

Press release  
27 June 2005

## £10,000 ARTS PRIZE UP FOR GRABS

### NORTHWEST BUSINESSES PROVIDE PHILANTHROPIC FUND

Arts organisations in the Northwest could win a substantial pot of money if they enter in for the Lever Prize. Launched in May 2005, the Lever Prize is the brainchild of North West Business Leadership Team (NWBLT) and is set to become an annual award for world-class arts organisations. The award of £10,000 also includes the opportunity to work directly and creatively with the NWBLT membership. Organisations are still being encouraged to enter by the closing date of 8 July 2005.

The Lever Prize is the idea of the North West Business Leadership Team (NWBLT), made up of 27 of the region's prominent company leaders. It is hoped that the prize will encourage more businesses to build stronger links to arts organizations and to show that it has a vital role to play in engaging with the arts. The Prize is inspired by William H. Lever, (later Lord Leverhulme), the Bolton-born soap magnate famed for his grand-scale patronage of the arts, as seen in the Lever Free Library and Museum and the Lady Lever Art Gallery in Port Sunlight, Wirral.

The Prize will be awarded not just for high calibre existing work, but also for both creative proposals for working in partnership with businesses and for those that might be international or have potential international significance.

United Utilities Chief Executive John Roberts, chair of the NWBLT says: "It is a fact that the great tradition of business philanthropy towards the arts has been sadly lacking in recent years. We wish to award the Lever Prize to an arts organisation or programme of international or potentially international significance. In doing so, as business leaders, we hope to help bring back this tradition by sending a signal to business that it has a vital role to play in engaging with the arts. Beyond the demands of corporate responsibility, it brings positive benefits for the workforce, consumers and stakeholders. The arts are good for business. We hope the prize will encourage more businesses to build stronger links to arts organisations."

Loyd Grossman, Chair of Culture Northwest said: "Culture enriches the lives of all those who live in, work in and visit the region. It gives the North West a competitive advantage and has a powerful impact on economic and social success. This award is a terrific idea and a valuable shot in the arm for the arts in the region."

The Prize is open to arts and cultural organisations, institutions, buildings, museums, performing arts, events, festivals, libraries or archives located or taking place in England's North West. It will not normally be awarded to a single piece of work, performance or production. Sport is not eligible.

The short-list is announced in August, with short-listed organisations presenting to the judges on 29 September 2005. The award announcement dinner will be in January 2006. The application form can be downloaded from <http://www.nwblt.com/leverprize.html>

For more information call Katie Bray, Project Manager, NWBLT on 01925 212078

Notes for Editors:

The North West Business Leadership Team (NWBLT) brings together a group of the most influential business leaders in North West England, to address key strategic issues affecting the well-being of the region and the quality of life of all its people. It operates as a not-for-profit organisation with a small office based in Warrington.

Culture Northwest is a thinking, networking and advocacy organisation. Culture Northwest is the Cultural Consortium for England's Northwest, established in 1999 by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and its role is to drive the Regional Cultural Strategy. Culture Northwest's core funding is predominantly provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Northwest Regional Development Agency.