

London, 21 November 2005 – for immediate release

## **PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE RELIEF - HUMAN CHAIN LINKS LONDON TO THE HIMALAYAS**

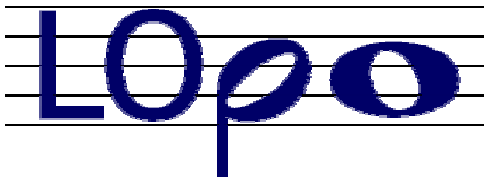
In an initiative welcomed by the Pakistan High Commission, a group of London musicians has forged links with relief workers in Pakistan to support a human chain that is working against the clock to deliver humanitarian aid to victims of the earthquake in Northern Pakistan and Kashmir.

On Tuesday 22 November, at St Botolph's Church in the City of London, the London Orpheus Philharmonic Orchestra will give the first of two concerts of popular chamber music to raise funds for survivors of the earthquake.

The concerts are the brainchild of the orchestra's Chairman, businessman Dr Roger Prentis, who has lived and worked in Pakistan for many years and who knows the affected region well. "Through my contacts I became aware, not only of the scale of the disaster, but also of the measures that Pakistanis themselves are taking to help their own people. They know how to deal with the local conditions - devastated infrastructure, the injured, sick and homeless and their needs and, particularly the impending severe winter weather - better than anyone, but they desperately need funds and practical help to support their work," he explains.

Every penny raised will go directly to support the Murshid Hospital & Health Centre's work. The charity is active in the Neelum Valley near Muzaffarabad, one of the worst hit areas. Its activities range from providing emergency medical aid (such as urgent surgery and fitting of artificial limbs), to delivering food and other supplies that will sustain survivors through the coming winter. The remoteness of many of the villages and the damage to access routes has led relief organizers to establish an extraordinary human chain: 15kg relief parcels containing basic foodstuffs such as flour, powdered milk, fat, sugar, tea, salt, together with other urgent items ranging from matches to all-weather tents from Norway, are taken as far as possible by four-wheel drive vehicles, then transferred to mule train, before finally being carried up the mountains on foot by experienced human trekkers.

Thousands of miles away, concert-goers at St Botolph's (which, situated next to Aldgate Underground Station, served as a triage centre for victims of the 7/7 bombings and a base for London's emergency services) will become part of the human chain. They will also have the opportunity to sign up for an e-mail newsletter that will allow them to see the difference their support makes and follow the aftermath of the earthquake long after it ceases to be headline news. "With the heavy snows and cold about to close in, it will be many months before the victims can resume any kind of normal life," Dr Prentis admits. "I'm well aware of the risk of 'compassion fatigue', and Pakistan is not nearly as familiar to us in the West and may therefore attract less sympathy than, for example, the countries devastated by the Tsunami



# The London Orpheus Philharmonic Orchestra

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last Christmas. However, I believe that if people can see the practical difference their contribution can make to the lives of the children and their families they will want to help. Otherwise, quite simply, many thousands more will die."

Tickets for LOPO's concerts at St Botolph's Church, Aldgate on 22 November and 1 December at St Andrew Church, Holborn, priced at £10.00 are available on the door or from [www.lopo.org.uk/pk](http://www.lopo.org.uk/pk). All proceeds will go towards vital relief work. To make individual or corporate donations or to sign up for the newsletter register at [www.lopo.org.uk/news](http://www.lopo.org.uk/news).

Dr Roger Prentis and Saira Jaffer, representative of the Murshid Hospital in the UK, are available for press and broadcast interviews.

**For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Nicky Mayhew on 07773 327 392 ([nicky@crucialserve.com](mailto:nicky@crucialserve.com)).**

## Notes for Editors

### LOPO

The London Orpheus Philharmonic Orchestra has been set up with the aim of raising money for charitable causes. A concert was run in March 2005 at the Barbican which raised £15,000 for the tsunami appeal. The orchestra is made up of professional and semi-professional musicians who give their time free of charge to help with LOPO's fund raising objectives.

### Concert programme

Respighi "*Siciliana*"  
Zabel "*La Source*"

Rohan Platts (Harp)

Poulenc Flute Sonata

Clare Jefferis (Flute)  
Nicholas Zaklama (Pianoforte)

Schubert String Quintet

The Devonshire Players:  
Liz Menezes and Laura Clayton (Violin)  
Beth Scott (Viola)  
Helen Fishwick and Monica Esslin  
(Cello)

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### **St Botolph's**

St Botolph's Church is situated next to Aldgate Underground station in the City of London. It was used as a triage centre for victims of the 7/7 bombings and, after, as a base for the Emergency Services. The Church and its Rector, the Rev Dr Brian Lee, are committed to helping - and have the support of - the ethnically diverse local community.

St Botolph was the English Patron Saint of travellers, and has three surviving Churches in the City dedicated to him, all of which are situated next to the sites of the old city gates.

### **Vaseem Mohammed**

Vaseem Mohammed, an Islamic artist who has an exhibition at St Botolph's during the concert has kindly agreed that "Relief," one of his works, can be used as the image for the Concert.

Vaseem Mohammed was born in 1966 and grew up in the East End of London. He has always been interested in the shapes, textures and atmospheres of his urban childhood. This fascination developed into a vocational interest in art during his mid-twenties when he enrolled at Tower Hamlets College to do an access course in Art & Design and then another in Creative Computing & Illustration. Since then, he has freelanced in graphic design and furniture renovation with decoration (using Islamic patterns), only to have found his niche in Fine Art which he has concentrated on for the past seven years.

**ENDS**