

# Press Release



25 August 2011

For Immediate Release

## World premiere opens Last Night of the Proms to mark Fund's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday

- Fund's 90th birthday year to be celebrated by world premiere which is to open the Last Night of the Proms on Saturday 10 September
- The new work is to thank the Promenaders' Musical Charities for their long-term fundraising activities
- *Musica Benevolens*, commissioned by the Fund, has been composed by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Master of the Queens Music and the Fund's President

The Prom is one of the Fund's *90 years: 90 big ideas* campaigns which have been taking place throughout the UK this year to mark the charity's 90th birthday.

Over the nine week span of the BBC Proms, a dedicated team of trustees and associates from the Promenaders' Musical Charities have been collecting after each concert at the doors of the Royal Albert Hall. Each year several charities benefit from the collections taken. This year's charities being supported as well as the Musicians Benevolent Fund are:

CLIC Sargent  
Music in Hospitals  
Cherubim Music Trust

Thanks to the generosity of the Proms audiences in 2010, the Musicians Benevolent Fund received a record £40,000.

So far £51,000 has been raised during the 2011 Proms season.

The Last Night will feature pianist Lang Lang, supporter of the Fund soprano Susan Bullock, the BBC Symphony Chorus and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Edward Gardner.

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### Notes to Editors:

#### About the Musicians Benevolent Fund

The Musicians Benevolent Fund is a unique charity which provides essential help to musicians of all ages and genres. The Fund supports music professionals throughout their working lives when a crisis such as an accident or illness can have a devastating impact and in later life, with the challenges that disability or growing older can bring. It also supports young aspiring musicians to help them enter the profession with the best chance of success and works in partnership with a number of organisations across the UK which provide outstanding opportunities for musicians. For more information visit [helpmusicians.org.uk](http://helpmusicians.org.uk)

The Musicians Benevolent Fund was founded in 1921, in memory of an English tenor called Gervase Elwes, who died tragically in a railway accident. During his life he had shown compassion and kindness to his colleagues and following his death, his friends set up a fund in his name, which in 1930 became the Musicians Benevolent Fund. During the first year, 11 grants were made totalling £90.

Many famous musicians have been associated with the Fund over the years, including Sir Henry Wood. Whilst it operated fairly modestly in its early years, the Fund received a significant financial boost when Myra Hess, the pianist, donated the proceeds of her legendary concert series which ran throughout World War 2 at the National Gallery.

### **About 90 years: 90 big ideas**

This year is the Musicians Benevolent Fund's 90th birthday, so to celebrate it is collaborating with musicians, music lovers and organisations to hold 90 events throughout the year.

So far the response has been amazing, with people all around the country pledging a huge variety of events. One of the very first *90 years: 90 big ideas* events was held by Adam Taylor and his band [ChiJazz](#), who have raised £1,600 by donating their gig fees throughout the year.

In April Radio 1 DJ Gilles Peterson ran the London Marathon and raised nearly £7,000 and over £3,000 was collected by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra after two concerts, in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

81 events have been pledged so far. To find out about events that are happening, please check the Fund's [events calendar](#).

### **About Sir Peter Maxwell Davies**

One of the foremost composers of our time, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies has made a significant contribution to musical history through his wide-ranging and prolific output. He lives in the Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland, where he writes most of his music. In a work list that spans more than five decades, he has written across a broad range of styles, yet his music always communicates directly and powerfully, whether in his profoundly argued symphonic works, his music-theatre or witty light orchestral works. For more information visit [maxopus.com](#)

Sir Peter will be the guest speaker at the Musicians Benevolent Fund's Festival of Saint Cecilia on 23 November. For more details, visit [helpmusicians.org.uk/festival2011](#)

### **About the Promenaders' Musical Charities**

Promenaders' Musical Charities (PMC) was developed from the previous collecting activities of the Promenaders' some ten years ago. Now based on a more formal structure of trustees, selected from the Arena & Gallery promoter's, it has gone from strength to strength. Each year four charities are chosen from the many applications received that reach the criteria for funding.

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