



## The Hills Are Alive...

NVA commissions innovative sound element for *Speed of Light*

Public Art Charity **NVA** have commissioned **Resonance Radio Orchestra**, a group devoted to the live performance of radiophonic art, to create an innovative audio element for their *Speed of Light* project which will see hundreds of runners and walkers light up Edinburgh's iconic Arthur's Seat this August as part of the Edinburgh International Festival.

One of Scotland's official contributions to London 2012 Festival, *Speed of Light*, is a tremendous fusion of sport and culture which will see Edinburgh's iconic mountain brought to life through sporting endeavour and performative visual art. Runners will activate specially designed light suits at night, illuminating the hillside. The audience will generate their own light through the movement of bespoke walking staffs as they ascend the summit to witness the remarkable moving tableaux below.

It was with these walkers in mind, and the thought of enhancing their experience that Ed Baxter and Chris Weaver, founding members of Resonance Radio Orchestra, were brought on board. They were approached by NVA to produce a portable, easily powered, interactive, economic, weather proof, complex and engaging sound composition which elegantly reflected (at high altitude) the activity of the *Speed of Light* runners.

The electronics were developed by renowned STEIM alumnus **Sukandar Kartadinata** in Berlin and comprise 800 individually encoded micro-computers. The score is uploaded to each of these, with minute variations in data to allow for an expansive chordal sequence to be produced in real-time by audience members. It is also activated by altitude on the hillside.

As with the light, the sound is carried by the walking participants. Their movement of the light-sticks on which the circuit is mounted allows for variations in pitch and volume, and frames the choreographed action taking place below. The ebb and flow of the individual sine waves causes them to be pulled in and out of phase with one another, giving rise to ghost tones. Both predictable and random musical developments occur amongst the participants, with "wild card" elements adding to the mix.

The music is at once both macrocosmic and microcosmic, the listener being able to concentrate on the discrete sounds immediately to hand or on the massed result of many dozens of devices playing in tune with one another. A further audio element at the summit of Arthur's Seat seeks subtly to complement the intricacies of each performance.

Resonance's Chris and Ed explain: 'Having pondered the idea of modular synthesis for several weeks and having discarded thoughts of solar powered sound machines, hot air balloons, bird calls and bag pipes, we settled on the development of a bespoke, battery powered circuit and took it from there.

It's a testament to the vision of NVA and the perspicacity of Sukandar, and Speed of Light design team (James Johnson and Robin Iddon), that it ever got off the drawing board, so our huge thanks to them.'

NVA's *Speed of Light* takes place on:

**9–12, 15 –19, 22–27, 29–31 August and 1 September 2012**

Guided walking groups meet at *Speed of Light* base every 15 minutes at 9.15pm, 9.30pm, 9.45pm, 10.00pm, 10.15pm, 10.30pm, 10.45pm and 11.00pm

Tickets £24 or £18(concession) available from [www.eif.co.uk/speedoflight](http://www.eif.co.uk/speedoflight)

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

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

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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 incomparable and critically successful works, notably *The Storr: Unfolding Landscape* on Skye and the Hidden Gardens, Glasgow. NVA is an acronym of *nacionale vitae active*, 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 the summit. Tickets for this are now on sale at [www.eif.co.uk/speedoflight](http://www.eif.co.uk/speedoflight)

3. Based in London, **Resonance Radio Orchestra**, was formed in 2004 by Ed Baxter and Chris Weaver as a vehicle to explore their shared interest in radio phonic composition and live performance. Together they have written over a dozen pieces including "Overheard," for musicians, actors and boxers, commissioned by Arika in 2010 for Kill Your Timid Notion, Dundee; "Overheard 2," a 48 hour live performance featuring actor Tam Dean Burn in 2010 for Install,

Glasgow; and in 2009 the European Cultural Foundation-supported "Suspension of Belief," a five hour broadcast event with live rock climbers on the sheer cliff face of the Penon d'Ifach in Alicante. The Orchestra adapts itself to each specific context or circumstances, with a floating pool of collaborators – among them Adam Bushell, Fari Bradley, Kay Grant, Ivor Kallin, and Vryan Weston. RRO acknowledges the support of the PRS for Musc Fund.

3. NVA's Speed of Light is supported by Legacy Trust UK

4. **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 Olympic and Paralympic Games 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.

5. **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. 2012 is also the Year of Creative Scotland: a chance to spotlight, celebrate and promote Scotland's cultural and creative strengths on a world stage.

6. Featuring world class new and classic drama, opera, music, dance and visual spectacles the **Edinburgh International Festival 2012** runs from Friday 10 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. [www.eif.co.uk](http://www.eif.co.uk). The Edinburgh International Festival is supported by The City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland. Scottish Charity (SC004694).

7. **London 2012 Festival** is the culmination of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, which is the largest artistic celebration in the history of the modern Olympic and Paralympic Movements. [www.london2012.com/festival](http://www.london2012.com/festival)

8. **EventScotland** is Scotland's national events agency, & works to generate, bid for, attract and sustain events which will drive tourism and create international profile for Scotland. [www.eventscotland.org](http://www.eventscotland.org)

9. **Paths for All** is a partnership of more than twenty national organisations committed to promoting walking for health and the development of multi-use path networks in Scotland. [www.pathsforall.org.uk](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk)

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