

PRESS RELEASE 12/07/2011



Air Vag's "Starry Nights" for *Lumiere*. Produced by Artichoke in Durham, 2009
Photo copyright Matthew Andrews.

THE POWER OF LIGHT: FESTIVAL PRODUCERS ANNOUNCE LATEST SPONSORSHIP AND URGE LOCAL BUSINESSES TO BEGIN PLANNING FOR NOVEMBER

Festival producers Artichoke are delighted to announce that the Radisson BLU has come on board as one of the sponsors for the 2011 *Lumiere* festival. The hotel has agreed to provide accommodation for festival artists, staff and crew and to act as a festival hub for visiting artists and producers during the event.

The Radisson joins Thorn Lighting and Northumbrian Water as a local sponsor of this much anticipated second festival of light for Durham, commissioned by Durham County Council. As the countdown to *Lumiere* 2011 begins, Artichoke are encouraging local businesses to begin planning well in advance of November, so that they can benefit fully from the opportunities offered by the influx of visitors into the city.

“There are plenty of ways for local business to get involved with the festival, ranging from sponsoring the event to simply taking advantage of the business opportunity offered by the huge numbers of visitors we expect the festival to attract. Businesses could extend opening hours, provide special festive menus, or just make sure there are enough staff on hand to service the increased demand”, said Nicky Webb, co-director of Artichoke.

The first *Lumiere* festival in 2009 brought 75,000 visitors into the centre of Durham and generated some £1.5million for the local economy. Some local traders spotted the opportunity, and stayed open late to cater for the huge influx of potential customers. **Cotswold Outdoor** on Silver Street did just that, and did a roaring trade in all-weather wear as a result, as customers streamed in to buy waterproofs and woolies to protect them from the elements.

Other businesses were taken by surprise, and missed out on the chance to benefit to the full, either by closing when there was plenty of trade around, or being understaffed. **Daniel Spoor** of **The Hide Bar and Grill** on Saddler Street said: “We only had a small team of staff on as we weren’t expecting it to be so busy but we were literally turning people away at the door. This year we’re going to make sure we have plenty of staff on during the festival and will run a special offer to entice festival-goers in. We won’t miss out on this opportunity.”

Artichoke say the growing reputation of *Lumiere* is another reason for local businesses to support the festival. The success of the first event in 2009 has enabled it to attract funding and support for 2011 through Arts Council England and the European Commission, as well as through local sponsors. The EU funding, together with a substantial grant awarded by Arts Council England demonstrates the power of cultural events to attract inward investment and build local economies.

John Mowbray, Director of Corporate Affairs for **Northumbrian Water**, who are also sponsoring the festival said:

“Last time *Lumiere* visited, Durham was full to capacity and they brought a real local, national and overseas focus on the city with a magnificent spectacle. Artichoke will deliver the same again this year and every business needs to get behind *Lumiere* as they plan this year’s event as well as making their own plans to make the most of the crowds. This can and should be a great boost to the Durham economy.”

Councillor Simon Henig is the Leader of Durham County Council:

“The very reason we felt so strongly that we wanted to commission this second *Lumiere* festival is because we recognise the extremely important role culture-based tourism can play in the ongoing regeneration of County Durham. Festivals like Brass, Streets Of... and *Lumiere* all combine not only to put us on the world map but to ensure our local businesses benefit from increased numbers of visitors. *Lumiere* offers a fantastic opportunity for a whole host of businesses to take the moment and showcase what they and the county have to offer. I am sure they will do just that.”

Lumiere will return to Durham 17-20 November 2011 with more than thirty artists using light as a medium in every possible way, creating artworks that will

transform the city into a magical nocturnal landscape that will delight visitors and residents alike.

This year's festival includes "Brilliant", a local programme that will showcase four projects developed by artists living in the North East and involving local communities and resources. The artists include **Mick Stephenson**, a local builder; **Dan Ziglam** and **Elliot Brook** of product design agency, **Deadgood**; **The Global Curiosity Shop**, a collective based at Northumberland University, led by lecturer Paul Goodfellow; and visual artist **Bethan Maddocks** working with theatre designer and visual artist **Verity Quinn**.

The full programme for *Lumiere* 2011 will be announced later this year.

EDITORS' NOTES:

Lumiere

Lumiere was created by Artichoke in 2009 and generated around £1.5million for Durham's economy. It was commissioned by Durham County Council, and is supported by Arts Council England. It followed the success of Durham's own light festival, *Enlightenment*, featuring outdoor arts installations by Asian and British artists and inspired by the county's religious and industrial heritage in 2008. *Lumiere* 2011 will take place 17-20 November 2011.

Lumieredurham.co.uk

Artichoke

Producers of extraordinary live events, Artichoke is one of the country's leading creative companies and is a registered charity, funded by Arts Council England. Artichoke works with the best creative minds to produce extraordinary shows that live in the memory forever. Productions have included Royal de Luxe's *The Sultan's Elephant*, which filled the streets of London for four days in 2006; *La Machine's* 50-foot high mechanical spider for Liverpool's Capital of Culture celebrations in 2008; Antony Gormley's 100-day long invasion of the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square in London, *One & Other*, and Paul St George's *The Telectroscope*, which allowed people in London and New York to communicate with each other by means of a hitherto undiscovered transatlantic tunnel. They produced the first edition of *Lumiere* in Durham in 2009. artichoke.uk.com

Durham County Council (DCC)

Durham County Council is one of the largest unitary councils in the country, serving a population of approximately 500,000 people. Artichoke has been commissioned to design, produce and deliver the *Lumiere* festival on behalf of DCC, working with local partners including Durham University and Durham Cathedral. durham.gov.uk

Arts Council England

Arts Council England works to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of artistic activities from theatre to music, literature to dance, photography to digital art, and carnival to crafts.

Great art inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves, and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2008 and 2011, we will invest £1.3 billion of public money from government and a further £0.3 billion from the National Lottery to create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

Further information: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk>

For images, interviews and further information contact Anna Vinegrad:
pr@annavinegrad.org T+44 0207 609 8905 M +44 07813 808 487

Radisson BLU

The Radisson BLU Hotel Durham is situated on the banks of the River Wear offering stunning panoramic views of the historic city of Durham and the Cathedral. A purpose built hotel catering for the business and leisure markets, its guests are ensured a high standard and genuine Yes I Can! hospitality. Radisson BLU currently includes more than 255 hotels either in operation or under development and with almost 60,000 rooms in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. For more information: www.radissonblu.com