



NVA's *Speed of Light* offers runners a once in a lifetime opportunity to illuminate an iconic Scottish landscape

Public art charity NVA today put out a call for runners to participate in *Speed of Light*, which will bring people together from all over the UK in an extraordinary programme of cultural activity and presentations. NVA's *Speed of Light* will climax with a series of mass participation performances that will take place in August 2012 on Edinburgh's iconic Arthur's Seat as part of the Edinburgh International Festival and London 2012 Festival.

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 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The project has also been supported and funded by Creative Scotland and the Dunard Fund.

NVA's *Speed of Light* is looking for thousands of runners to bring Arthur's Seat to life through sporting endeavour and performative visual art between Thursday 9th August and Saturday 1st September 2012.

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

Speed of Light will also investigate the physiological and psychological aspects to endurance running, exploring the impact within the body and the extent to which power of mind can override physical pain. To be able to take part in this momentous event, runners will need to have 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 a night.

In addition to runners, audience members, 800 per night, will be integral to the event. They will generate their own light through the movement of bespoke walking staffs as they ascend to the summit to witness the remarkable moving tableaux below.

Angus Farquhar, Creative Director NVA said: "*Speed of Light* is an exciting and equally 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 runners 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 as 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.

From today 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.'

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.'

sportscotland Chief Executive, Stewart Harris said: '2012 will be a fantastic year for sport in the UK with the Olympics and Paralympics taking place in London. Following the Games, '*Speed of Light*' will capture the imagination of thousands of people, through it's exciting visual concept, while also exploring the physical and emotional aspects of endurance running. sportscotland will support the event through our strong networks such as Active Schools and will utilise our partnerships with governing bodies of sport, to engage prospective participants.'

Alistair Currie, Head of Business Development and Recreational Running for scottishathletics: '**scottishathletics** and **jogscotland** are proud to be working in partnership with the *Speed of Light* project – a truly unique opportunity for our members. Not only do we expect **jogscotland** groups and running and athletic clubs from across the country to jump at the chance to take part in Scotland's official contribution to the London 2012 Festival and the Cultural Olympiad, but we hope that this stunning project will inspire others to take up running as a recreational activity.'

jogscotland is Scotland's recreational running network and our specially trained Jog Leaders will play a vital part in helping participants to train for this event. Our friendly and welcoming **jogscotland** groups are the perfect way to enter the world of running, whatever your ability. Our special *Speed of Light* training programmes will also provide guidance in getting in shape for the greatest celebration of non-competitive running Scotland has seen.'

Please go to 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 an entry pack.

To register please go to www.speedoflight2012.org.uk

Tickets for *Speed of Light* will go on sale following the Edinburgh International Festival Programme launch in March 2012.

Follow us on twitter: @_NVA_ #nvasol

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

Gillian McCormack | Material | T: 0141 204 7970 | M: 07792423012 |
E: gillian@materialmc.co.uk

Lesley Morton | Material | T: 0141 204 7970 | M: 07912 379 432 | E:
lesley@materialmc.co.uk

For Edinburgh International Festival please contact:

Susie Burnet | EIF | T: 0131 473 2020 | M: 07810 383 091 | E: Susie.Burnet@eif.co.uk

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

2. **NVA's Speed of Light** will culminate in a mass participatory event on Arthur's Seat between the 9th August and 1st 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 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.

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

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.

5. 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. More information is available at 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 jog**scotland** please visit www.jogscotland.org.uk.

Supported by:



DUNARD FUND

With thanks to:



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