



MEDIA RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 APRIL 2010

Hanson Clarinets completes the world's first chain of custody for sustainably harvested African blackwood.

Clarinet players will soon have the choice of buying environmentally and socially sustainable instruments after Hanson Clarinets became certified under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in March 2010.

The FSC-certification of Hanson Clarinets, the UK's largest clarinet manufacturer, completes the world's first FSC chain of custody for sustainably harvested African blackwood.

The chain of custody links all handlers of FSC-certified African blackwood, starting with forest harvesters in Tanzania and ending with instrument manufacturers and retailers in the West, providing consumers with independent verification that the wood used to produce their instruments originates from a sustainable source.

Alastair Hanson, Co-Founder of Hanson Clarinets says: *"We are proud to become the world's first FSC-certified maker of woodwind instruments. We buy our wood responsibly to help safeguard the hugely valuable natural resources of the tropical forests that provide the material needed to make clarinets. We hope that our commitment will help persuade other makers to join in protecting endangered species and in turn work to protect the future for forests, wildlife, communities and of course music."*

The world's first harvest of FSC-certified African blackwood was carried out in December 2009 in a Village Land Forest Reserve managed by Kikole village, southern Tanzania, under the guidance of the Mpingo Conservation Project.

Kikole received a payment of around £1,200 in return for 15m³ of African blackwood, a sum 400 times greater more than they would have received before FSC-certification.

The wood is currently being processed at an FSC-certified sawmill in Tanzania and will shortly be exported to the UK.

Neil Bridgland, Sound & Fair Campaign Manager, says: *"This a massive step forward in our campaign to realise a sustainable trade in African blackwood timber and help lift some of the world's poorest people out of poverty. Many years of hard work have gone into creating the required infrastructure in Tanzania to export FSC-certified hardwoods and now we have the commitment of one of the UK's major woodwind instrument manufacturers to drive the process through. Very soon clarinet players will be able to make purchasing decisions based on ethical considerations as well as quality."*

Hanson Clarinets expect to launch the world's first FSC-certified clarinet in late-2010.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. African blackwood is a slow growing tree that is highly prized for making clarinets, oboes and bagpipes. It has long been over-harvested across the continent to obtain its dark, lustrous heartwood. The wood is greatly prized for its strong structural qualities by international manufacturers of woodwind instruments. Although African blackwood is still relatively abundant in southern Tanzania, illegal logging is widespread and very poor, forest-dependent communities generally receive little benefit from logging on the land around their villages.

2. FSC is an independent, not-for-profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. The FSC label provides a credible link between responsible production and consumption of forest products, enabling consumers and businesses to make purchasing decisions that benefit people and the environment as well as providing ongoing business value. FSC's forest certification standard is recognised as the global gold standard for responsible forest management.

3. Hanson Clarinets is FSC-certified as a member of the Oxford Timber Audits Group Chain of Custody scheme – no. SA-COC-001654 HG

4. The Mpingo Conservation Project (MCP) aims to conserve endangered forest habitats in Tanzania by promoting sustainable and socially equitable harvesting of valuable timber stocks, and with a particular focus on Mpingo, the Swahili terms for African blackwood. MCP holds an FSC group certificate (SA-FM/COC-002151) and grants FSC status to Village Land Forest Reserves that meet the required FSC criteria.

Background on the Sound and Fair Campaign

The Sound & Fair campaign aims to realise a sustainable trade in African blackwood through a fully-certified chain of custody linking village communities in Tanzania to woodwind instrument musicians in the UK.

By safeguarding a hugely valuable natural resource, Sound and Fair will help lift some of the world's poorest people out of poverty.

The Sound & Fair campaign is managed by Kilimanyika and funded by the Environment Africa Trust through a grant from Comic Relief.

Mpingo Conservation Project (MCP) is the Tanzanian partner responsible for managing village FSC-certification.

Fauna & Flora International, the environmental organisation, is a UK partner.

Further Information

www.soundandfair.org

Images and further and interviews available on request from:

Neil Bridgland – neil@soundandfair.org / +44 (0) 7919 092 189

For technical information on African blackwood and its exploitation:

www.mpingoconservation.org.

