

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **National Theatre of Scotland open eyes and ears to new audiences after Innovation Award**

The National Theatre of Scotland will relay captions and audio descriptions live to smart phones during performances to allow those with hearing or sight impairments to fully enjoy their programme, thanks to an award of nearly £55,000 from the UK's Innovation Foundation, Nesta.

The award is one of four totalling over £230,000 in the second round of the Digital R&D fund for Arts and Cultural Scotland, a partnership between Creative Scotland, Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Nesta to support arts and cultural organisations across Scotland who want to work with digital technologies to expand their audience reach and engagement and/or explore new business models. Joining the projects will be CReATeS (<http://creates.stir.ac.uk>) – a team of researchers led by the University of Stirling, in partnership with University of Strathclyde and University of St. Andrews. Funded by the AHRC, researchers will bring a range of skills to these projects including the analysis and interpretation of data, support for developing engagement and dissemination strategies and evaluation.

The other projects announced today that will receive funding are:

- **Publishing Scotland (PS)** who will produce a smartphone app to expand readership and celebrate Scotland's unique literary heritage;
- **Scottish Documentary Institute (SDI)** who will develop a new way of fundraising online to provide new funding streams for arts and culture.
- **The Audience Business (TAB)** who will develop a Facebook app to increase audience numbers for theatrical and other productions.

The call for ideas for the second round of projects was announced in November 2012 and there were a total of 35 applications to the fund from all across Scotland

Commenting on the announcement of the latest awards, Jackie McKenzie, Head of Innovation Programmes Scotland for Nesta said: "The projects we are supporting with these awards are all determined to use new technology to increase revenue and attract new audiences. The ideas we are supporting with this announcement today will develop the new ideas that will allow Scotland's arts and culture sector to continue to thrive in the future.

"Projects such as that proposed by the National Theatre of Scotland will bring their fantastic programme to a whole new audience. By using captioning and audio description directly to smart phones, every theatre performance will be made truly accessible for those with hearing or sight impairments.

Iain Munro, Acting Chief Executive at Creative Scotland said: "The Digital R & D fund continues to keep Scotland's creative sector at the forefront of innovations in audience engagement. Digital technology provides limitless possibilities for sharing and promoting work, and these four diverse projects will help these organisations connect with audiences in new and exciting ways."

Projects supported in the first round of funding included the National Piping Centre in Glasgow, An Iodhlann on Tìree, the Cultural Quarter Project in Edinburgh, Dundee Contemporary Arts and the National Galleries of Scotland.

## ENDS

### Notes to Editors

For more information about any of these projects or to arrange interviews, please contact Graeme Downie on 07973 300 184 or at [graeme.downie@orbit-comms.co.uk](mailto:graeme.downie@orbit-comms.co.uk)

The four awards are:

#### **The National Theatre of Scotland's (£54,862)**

Founded in 2006, the National Theatre of Scotland exists to create theatre experiences that are contemporary, confident and forward looking. Since our launch, the National Theatre for Scotland has been involved in creating 190 productions in 168 different locations and have performed to over 860,000 people across four continents. The Company has a permanent core staff of 41, but also employs over 600 theatre practitioners each year to help create our productions.

The National Theatre of Scotland will work with We Are Everyone (technology partner) and FLIP – Disability Equality in the Arts – to create a web-based platform to relay captions and audio description directly to smart phones or tablets in real time during live theatre performance.

#### **The Audience Business (£50,425)**

The Audience Business (TAB) is a registered charity and was established in 1999 as an audience-focussed agency, to support Edinburgh's cultural organisations engage the widest possible public. Their core team of 6 works with a broad cross-section of c. 40 of Edinburgh's theatres, galleries, museums, festivals and large scale touring companies – delivering research services, market intelligence and audience benchmarks, campaigns and pilot projects targeting existing and potential audiences, and facilitating networking and skills development events.

TAB will work with Whitespace and TicketSwitch to produce a Facebook ticketing application to be piloted and rigorously tested by The Queen's Hall in Edinburgh to add value and increase audiences.

#### **Publishing Scotland (£53,960)**

Publishing Scotland (PS) is the network, trade and development body for the book publishing industry in Scotland. Based in Edinburgh, it was established in 1974 by a group of 12 publishers. The organisation has grown to over 60 publisher members and 43 network (or associate) members. PS has charitable status and restructured in 2007 to reflect the fact that the book sector was changing – moving away from traditional methods of production and business models into a more open, diverse, and accessible sector and range of activities.

PS will produce a smartphone apps based upon a curated selection of Scottish-interest books to offer users new, compelling ways to access the content. The project aims include; improving audience reach, celebrating Scotland's unique literary heritage and increasing revenue for publishers and writers around Scotland.

#### **The Scottish Documentary Institute (£75,600)**

The Scottish Documentary Institute (SDI) has become Scotland's hub for documentary film and is recognized internationally as a leader in the genre. Through training, production and distribution, SDI brings the documentary world to Scotland, and Scottish films and filmmakers to the world. SDI combines a research centre at Edinburgh College of Art with SDI Productions Limited. While SDI

originally focused on developing new talent through short films, SDI Productions enabled them to move into feature-length documentaries.

SDI will work with Distrify to develop a fundraising widget that can be universally embedded on the web. It will feature an easy-to-use sliding-scale interface and offer incentives or donations to partners. The aims of the project include generating additional investments and delivering a robust fundraising solution.

### **About the Digital R&D Fund for Arts and Culture in Scotland**

The first call for ideas for the Digital R&D Fund for Arts and Culture in Scotland was launched on 17 January 2012 and the first awardees were announced on 1 June 2012.

The project is jointly funded by Nesta, Creative Scotland and AHRC. All submissions are judged by a panel involving the funders and independent technology experts.

**About Nesta:** <http://www.nesta.org.uk>

Nesta is the UK's innovation foundation. We help people and organisations bring great ideas to life. We do this by providing investments and grants and mobilising research, networks and skills. We are an independent charity and our work is enabled by an endowment from the National Lottery.

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