

philharmonia orchestra

PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until Wednesday 3 September 2008

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA AND BT LAUNCH NEW FREE SAMPLING SOFTWARE Sample Sequencer will enable anyone, anywhere in the world, to compose and mix music using their own virtual Philharmonia Orchestra

The Philharmonia Orchestra is launching a new version of its award-winning music education website, The Sound Exchange (www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange), featuring a unique new piece of free sampling software, developed in partnership with BT. The site launch takes place as The Sound Exchange celebrates its five millionth user, and as the Orchestra celebrates its first month with its new Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor, Esa-Pekka Salonen.

The redesigned Sound Exchange features a brand new piece of free software, called the Sample Sequencer: a downloadable programme, designed by the Philharmonia in partnership with BT. The Sequencer enables anyone, anywhere in the world, to create their own Philharmonia compositions by manipulating an 8-track player - with every note of every instrument in the Philharmonia Orchestra available for use in composing and mixing music.

The Sequencer is both sophisticated enough for professional composers and DJs to use, and simple enough to be usable by children from Key Stage 2 upwards. Those using the online version can also save their compositions online, allowing other users to rate their work and encouraging people to see the Philharmonia as a musical "community" that they can belong to. Schools and colleges will be able to use the programme on interactive classroom whiteboards.

In the three and a half years since The Sound Exchange was first launched, it has received numerous awards and widespread critical acclaim. It is recognised as one of the leading interactive music education websites in the world, and has just celebrated its five millionth unique user, making it also one of the most successful orchestral outreach projects in history. As well as featuring a vast amount of behind the scenes information about the Orchestra's life and work, much of it on film, the site offers rich musical resources for children, teachers, parents, students and adults, offering assistance in learning and playing instruments, composition, musical notation, theory, analysis and history.

The new site has been designed to enable users to have a more personal relationship with the site content and the Philharmonia Orchestra: and particularly to tailor the content to their personal interests. New free orchestral sound samples have been added to the existing Philharmonia Sample Library, enabling users to download more than 17,500 real orchestral sounds for mixing and composing. Access to the site's extensive library of web video is more effective: The Sound Exchange already hosts numerous hours of professionally produced film footage, including live concert footage; detailed information led by Philharmonia players about writing for and performing on instruments;

interviews with artists including Christoph von Dohnányi, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Esa-Pekka Salonen; documentary films about composers and projects; and a popular series of monthly video podcasts, which are already downloaded by more than 3500 people per month.

Alistair Mackie, Philharmonia Orchestra Chairman and Co-Principal Trumpet, commented: "The Philharmonia Orchestra is utterly committed to find new ways of using technology to enable everyone in the world to have a relationship with the enormous, wonderful resource that is an orchestra; and the Sound Exchange is the jewel in the crown of our work in this area. We are extremely grateful to BT for everything they have done to help us to realise our ambitions over the last three years: welcoming our five millionth user to the site is proof that there is a huge appetite and enthusiasm for everything that an orchestra can offer in the 21st century. This new piece of free software embodies all our ideals for the site and its future: free access for all, and new opportunities for our audiences to create and share as well as listen to music."

Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Philharmonia Orchestra's new Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor, added: "What I have always found especially attractive about the Philharmonia's approach is that everything the Orchestra does has its counterpart on the web. Some of the numbers I have seen – hits per day, The Sound Exchange numbers – are staggering. And this tells you that classical music is well and truly alive; it just needs to be accessible and out there."

Adrian Hosford, Director of Corporate Responsibility BT said "We are incredibly enthusiastic about the benefit to society of our work with the Philharmonia Orchestra. Our partnership is leading the way in terms of using new media to increase access to music and make it more readily available to everyone on the internet. The sample sequencer is our latest collaborative project, which allows us to develop new audiences and increase participation. Using our new software, children can create their own music - in schools or the community – which helps to further demonstrate our commitment to society and the arts".

ENDS

**www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange
www.philharmonia.co.uk/sequencer**

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Philharmonia Orchestra

Acknowledged as the UK's foremost musical pioneer, with an extraordinary recording legacy, the Philharmonia Orchestra leads the field for its quality of playing, and for its innovative approach to audience development, residencies, music education and the use of new technologies – including webcasts, podcasts, downloads and computer games – in reaching a global audience. Together with its relationships with the world's most sought-after artists, most importantly its Principal Conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Philharmonia is at the heart of British musical life.

The Philharmonia Orchestra's first season with Salonen at its helm opens with a gala performance at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall on Tuesday 23 September.

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