



– Embargoed to 00.01 hours, 23rd July 2018 –

First ever ‘National Album Day’ announced for October 13th 2018

- **Week-long build-up of events & activity celebrating the UK’s love of the album**
- **Supported by BBC Music and with backing across the music community**
- **Artist engagement, leading the national conversation around the format as it evolves**
- **At 3.33(r)pm on Saturday, 13th October – British public invited to play favourite record**
- **Marking the 70th anniversary of the album in 2018**

London, 23rd July 2018 – All sectors of the British music community have come together with BBC Music to proudly announce a new annual event – the first-ever **National Album Day** on Saturday, **13th October 2018**.

National Album Day will mark the culmination of a week-long series of events and activity around the country that will celebrate all aspects of the UK’s love of the album – new releases and classic recordings across all genres of music. It will also pay tribute to the sleeve artwork that contributes to the album’s iconic appeal. This inaugural event comes in a year that coincides with the 70th anniversary of the album¹.

Planned activity will include dedicated **BBC Music** programming and editorial support; **retail events** and artist personal appearances; **Classic Album Sundays** LP playbacks and artist interviews/fan Q&As; and **online listening parties**. A **social media** campaign (@AlbumDayUK/#NationalAlbumDay) will invite people to nominate and share the album that has most inspired them; and at **3.33pm** on 13th October – National Album Day – fans, stores, radio stations and public spaces will be invited to play their favourite album in full.

Leading the ‘national conversation’ will be the **artists and producers** who give expression to the album as a conceptual body of work, and help to define the format’s purpose and meaning. Numerous musicians are giving National Album Day their backing (see *attached sheet of artist quotes & industry testimonials*), while others will be confirmed in due course.

National Album Day is delighted to announce **Paloma Faith** – Sony Music/RCA recording artist, as one of its first *artist ambassadors*, who says: *“I vividly remember being excited by so many classic albums as I was growing up, like Marvin Gaye’s ‘What’s Going On’, Dylan’s ‘Freewheelin’, and Erykah Badu’s ‘Mama’s Gun’, although, if I had to pick one, the album that most inspired me was Tracy Chapman’s self-titled debut. It featured the incredibly powerful ‘Why?’ - a song that has become a real anthem for me not least as it was the first to bring home the emotional power of lyrics. The way we engage with music may be changing, but for me the album remains the ultimate expression of the songwriter’s craft.”*

The event’s official broadcast partner is **BBC Music**, which is supporting the initiative through programming and editorial support on *BBC Radio 1, BBC Radio 1Xtra, BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, and BBC Radio 6 Music* stations plus on *BBC iPlayer* and *BBC Four* – which will be re-screening some of its celebrated music documentaries.

James Stirling, Head Of Content Commissioning, BBC Music, says: "BBC Music is proud to support the first National Album Day. The role of the album has evolved over 70 years – through vinyl and beautiful artwork to current streaming consumption – yet the story behind a great album remains an important part of British culture. We look forward to exploring the album in all its glory and telling these stories across the BBC."

National Album Day is announced at a time when demand for albums remains strong², underlining the format's cultural and commercial significance and its enduring appeal at the heart of British recorded music³. In 2017 135m albums, or their equivalent, were either purchased, downloaded or streamed, a rise of 9.5 per cent on the previous year. 4.1m of these were on vinyl – the highest level since the start of the 1990's. The BPI estimates⁴ that a staggering 5 billion albums have been sold in the UK since the format's advent in 1948.

Further evidence of the format's continuing relevance is provided by an ERA tracking study⁵ in May 2018, which showed that nearly 60 per cent of respondents had listened to an album in full in the month prior to the online survey. And whilst albums are most often associated with older music consumers, the research suggested that it is actually younger fans who are more likely to have listened to an album recently: over half (55%) of those polled aged 25 or below said they had listened to an album in the previous week, compared with 45 per cent of 45-54 year-olds and just 33 per cent of those aged 55 or above. The research also challenged the notion that albums are a male preserve – with nearly four in ten (38%) female consumers having listened to an album in the week prior to the study, compared with 45 per cent of male respondents.

National Album Day is being organised jointly by **ERA** (Entertainment Retailers Association), representing the nation's music retailers and digital/streaming platforms, in partnership with record labels body, the **BPI** (British Phonographic Industry). It also has the backing and input of the wider music community, including **AIM** (Association of Independent Music), **Classic Album Sundays**, **BBC Music**, **FAC** (Featured Artist Coalition), **MMF** (Music Managers Forum), **MPG** (Music Producers Guild), **Official Charts Company**, **PPL** (Phonographic Performance Limited), **United Talent Agency**, and industry umbrella body **UK Music**.

One of the originators of National Album Day⁶, whose vision is helping to provide impetus for the event, is **Iain McNay, Chairman of Cherry Red Records**, a label which was launched 40 years ago and is still very much Independent, who says: "The format of the album is so important. Even in this era of the growing popularity of streaming, the majority of artists still think in terms of writing and recording albums rather than just tracks. National Album Day is a great reminder of the creative thought and brilliance that goes into the making of an album, and it is a way that we can all participate by listening to and remembering our favourite albums. The album is the King of music formats; long live the King!"

Kim Bayley, Chief Executive ERA, says: "Individual tracks may have stolen the limelight over the past few years, but British music fans love albums as much as ever. National Album Day is an opportunity to throw the spotlight back on to long-form listening and we are delighted that the Record Store Day team will play a key role in establishing this first-time event working alongside our friends and colleagues at the BBC, the BPI and the wider music community."

Geoff Taylor, Chief Executive BPI & BRIT Awards, adds: "It is fitting that, in this 70th anniversary year, we should look to create a special moment that celebrates the UK's love of the album and the huge role it plays at the heart of our popular culture. The album has underpinned the phenomenal success of recorded music the world over, providing artists

with a compelling medium through which to express their creativity and fans the freedom to engage with all shades of music through the stories that it tells.

“Streaming may be broadening our ability to access and discover music, but the concept of the album as a body of work that expresses a narrative or an artist’s creative vision at a given moment, remains as relevant and inspiring as ever.”

The organisers plan to grow National Album Day organically into an annual event so that becomes a keenly anticipated part of the music industry calendar⁵, in much the same way as *Record Store Day*.

For more details on National Album Day, and how to participate, visit www.nationalalbumday.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

¹ **The first album recognised as being released on LP format was the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E Minor**, on the Columbia ‘Masterworks’ label released in June 1948 (<http://www.33audio.com/enter/ML4001.html>). HMV and Sony Classical recently collaborated to reissue 500 limited edition copies of the album to celebrate its 70th anniversary: read [here](#)

² **In 2017 135 million albums, or their equivalent, were either purchased on CD and vinyl, downloaded or streamed** – a rise of 9.5% on the previous year, driven by a surge in streaming (51.5% increase to 68 billion streams) representing the fastest rate of growth this millennium. Demand for vinyl LPs rose 26.8%, with unit sales hitting the 4.1 million mark – the highest level since the start of the 1990’s and representing over a decade of consecutive growth. CDs continued their decline (-1.2% y-o-y)) as consumers switch to streaming and other formats, but still showed remarkable resilience – with 41.6 million units purchased still representing nearly a third of UK music consumption. Read full details [here](#).

³ **Vinyl LPs and CDs come to mind when we consider the album – we rightly think of it as a physical format**, but it’s also the case that streaming is changing the way music is being created and presented and how fans seek to discover and play the songs they love. However, the founders of NAD believe that, far from facing any long-term decline, the album is, in fact, evolving and finding new and additional forms of creative expression. There have, for example, been a number of instances of albums being launched on streaming platforms ahead of their physical release, not least Kanye West’s seminal *Life of Pablo* in 2016, but, as the artist himself insisted, this made *Life of Pablo* no less an album. This supports the view that if creators view an album as a ‘body of work’ featuring a connected series of songs or pieces of music, then this is what ultimately defines it as an album – rather than the format itself.

National Album Day will adopt an inclusive, non-prescriptive approach, encouraging people to celebrate the album as they wish, and participation not just from the record labels and high street stores such as indies and HMV, that have acted as a ‘keeper of the flame’, but from services such as Spotify and Apple Music that also value the album as part of the streaming eco-system.

⁴ **BPI historical estimate is based as follows:** Trade shipment data for 1964 to 1994 is calculated to account for 42% of total sales. From 1995 to 2017, Official Charts album sales totalled 2.731bn. Assuming this accounts for 58% of the total from 1964 to 2017, then the total overall would be 4.709 billion. For 16 years 1948 to 1963 – for 1948 to 1955 an annual total average 10m units is assumed and for 1956 to 1963 a further 15m, adding another 200m units. Therefore total sales over the entire period would come to 4.9bn. Once album streams are included, it is reasonable to estimate all time album sales of around 5 billion.

⁵ **Report not published, for members only.** Please contact ERA Press Office for more details if required eraltd.org

⁶ **The impetus for National Album Day** came out the BPI's Independent labels Physical Committee, chaired by Cherry Red Founder & Chairman and BPI Council member Iain McNay, and featuring members including Jonathan Green, John Cooper and Jamii Layton, who helped to shape much of the thinking behind it.

About BPI (British Phonographic Industry) – bpi.co.uk

The BPI champions the UK's recorded music industry, safeguarding the rights of its members and of the artists, performers and label members of collecting body PPL. The BPI's membership consists of well over 400 independent labels and the UK's three 'majors', which together account for 85 per cent of legitimate domestic music consumption and 1 in 8 albums sold around the world.

The BPI promotes British music overseas through its trade missions and the *Music Exports Growth Scheme*. It provides insights, training and networking with its free masterclasses, *Innovation Hub*, *Insight Sessions*, *WidsomWednesdays* events, and reports. The BPI administers *The BRIT Certified Awards*, co-owns *The Official Charts*, organises *The BRIT Awards* and *BRITs Week*, and is also home to *The Mercury Prize*.

About ERA – eraltd.org

ERA is the trade association representing the vast majority of retailers and digital services offering music, video and games. Its members range from independent record shops (Reflex, Sister Ray) to digital services (Spotify, Sky, Deezer, 7digital) to internet retailers (Amazon) to specialist High Street operators (HMV, Game) and supermarkets (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda and Morrisons).

ERA members supply the sales data which powers the Official Charts Company (music and video charts) and GfK Chart-Track (videogames). Together with record companies trade association the BPI, it owns the Official Charts Company. ERA provides the organisational force behind Record Store Day, the annual celebration of independent record stores which has become the most successful new music industry promotion of the past two decades. ERA works closely with its sister organisations in music, video and games and is a strong proponent of open markets, open standards and consumer choice.

About BBC Music – bbc.co.uk/music

BBC Music, led by Bob Shennan, Director of Radio and Music, is the corporation's strongest commitment to music in 30 years – comprising of new partnerships and ground-breaking music initiatives, which include *Ten Pieces*, the classical music initiative for schools which aims to open up the world of classical music to children, and *BBC Music's The Biggest Weekend* - a music festival that took place in May 2018, attended by over 175 000 people across four sites in four nations over four days. BBC Music supports nationwide initiatives including Record Store Day and Independent Venue Week. Recent TV programming includes: on BBC One, music series *Sounds Like Friday Night*; on BBC Two - *Reginald D Hunter's Songs of the Border* in which he takes a 2000 miles road trip exploring the music of the border; on BBC Four - *Africa: A Journey Into Music* in which Rita Ray explored the ancient traditions and enduring influence of popular music across Mali, Nigeria and South Africa, *Smashing Hits! The 80's Pop Map of Britain & Ireland* with Midge Ure and Kim Appleby revealing how the 80s was actually one of the most revolutionary musical decades in British pop history, and *Boys on Film – A Night with Duran Duran*, a night of programming featuring two documentaries showcasing some incredible insights and exclusive access to this iconic British rock band. There will be live coverage of the Mercurys on TV and Radio later in the year and BBC Music has also recently announced BBC Music Introducing LIVE 18, a brand new three-day music event for the public, supporting musicians and new talent with a programme of inspiring performances, talks and masterclasses (8-10 November 2018 at London's Tobacco Dock).

About Classic Album Sundays – classicalbumsundays.com

Founded by inspirational advocate of vinyl LPs, Colleen 'Cosmo' Murphy, [Classic Album Sundays](http://ClassicalAlbumSundays.com) tells the stories behind the albums that have shaped our culture and in some cases, our lives. Classic Album Sundays is the world's most popular and respected classic album listening event with satellites in four continents and their website and social media channels are the hub for classic albums and artists.

About Cherry Red – cherryred.co.uk

Founded by Iain McNay in 1978, UK record label Cherry Red has continued to uphold the same fiercely independent values since day one. Renowned for its diversity, the label had early successes with artists ranging from The Dead Kennedys to Everything But The Girl, The Monochrome Set and Felt – going on to release the ground-breaking compilation *Pillows & Prayers* in 1982. As well as a continued commitment to new music, Cherry Red now acts as an umbrella for more than 20 individual imprints and catalogue specialists, releasing more than 400 albums each year.