



## **NVA's *Speed of Light* reaches 2500 runners, as the project launches its final UK-wide call to take part in this once in a lifetime experience**

Public art charity NVA today announced that 2500 runners from across the UK and the globe have now signed up to take part in *NVA's Speed of Light*, which will see Arthur's Seat illuminated through a series of mass participation performances in August this year as part of Edinburgh International Festival and the London 2012 Festival. This staggering figure, with participants from 17 to 70 years old, is released as NVA extends the invitation to runners of all levels and from all corners of the UK and further afield to sign up to experience this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Each night hundreds of runners will activate specially designed light suits, illuminating the hillside. Runners will follow a choreographed series of movements over Arthur's Seat path network creating an astonishing and subtle visual display.

A tremendous fusion of sport and culture, *NVA's Speed of Light* is one of only four national projects to be commissioned as part of Legacy Trust UK's Community Celebrations programme, an independent charity set up to build a lasting cultural and sporting legacy from the London 2012 Festival. The project has also been supported and funded by Creative Scotland, Edinburgh International Festival and the Dunard Fund.

Each of the 2500 runners who have already pledged to participate in *NVA's Speed of Light* are of different running abilities and have varied reasons for running. NVA hope that these individuals and their stories will inspire the next wave of runners to join in

bringing Arthur's Seat to life between Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August and Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012, reconnecting the competitive Olympic spirit with the co-operative philosophy espoused by the founder of the modern games Pierre de Coubertin.

**Perroline Orr, 38, Musselburgh said:**

*"I'm a total 'newbie' at this running nonsense...but its great! It's my time away from being a wife, mother and full time professional - its my time to get head space and feel great. The sense of achievement when I get to a 5km distance is unbelievable - it might not be a long distance for some, but for me it's awesome! This event has inspired me to keep running through the winter weather and keep focused on achieving longer distances - just the motivation I need when others are curled up in front of the TV! Bring on Speed of Light! "*

**Irene Kenny, 56, from Houston, Texas, USA**

*"Bucket list....lifetime event for an asthmatic who was told as a child I would never be able to run AND to be the best example to my family and friends."*

**Valeria Morosini, 39 from Rho, Milan, Italy**

*"When I run I feel free. My head is light".*

**Sue Northrop, 53, North Berwick said:**

*"To honour my dad who died of Parkinson's just before my wedding. He couldn't move at will - I can. I run to celebrate the life he gave me. Since I started running I've lost 4 stone, have run a half marathon and next year my first marathon. It changed my life and I am committed to helping others change theirs too."*

NVA's *Speed of Light* will also investigate the physiological and psychological aspects of endurance running, exploring the impact upon the body and the extent to which the power of the mind can override physical pain. To be able to take part in this momentous event runners will require a good level of fitness. By summer 2012, those signing up to the challenge will need to have the stamina to complete a 3-5K hill run and be able to stay active over a 1 ½ - 2 ½ hour period each night.

**To assist runners, whether beginners or more experienced runners, with training for their role and to get them to the required level of fitness, bespoke training packs have been launched today to all those registered. The packs, written in partnership with JogScotland, contain advice and information on hill running; tips to get started and**

**carefully tailored training schedules to ensure that taking part in NVA's *Speed of Light* in an unforgettable and enjoyable experience.**

**Cast yourself in this year's most extraordinary festival performance!**

You don't need to be a runner to take part in NVA's *Speed of Light* as you can also participate as part of the walking audience or as a volunteer.

Up to 800 audience members each night will be integral to the event. Every participant will generate their own light through the movement of bespoke walking staffs as they ascend the summit to witness the remarkable moving tableaux below. Tickets will go on sale in March 2012 with the launch of the Edinburgh International Festival 2012.

Volunteers will also play an essential role in the lead up to, and during the event. A whole host of volunteering opportunities are now being advertised online, with supporting roles in teams ranging from front of house, technical maintenance, stewarding and registration, amongst others. To find out more about the roles available, please note your interest by emailing [speedoflight@nva.org.uk](mailto:speedoflight@nva.org.uk) including your name and address (incl. postcode).

**Angus Farquhar, Creative Director NVA said:** "*Speed of Light* is a challenging new work for NVA which will see us collaborating with thousands of runners and new cultural and sporting partnerships across the country. It is a runner's dream to be part of making such an extraordinary collective visual statement.

Our ambitions with *Speed of Light* are many and varied - to encourage interaction and participation on a massive scale; to investigate new technologies using light and energy and to challenge peoples' perceptions of themselves and the landscape of Scotland.

*Speed of Light* is an act of co-operative enterprise that rises above the competitive aspect of sport to reveal the simple beauty of running and a mountain brought together for the world to see. "

**Jonathan Mills, Edinburgh International Festival Director** said: "*Speed of Light* is a vast and exciting project with important and timely ambitions. We are very proud to be presenting its premiere as part of the Edinburgh International Festival in 2012 and we

very much hope to make the most of the many opportunities it presents to grow relationships with sporting and community organisations.

We are asking you to get involved in helping to create this spectacular work. It's an extraordinary opportunity for people to take part and to experience first hand the ideas and the beliefs at its heart."

**Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs** said: "The spectacle of thousands of runners from Scotland and all around the world illuminating Arthur's Seat through creative and sporting endeavour is to be celebrated. NVA's *Speed of Light* is an inspiring event which encapsulates the excitement and dynamism of the cultural programme taking place in The Year of Creative Scotland 2012 and will be an added attraction for visitors during Edinburgh's International Festival."

**Dugald Mackie, Chair, Legacy Trust UK:**" The games are about more than just sport. They are a once in a lifetime opportunity to showcase Scotland to millions of people across the world. We believe that *Speed of Light* will inspire and encourage people throughout Scotland to get involved and will leave a lasting legacy for the country."

**Andrew Dixon, Chief Executive, Creative Scotland:** "Edinburgh's iconic Arthur's Seat will be the perfect backdrop for NVA's spectacular *Speed of Light*. Bringing together precision choreography, cutting-edge energy technology and breathtaking physical stamina, *Speed of Light* is a showcase for Scotland's creative talent. It will be a unique experience for runners and for audiences."

Please go to [www.speedoflight2012.org.uk](http://www.speedoflight2012.org.uk) for more details.

Runners will be required to pay a £10 registration fee to take part in this once in a lifetime opportunity – this will include access to training schedules, rehearsal events and goodie bag.

To register please go to [www.speedoflight2012.org.uk](http://www.speedoflight2012.org.uk)

Follow us on twitter: @\_NVA\_ #nvasol

For further information, to request images or arrange interviews please contact:

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### Notes to editors:

1. **NVA** was established in 1992 by creative director Angus Farquhar. In recent years the organisation has achieved international recognition with a number of critically successful works, notably *The Storr: Unfolding Landscape on Skye* and *the Hidden Gardens*, Glasgow. NVA is an acronym of *nacionale vitae activa*, a Roman phrase describing 'the right to influence public affairs'. [www.nva.org.uk](http://www.nva.org.uk)

2. **NVA's *Speed of Light*** will culminate in a mass participatory event on Arthur's Seat between the 9<sup>th</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012. Audience members will generate their own light through the movement of bespoke walking staffs as they ascend to the summit. Tickets for this will go on sale in March 2012.

3. **Legacy Trust UK** is an independent charity whose mission is to support a wide range of innovative cultural and sporting activities which celebrate the London 2012 Festival and which will leave a lasting legacy in communities throughout the UK.

The Trust is funded by a £40 million endowment from the Big Lottery Fund (£29m), Department for Culture Media and Sport (£6m) and Arts Council England (£5m), and is a Principal Funder of the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Festival.

4. **Creative Scotland** is the national development agency for the arts, screen and creative industries, and its ambition is to see Scotland recognised as one of the world's most creative nations. Its vision is:

That Scotland is recognised as a leading creative nation – one that attracts, develops and retains talent, where the arts and the creative industries are supported and celebrated and their economic contribution fully captured, a nation where the arts and creativity play a central part in the lives, education and well-being of our population.

**The Year of Creative Scotland** begins on January 1, 2012 and will spotlight and celebrate Scotland's cultural and creative strengths on a world stage. Through a dynamic and exciting year-long programme of activity celebrating our world-class events, festivals, culture and heritage, the year puts Scotland's culture and creativity in the international spotlight with a focus on cultural tourism and developing the events industry and creative sector in Scotland. More information about the programme can be found at: [www.visitscotland.com/creative](http://www.visitscotland.com/creative) The Year of Creative Scotland is a Scottish Government initiative led in partnership by EventScotland, VisitScotland, Creative Scotland and VOCAL.

5. Featuring world class new and classic drama, opera, music, dance and visual spectacles the **Edinburgh International Festival 2012** runs from Thursday 9 August to Sunday 2 September across the city in theatres, concert halls, opera houses and temporary venues attracting people from around the world to Scotland's picturesque capital and providing the best in international culture to a global audience. More information is available at [www.eif.co.uk](http://www.eif.co.uk). The Festival 2012 programme is revealed on Wednesday 14 March. The Edinburgh International Festival is supported by The City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland. Scottish Charity (SC004694)

6. **sportscotland** is the national agency for sport in Scotland. We passionately believe in the power of sport and the unique contribution it makes to lives and communities across Scotland. Our mission is to encourage everyone in Scotland to discover and develop their own sporting experience, helping to

increase participation, improve performance and achieve success in Scottish sport.

7. **jogscotland** was started in 2002 by **scottishathletics** – with support from NHS Health Scotland, **sportscotland** and the Scottish Government's Healthy Living Campaign. It is a truly unique healthy living initiative that is leading the world when it comes to jogging. Since it was established, jogscotland has helped over 25,000 Scots improve their lifestyle through structured walking, jogging and running programmes tailored at all levels of ability from complete beginner up to 10ks, half marathons and more! For more information on **jogscotland** please visit [www.jogscotland.org.uk](http://www.jogscotland.org.uk).

8. **Historic Scotland** is an executive agency of the **Scottish Government** charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment. The agency is fully accountable to Scottish Ministers and through them to the Scottish Parliament. For more information visit [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk). Register for media release email alerts from [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/news](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/news). If you wish to unsubscribe at any time, please email [hs.website@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hs.website@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

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