



MEDIA INFORMATION: For Immediate Release

Psappha: Exceptional support for Composers at the early stages of their careers

Contemporary classical ensemble Psappha is supporting a record number of up-and-coming composers this season, making the group's Ancoats base in Manchester a prime destination for talented young composers from across the UK.

Psappha is currently working with 24 composers through its "*Composing For...*" talent development schemes plus a further 12 composers from the RNCM and The University of Manchester, making an exceptional 36 in all.

Each of Psappha's *Composing For...* schemes focus on a different instrument or instruments, with guzheng (Chinese harp), French horn, violin & cello, and flute & clarinet featured this year. The composers work with a Psappha musicians over a period of six months, leading to the creation of 24 new works. The schemes culminate in a series of filming days where Psappha makes multi-camera HD films of each new piece.

Psappha's workshops at The University of Manchester and at the RNCM support advanced students of composition to write for small ensemble in various instrument combinations.

Psappha's Artistic Director selects works from the various schemes to be performed as part of Psappha's prestigious Manchester season, meaning that places are much in demand. On [15 February 2018](#) Psappha will give performances of six works from the ensemble's 2016-17 talent development schemes and Radio 3 will also record the concert.

Tim Williams, Psappha's Artistic Director, says: "We're proud to be an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and a PRS Foundation Talent Development Partner. Grants from these bodies enable us to support and work with some fantastic composers who are right at the start of their composing careers. Last year our *Composing For...* schemes focused on writing for flute, piano, trombone and percussion and the composers found the support we provided really beneficial. We know that the ongoing relationships we form with the composers and the films and recordings of

their compositions which we host on our YouTube Channel are invaluable to securing further performances of their work. It's really exciting to be able to discover new voices and to continue the relationship for the longer-term by recommending the composers to other organizations and by performing their work."

A participant in Psappa's 2016-17 *Composing For Flute* scheme said: "This was an excellent composition scheme to have taken part in. Having the time to develop a piece over several months, attend workshops, and develop a working relationship with the performer is the ideal composition scenario. Receiving a professional film and recording is hugely valuable to have as evidence of my work. It's refreshing to see a contemporary music ensemble strive to work with a large number of young composers and to promote their work."

Four composers from last year's *Composing For...* schemes have gone on to be selected to write works based on pieces of art from the Whitworth collection, supported by a Grants for the Arts Award from Arts Council England as part of the Here and Now wellbeing project. The pieces will be premièred on [17 May 2018](#) as Psappa invites audiences on a musical adventure through the Whitworth Art Gallery.

Psappa is also currently supporting jazz musicians Mike Walker (guitar) and Iain Dixon (reeds) to write a new work for the ensemble through a series of development workshops which began in July 2017. The premiere of this work will take place on [20 April 2018](#) at the Stoller Hall in Manchester.

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Notes to editors:

- [Full details of Psappa's Composing For schemes](#)
- [Films and sound recordings of the works that have been developed through Psappa's 'Composing For' schemes since 2013](#)

- Formed in 1991 by Artistic Director Tim Williams, **Psappha** specialises in the performance of work by living composers and music of the 20th and 21st centuries. Psappha has an extensive and varied repertoire of hundreds of works and a reputation for technical assurance and interpretive flair.

Psappha is unique in its artistic offering as the North of England's only stand-alone, professional contemporary classical music ensemble. A National Portfolio Organisation for Arts Council England and a Talent Development Partner for the PRS Foundation, Psappha is based at St Michael's, the former Italian Chapel in Ancoats, an inner-city area of Manchester that was once the cradle of the Industrial Revolution.

Sir Peter Maxell Davies was Psappha's Patron for 20 years until his death in March 2016 and the ensemble's inspiration. Psappha gave a special 80th birthday concert for Max in Manchester in 2014 and have performed much of his chamber repertoire including the award-winning music-theatre work *Mr Emmet Takes a Walk* which he wrote for Psappha in 2000.

Psappha has appeared throughout the UK, featuring regularly at most of the country's major music festivals and has made highly successful tours to North and South America, Australia, and throughout Europe, also appearing in the United States and Hong Kong through residencies at Princeton University and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. Most recently Psappha toured to the Jerusalem Festival in June 2017.

Psappha launched its own CD label in 2004 and has released seven recordings, most recently a unique, limited edition vinyl recording supervised by Peter Maxwell Davies of his iconic *Eight Songs for a Mad King*.

Psappha supports composers at all stages of their careers, offering a range of opportunities to work with its expert musicians as well as a number of online film-based resources; Composition Lab supports GCSE and A-level music and Psappha Kids supports the music curriculum for 7 to 11 year-olds.

Psappha continually seeks to develop new audiences and break fresh ground. Through its websites Psappha provides more than 120 free-to-view films of live performances. The ensemble's YouTube Channel had over 44,000 views in the last 12 months making Psappha one of Europe's leading providers of new music online.

- www.psappha.com