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PRESS RELEASE

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Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus to perform at Port's Windrush celebration

Members of the Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus have been busy preparing for a special performance. They are taking part in the Windrush 70th anniversary celebrations on Friday 22 June at the Tilbury Cruise Terminal.

The ROH Thurrock Community Chorus will sing a piece called *I Arrive*. It features opera choruses from three very well known operas: Fuoco di Gioia from *Otello* and Chorus of the Scottish Refugees from *Macbeth*, both written by Verdi and the Prisoners' Chorus, from Beethoven's *Fidelio*. These three pieces weave together to create a story of arrival in a new and strange place.

The work is inspired by the arrival of the 492 Caribbean migrants onboard the Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks on June 22 1948. It explores the journey of all migrants and the difficulties that they face on the journey and in a new land. Through conversations with the ROH Thurrock Community Chorus and with members of the Windrush Generation in Brent, 492 words were selected, representing their feelings and experiences of migration. 75 of these words have been included in *I Arrive* and placed alongside the emotive music of Verdi and Beethoven and the music of Lord Kitchener, who travelled from Trinidad on the Empire Windrush.

Alongside the musical work, members of Kite Spirit textile group will be displaying a textile maypole they have created, on which they will eventually hang 492 words inspired by migration. Audiences at the Windrush celebrations will be invited to contribute to this ever-expanding textile work by adding a word inspired by their own experiences of migration. Kite Spirit came together following a project with the Royal Opera House at the High House Production Park in 2013 at which the members volunteered.

The Windrush celebrations begin at 1pm at the Tilbury Cruise Terminal. The ROH Thurrock Community Chorus performances are at 1.30pm and 3.30pm. The event is free and open to all. For more information about the ROH Thurrock Community Chorus, please email getinvolved@roh.org.uk or go to www.roh.org.uk/community-chorus.

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Notes for Editors

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock has been offering innovative and creative projects and programmes in schools, colleges and across communities in the Thames Gateway since 2006.

Since then, more than 60,000 people have participated in activities ranging from schools' projects to teacher training, from work-based learning to fully-staged community operas. People in Thurrock have both been able to watch special performances at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden and gain a very special insight into the behind-the-scenes process.

The Learning and Participation team runs the Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus which currently has over 140 members of all ages and regularly performs across Thurrock and at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. For further information, please go to: www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/community-chorus. Details of future performances and taster session for the Community Chorus can be obtained by emailing getinvolved@roh.org.uk or calling 01708 891200.

Regular public tours of the state-of-the-art Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop where the sets and scenery for the Royal Opera House stage in Covent Garden are built, and the

Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre, which opened in October 2015, are now available. Please go to www.roh.org.uk/visit/tours/thurrock-tours for further details.

In April 2012, the Royal Opera House agreed to become a [Bridge](#) organisation, working to connect children and young people to great art and culture across Essex, North Kent, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

The Learning and Participation team is based at the High House Production Park in Purfleet which is supported by a unique partnership including Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills, the Royal Opera House and Thurrock Council: www.hhpp.org.uk