**Northern Opera Project**

An interdisciplinary PaR project which took place in two phases between 2014 and 2017, and aimed to develop techniques whereby a Northern English accent could be heard in the operatic singing voice, and which resulted in the world’s first Northern English opera, *The Arsonists* This was premiered as part of the BBC Philharmonic’s Red Brick Sessions series at the University of Salford in November 2017.

**Context**

Unlike theatre, operatic sung accents are dominated in the UK by an adapted form of Received Pronunciation; although some regional accents are occasionally used in Britten, for example, no Northern accented opera has been written. LaBouff, for example, does not mention Northern accents at all in her brief survey of regional accents in opera.

**Methodology and Outputs**

The project sought to create and test new material based on the speech patterns and rhythms of northern English, and set a libretto jointly developed by the composer and poet Ian McMillan

Phase 1 of the project consisted of a series of five workshops with singers, actors, poet Ian McMillan, sociolinguist Philip Tipton. It was funded by Arts Council England, and took place between July 2014 and March 2015. Evidence of this is to be found in:

1a summary video of phase one R and D project, including evidence of the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet

1b videos of the four songs created in this phase

1c scores in pdf of the songs

Phase 2 was the implementation of techniques in a full length opera, *The Arsonists*

Outputs are located as:

2a an introduction to the opera in a short taster video

2b a video extract – “Me Emergency Exit is Blocked”

2c Extracts from poet Ian McMillan’s own readings of the libretto

2d a full score of the opera in pdf