

PRESS RELEASE
Tuesday 9 September 2014

ORCHESTRA TO RUN 327 MILES FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

On Sunday 12 October, a team of 25 musicians and staff from Southbank Sinfonia - an orchestra of the most talented graduate musicians from around the world - will together run a total of 327.735 miles in the Oxford Half Marathon.

The team are running in support of Southbank Sinfonia's *Let's Inspire* appeal, raising funds to further the opportunities provided to children and the community in groundbreaking music education projects throughout the UK.

From interactive concerts for schools to special events where children have sat within the orchestra during performances, as well as hands-on music making as school children composed and performed their very own symphony, Southbank Sinfonia has brought the magic of classical music to thousands of new ears in 2014 alone.

The orchestra also appears in the new Channel 4 television series *Don't Stop the Music* with pianist and presenter James Rhodes, performing symphonic music to an audience of schoolchildren that had never before heard a live orchestra. Southbank Sinfonia has ambitious plans to further what it can provide for those most in need of musical inspiration in 2015 and beyond, and is excited to be initiating new projects that have lasting worth.

Besides the sheer joy and inspiration that great music brings, access to music making has been scientifically proven to significantly benefit motor skills, hearing, memory, emotional perception and concentration. This is true for people of all ages, but music making is particularly beneficial to children as their brains continue to develop. Southbank Sinfonia's youthful exuberance makes it ideally placed to deliver projects that help support this.

Jennifer House, Southbank Sinfonia's Creative Leadership Manager, says: *"Every single musician has a story about the moment of inspiration that sparked their passion for music and changed their lives. Witnessing the many magical moments in local schools or community events as Southbank Sinfonia's musicians captivate the next generation reaffirms the need for, and worth of, music making for all."*

The half marathon team represents 10 different instruments from the orchestra, including trumpeters, cellists and double bassists. They will collectively run the equivalent distance of 4,800 football pitches, or from London's Southbank Centre to Sage Gateshead via Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre.

Julia Hantschel, oboist with Southbank Sinfonia, says: *"Alongside helping to raise funds for our inspirational music education projects, I'm really looking forward to running with my friends from the orchestra. As professional performers you're usually in such a competitive environment, so it's fun to transfer this competitive spirit to running and have the half marathon as a joint goal to support each other through."*

More information about Southbank Sinfonia's recent education projects, the runners and how to sponsor the team is available at southbanksinfonia.co.uk/oxford-half-marathon

Notes for editors:

Further information on Southbank Sinfonia, the *Let's Inspire* appeal and the marathon team can be found online at southbanksinfonia.co.uk/oxford-half-marathon or by contacting Matt Belcher, Marketing Manager, at matt@southbanksinfonia.co.uk or 020 7921 0371.

- *Southbank Sinfonia is an orchestra of young professionals that performs concerts and leads music education projects throughout London and the UK. It is internationally recognised as a leading orchestral academy, each year providing 32 outstanding graduates with a much-needed springboard into the orchestral profession.*
- *The orchestra's players, each supported by a bursary, undertake an intensive and wide-ranging nine month programme of performance and professional development, including creative partnerships with the Royal Opera House, National Theatre, BBC Concert Orchestra and acclaimed artists such as Patrons Vladimir Ashkenazy and Edward Gardner.*
- *In addition to education work throughout the UK, the orchestra performs a regular series of free Rush Hour concerts in central London that give many people their first ever experience of live orchestral music.*
- *Southbank Sinfonia receives no public funding and is indebted to its supporters who believe in the potential of its young musicians and the worth of the projects they deliver.*
- *Further information on the scientific benefits of music making is available via [TED](#) or in articles by the [BBC](#), the [Independent](#) and the [Telegraph](#).*
- *The Vitality Oxford Half Marathon takes place on the morning of Sunday 12 October, with further information about the event available at oxfordhalf.co.uk. The course takes in many of the sights of historic Oxford, including a timed lap of the track where Roger Bannister ran the first ever four-minute mile in 1954.*

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