 2017**, a **PRS for Music Foundation** initiative which is presented in partnership with **Hull UK City of Culture 2017**, **London's Southbank Centre** and **BBC Radio 3**.

The winning commissions present a snapshot of contemporary music in the UK including ten brand new works and ten pre-existing works that have been composed within the last 15 years.

The New Music Biennial includes new music from across all genres: from classical and chamber opera to jazz, folk, electronic and music for brass band and organ. Works will be no longer than 15 minutes in duration in response to the New Music Biennial's aim to create a pop-up, interactive way for audiences to discover new music and be able to hear the pieces more than once.

Many of the winning new commissions such as **Errollyn Wallen's** *Mighty River* orchestral work that draws inspiration from the work of William Wilberforce in Hull and **GoGo Penguin's** *Abstractions of the Industrial North* resonate with one of the themes of Hull UK City of Culture (*Made in Hull, Roots and Routes, Freedom, Tell the World*). Several of the commissioning partners including **Freedom Festival**, **Jnight** and **Opera North** are based in Hull or the surrounding region. Yorkshire born composers such as **Daniel Elms**, **Gavin Bryars** and **Eliza Carthy**, who has strong family links to the city, are working on new pieces which explore the identity of the city and surrounding landscape and Mercury Prize-nominated folk singer and song collector **Sam Lee** exploring vernacular folk song in Hull City.

Other commissions featured in the New Music Biennial simply reflect the exceptional talent and breadth of composers in the UK. This includes composer **Simon Holt's** new clarinet concerto for 2006's BBC Young Musician of the Year **Mark Simpson** commissioned by **BBC Philharmonic Orchestra**, **Emily Hall's** new Opera for children and **Tom Jenkinson's** (**Squarepusher**) *The Secret Life of Organs* showcasing the potential for these incredible instruments beyond traditional organ music. (*See full list below*)

The winning compositions were selected by a panel of judges that included **Vanessa Reed** (Executive Director, PRS for Music Foundation), **Judith Weir** (Master of the Queen's Music), **Sara Mohr-Pietsch** (BBC Radio 3 Hear and Now presenter) **Sam Hunt** (Executive Producer, Hull UK City of Culture), **Gillian Moore MBE** (Director of Music, Southbank Centre), **Kevin Le Gendre** (Broadcaster and journalist) and chaired by BBC Radio 3 Controller, **Alan Davey**.

The commissions will receive public performances throughout the UK in 2017, culminating in two celebration weekends in Hull on 1 & 2 July as part of Hull UK City of Culture 2017 and 7- 9 July at London's Southbank Centre.

**Martin Green, CEO and Director of Hull UK City of Culture 2017**, said: "*The New Music Biennial 2017 commissions which feature composers and performers from across the country*

*are a brilliant representation of the state of new music in the UK in the 21st century. They stretch across genres, across diverse musical styles, and include everything from electronic innovators to jazz groups to stars of the folk scene. I am thrilled that this national music festival is to be staged between Hull 2017, and London's Southbank Centre as part of our year as UK city of culture.*

**Vanessa Reed Executive Director PRS for Music Foundation**, said: *"The line-up of new pieces for this New Music Biennial showcases again the immense quality and breadth of music composed in the UK and the imagination of UK composers working across an array of different styles. Hull's City of Culture status has been a real inspiration to everyone involved and I'm delighted that this will be an opportunity for music creators and arts organisations from Yorkshire and from across the whole of the UK to come together in a celebration of new music in all its forms. Can't wait to see how the pieces and ideas develop over the next 12 months."*

**Gillian Moore MBE, Director of Music, Southbank Centre**, said: *"Today's announcement recognises what a wealth of talent we have to celebrate in the UK's contemporary composition scene, and the importance of giving new music this platform. I'm incredibly excited that such a strong, diverse list of winners has been chosen this year and look forward to welcoming them to Southbank Centre. We're very proud to be part of the New Music Biennial 2017, whose commitment to quality, innovation, and accessibility mirrors that of our own, and look forward to inspiring audiences old and new with the best music being written today."*

**Alan Davey, Controller BBC Radio 3**, said: *"Encouraging new talent and music making is at the heart of the BBC Music. It is an important part of BBC Radio 3's mission and purpose and we'd like to congratulate the composers and look forward to sharing their works with our millions of listeners."*

New Music Biennial 2017 is supported by Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, NMC Recordings, The John S Cohen Foundation, The Finzi Trust, Jerwood Charitable Foundation, RVW Trust and The Bliss Trust.

### **New Music Biennial 2017 commissions**

#### **New commissions:**

##### **Sam Lee – *Hullucination***

##### **Commissioned by The Nest Collective**

The Mercury Prize nominated Sam Lee and driving force behind the eclectic, award-winning folk club The Nest Collective will explore the rich history of vernacular folk song in Hull City and District using a collection of songs from in and around the city. Through recorded testimonials that capture the current and historical oral traditions extant amongst the residents, Sam Lee creates a sonic triptych combining choral and arranged accompaniment to portrait the city and its ever changing character.

##### **Emily Hall – *Witchsong***

##### **Commissioned by Mahogany Opera Group**

Written by composer Emily Hall and author Toby Litt, *Witchsong* is a visual and atmospheric event for children aged 8-11 and forms part of the nationwide project 'Snappy Operas' of 10 new mini-operas from British artists created with and performed by children. The piece invites each child and audience member to explore the ambiguous nature of witches using chants, melodies and language from the playground and instrumental accompaniment made from everyday school equipment including recorder drones, chalk and skipping ropes. Hall works regularly with singers and writers and finds her own ways of using technology and live performance in her works.

##### **Daniel Elms – *Bethia***

##### **Commissioned by British Film Institute**

Influenced by the natural landscape surrounding his Yorkshire Hometown, Daniel Elms' piece for acoustic and electronic instruments celebrates the maritime history of Hull using re-imagined sea shanties and maritime hymns. It will be performed alongside projected film footage that has been edited and adapted to create abstract ambience and light. Written for a small group of chamber musicians the music will interweave cross-rhythms and interlocking harmony to create a texture similar to that of a tremulous sea.

**Peter Edwards – *A Journey with the Giants of Jazz***

**Commissioned by Turner Sims, Southampton**

Pianist, composer and bandleader and nominee for the 2015 Jazz FM Breakthrough Artist Awards, Peter Edwards, looks into the year 1917, which was a defining year for jazz. It saw the births of some of the most influential jazz artists including composer 'Tadd' Dameron, singer Ella Fitzgerald, trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, pianist Thelonious Monk, drummer Buddy Rich and percussionist Mongo Santamaria. Taking inspiration from the motifs found in six of the artists' classic works, Peter Edwards' piece, to be performed by the Nu Civilisation Orchestra (a Tomorrow's Warriors ensemble), deconstructs their themes to offer the audience a re-imagined and alternative musical experience.

**Ray Lee – *Ring Out***

**Commissioned by Oxford Contemporary Music**

Sound artist and composer Ray Lee, renowned for creating music for public places, will create an outdoor musical and visual spectacle composed for electronically generated bell sounds, each swinging from a giant metal tower. The composition builds a series of tonal pitches into a constantly evolving texture of pulsed tones created by the swinging of the bell-speakers by a team of local bell-ringers. The audience are able to walk around the space and experience the series of micro-melodies shifting and changing as the piece progresses.

**Simon Holt – *Concerto for clarinet & Orchestra***

**Commissioned by BBC Philharmonic Orchestra**

Simon Holt is one of the UK's leading composers and is currently Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music. He will write a bass clarinet concerto for 2006's BBC Young Musician of the Year Mark Simpson, inspired from a black and white print by the English artist, Cecil Collins, of a rampant bull-like creature with fearsome horns.

**Mica Levi – *New work for the BBC Concert Orchestra***

**Commissioned by BBC Concert Orchestra**

Mica Levi is a classically trained singer, songwriter, BAFTA nominated composer and producer who is best known for her band Micachu & The Shapes. Mica will write an exciting piece with the BBC Concert Orchestra drawing on and utilising the Orchestra's huge sound and great power.

**Gavin Bryars – *Holderness or Spurn Head***

**Commissioned by Opera North**

Born in Yorkshire Gavin Bryars has been described as a composer 'who falls under no category' and since 2006 he has been collaborating with Opera North on numerous projects. For this commission Bryars will use the inspiration of the Holderness/Spurn Head landscape, and at the same time the life and poetry of Andrew Marvell (1621-1678), the metaphysical poet who was born and raised in the Holderness region. When a young man of just 19, Marvell may have witnessed his father drowning as he tried to cross the Humber. The new commission will take two iterations; one a sound installation in the church at Winestead where Marvell's father was the rector; and the second a live performance by an ensemble of musicians and possibly one singer.

**Eliza Carthy in collaboration with the Moulettes – *Rivers and Railways***

**Commissioned by Freedom Festival**

Eliza Carthy is a traditional folk musician and composer who was championed from an early age by John Peel, Andy Kershaw and Billy Bragg and is the winner of five BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards and currently Associate Artist at Sage Gateshead. Eliza's new piece, *Rivers and Railways* is a collaboration with celebrated sonic adventurers Moulettes, exploring the theme of what makes a

city what it is when it is perched on the edge of a place, a port, a destination, an identity. Touching upon themes of migration, Hull's industries and history (Hull was the second most bombed city in the Second World War) and its pioneering son William Wilberforce who was instrumental in writing the Abolition of Slavery Act. Using local stories and music to create the new work, and through creative staging, using outdoor location and engagement with the 'Freedom Choir', will make something very special and unique and with a strong Hull flavour that will be unmistakable and moving.

**GoGo Penguin – *Abstractions of the Industrial North*  
Commissioned by Jnight Jazz Promoters**

Renowned for the minimalist piano themes, deeply propulsive bass lines and electronica-inspired drums, the Mercury Prize nominated Manchester based jazz trio GoGo Penguin will create a piece of music inspired by the Northern industrial landscape in 2017 for the documentary film *Mind On The Run*. The film will be created by producers from Nova Studios, the University of Hull and Hull 2017 and will be about Basil Kirchin, who died in Hull in 2005. Basil Kirchin is the forgotten genius of post-war British music. British pioneer of musique concrete, leading light in the free jazz movement, a film composer who inspired Bernard Hermann and according to Brian Eno, the founding father of ambient.

**Existing works:**

**Jason Singh & Anne Martin (UK) with Sharat Chandra Srivastava, Gyan Singh (India) – *Ceumannan – Footsteps. 2.***

**Commissioned by Atlas Arts**

**Performed by Anne Martin, Jason Singh, Sharat Chandra Srivastava, Gyan Singh and Joe Harrison**

A synthesis of traditional Gaelic song and North Indian Raga, this piece interweaves contemporary rhythms and acoustic sounds with the struggles of culture and identity pertinent to both of the artists' roots. The work is a continuation of *Ceumannan – Footsteps* which explores the struggle for land use experienced by both the Highlanders of Scotland and communities of Northern India, and emphasises the commonality and creativity of human experience.

**Brian Irvine & Jennifer Walshe – *13 VICES***

**Commissioned by Moving on Music**

**Performed by Brian Irvine, Jennifer Walshe & Red Note Ensemble**

A collaboration between two of the UK and Ireland's most dynamic compositional voices, Brian Irvine and Jennifer Walshe, this piece explores the weird, humorous, dark and exotic world of contemporary vices. Written for ensemble, improvisers, conductor and voice it melts the boundaries between various disciplines including theatre, opera, poetry and contemporary music.

**Errollyn Wallen – *Mighty River***

**Commissioned by Oxford Contemporary Music**

Exploring themes of slavery and freedom, *Mighty River* combines contemporary classical techniques with spirituals which were introduced to Hull in 1871 by the Fisk Jubilee Singers - an African-American cappella choir of ex-slaves. The piece, written for orchestra, takes its inspiration from William Wilberforce the English politician, philanthropist and leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade who was, very fittingly, a native of Hull. Errollyn Wallen is at ease both as a singer-songwriter of pop-influenced songs and a composer of contemporary new music. She describes her own Ensemble X with the motto, '*We don't break down barriers in music...we don't see any.*'

**Philip Venables & David Hoyle – *Illusions***

**Commissioned by London Sinfonietta**

*Illusions* is politically-engaged contemporary music exploring themes of government, LGBT rights and the rituals of music and art performance, featuring footage of avant-garde performance artist David Hoyle. The interplay between music and the cut-up video snippets of Hoyle searing and topical polemic is reflected in the erratic, boisterous and aggressive nature of

the composition. The piece is written for an ensemble of nine musicians and is an extended and further developed version of Philip Venables' existing composition which was part of the London Sinfonietta's *Notes to the New Government* in May 2015. Philip Venables' music is often concerned with violence, politics and speech within concert music and opera. Performance artist David Hoyles' often focuses on themes in the LGBT community attacking what he sees as dominant trends in 'bourgeois Britain'.

**Anna Meredith – *Concerto for Beatboxer & orchestra*  
Commissioned by Southbank Centre**

Anna Meredith is a composer, producer and performer of both acoustic and electronic music. Her sound is often described as 'maximalist', 'uncategorisable' and 'genre-hopping' and straddles the worlds of contemporary classical, avant pop, electronica and experimental rock. Southbank Centre commissioned Anna Meredith and internationally renowned Beatbox Artist Shlomo to write a new piece for Beatboxer and Orchestra in 2010. The Concerto is an acclaimed modern classical work recognising the human voice box as a musical instrument.

**Hannah Peel - Tubular Brass featuring Mary Casio: Journey to Cassiopeia  
Commissioned by Tubular Brass**

Inspired by a brand new brass band score of Mike Oldfield's multi-million selling classic 'Tubular Bell's', Tubular Brass were keen to commission a further new piece combining 70's analogue synths and brass. Drawing from her influences of electronic pioneers Daphne Oram and Delia Derbyshire, Hannah Peel tells the story of Mary Casio, now 86 years old, and her lifelong stargazing dream to leave her South Yorkshire home in the mining town of Barnsley. Mary Casio makes her journey into space via home-constructed, hand-made machines that 'buzz and whirr' alongside her ever-growing collection of antiquated analogue synths, of which she started collecting ever since her father gave her a Casio keyboard as a child. As her vehicle 'stirs into life', oscillating with home-made technology, she faces space alone without ever leaving her garden shed. This is her greatest journey - destination Cassiopeia!

**Mark Simpson – 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary piece for the Gould Piano Trio  
Commissioned by Glen Gould Trio (Welsh based)**

At the age of 17 Mark Simpson became the first ever winner of both BBC Young Musician and BBC Proms/Guardian Young composer of the Year. In 2015 he was appointed Composer in Association of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. The new work by Mark will form the centrepiece of the Gould Piano Trio's 25th anniversary celebration. Impressed by Mark's high profile appointment as the BBC Philharmonic's new Composer-in-Association, as well as critical acclaim following his latest premiere of a large scale oratorio at the Manchester International Festival.

**Laurence Crane – Pieces About Art  
Commissioned by EXAUDI**

Composition Professor at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Laurence Crane was commissioned by EXAUDI vocal ensemble in 2014 to write a new work for them. Initially wanting to use the words that had been written by American artist Bruce Nauman, titled *First Poem Piece*, which Nauman had engraved on a metal sculpture exhibited in a show in the late 1960s, Laurence was denied permission to use the text. Immediately putting his disappointment to one side, Laurence made the decision to write a text based on this permission email while concealing Nauman's name from the score. It is a piece is all about the composers struggle to get permission to set the text. There are sections of wordless music in this movement, perhaps suggesting that if permission had been granted then this is where Nauman's words would be.

**Tom Jenkinson – *The Secret Life of Organs*  
Commissioned by No Nation and James McVinnie  
Performed by James McVinnie**

Tom Jenkinson, best known as Squarepusher, is a UK based recording artist whose compositions draw on a number of influences including drum & bass, acid house, jazz and electroacoustic music. Originally commissioned as part of a five date national tour, Tom

Jenkinson's *The Secret Life of Organs* aims to draw attention to the magnificent organs around the country, placing them in the hands of artists who will explore their potential beyond traditional organ music, and engaging new audiences with these remarkable but rarely used instruments. This remarkable piece represents a side to this exceptional artist which is rarely heard, and likely to come as a surprise and attraction to audiences. As well as ensuring the work is heard across the country being performed in collaboration with acclaimed organist James McVinnie.

**Jocelyn Pook – Anxiety Fanfare and Variation for Voices  
Commissioned by the Mental Health Foundation**

First commissioned by the Mental Health Foundation for Anxiety Arts Festival London 2014 and premièred at the Wigmore Hall, London this work extends the multi-award winning composer Jocelyn Pook's interest in the experience of mental illness, which she explored in her ground-breaking 2012 work *Hearing Voices*. The Fanfare is written in five movements and draws on the unique potential of professional and nonprofessional singers. The fanfare will be rehearsed and performed with a community choir composed of mental health service users and professionals.

For more information about the New Music Biennial visit [www.newmusicbiennial.com](http://www.newmusicbiennial.com)

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**Notes to editors**

**PRS for Music Foundation** is the UK's leading charitable funder of new music and talent development across all genres. Since 2000 PRS for Music Foundation has given more than £22 million to over 5,200 new music initiatives by awarding grants and leading partnership programmes that support music sector development. Widely respected as an adventurous and proactive funding body, PRS for Music Foundation supports an exceptional range of new music activity – from composer residencies and commissions to festivals and showcases in the UK and overseas. [www.prsformusicfoundation.com](http://www.prsformusicfoundation.com)

**Hull** secured the title of **UK City of Culture 2017** in November 2013. Hull is only the second city to hold the title, and the first in England. The vision of the Hull 2017 Culture Company, the delivery organisation of the project, is "to deliver 365 days of transformative culture in 2017 through a range of diverse and high-profile events and projects". Following on from the Olympics and Paralympics, Commonwealth Games and the Tour de France in Yorkshire, Hull 2017 is the next major event in the nation's cultural calendar. The Culture Company is an independent organisation with charitable status, funded both publicly and privately. For more information, visit [www.hull2017.co.uk](http://www.hull2017.co.uk)

**Southbank Centre** is the UK's largest arts centre, comprising three iconic buildings (Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Hayward Gallery) and occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Building on this rich heritage, Southbank Centre offers an extensive artistic and cultural programme including annual and one-off themed festivals and classical and contemporary music, performance, dance, visual art and literature and spoken word. [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

**BBC Radio 3** broadcasts high-quality, distinctive classical music and cultural programming, alongside regular arts and ideas programmes, jazz and world music. The station features more live classical music programming than any other and is the home of the BBC Proms - broadcasting every Prom live and more than 600 complete concerts a year - alongside daily speech programming, 90 full-length operas, over 25 drama commissions and over 20 new BBC music commissions a year. Radio 3 is the most significant commissioner of new musical works in the country and is committed to supporting new talent, from composers to writers and new young performers, through schemes such as New Generation Artists and New Generation Thinkers. [www.bbc.co.uk/radio3](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3)

**NMC Recordings** is a registered charity record label devoted to the promotion of contemporary British classical music. The first organisation to be heralded with the Royal Philharmonic Society's Leslie Boosey Award for "its outstanding contribution to the furthering of contemporary music in Britain" NMC is a member of Arts Council England's National Portfolio and is the proud digital partner of New Music Biennial 2017, providing a permanent digital home to the recordings of the works featured in the festival. [www.nmcrec.co.uk](http://www.nmcrec.co.uk)

**Arts Council England** champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2015 and 2018, we plan to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

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