

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Just Forests,  
Rhode,  
Co. Offaly.

**MARTIN DOYLE LAUNCHES WORLD'S FIRST FLUTE MADE FROM FSC-CERTIFIED AFRICAN BLACKWOOD**

Irish flute manufacturer, Martin Doyle, has launched the world's first flute made from African blackwood sourced from a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified supplier.

Martin Doyle has been a prominent supporter of the sustainable use of African Blackwood. In 2009, in the process of making a Radio 4 documentary, *The Music Tree*, Martin travelled to Tanzania where he saw first-hand the efforts being made to manage African Blackwood.

*"We are delighted with Martin's achievement as it is central to our mission that all wood used in Ireland will come from responsibly managed forests worldwide-thus ensuring a fair price for the communities relying on the forests for their livelihoods"*, according to Tom Roche founder/coordinator of Irish NGO Just Forests.

Lessons learnt in Africa have now born fruit in Ireland with the production of flutes made from wood from the same villages that Martin visited several years ago.

Martin Doyle said: *"When I started making flutes I was concerned as to where the timber came from: were they just hacking down the forests or were they sensitive to their continuation and replanting?"*

*"In 2009, I was fortunate enough to be invited to Tanzania and I could not have been happier with any system of conservation. Villagers cut the trees down when they are mature and another grows right out from the stump ensuring the continuation of the species in the natural forest."*

*"I feel that this is a great system as within it man is working in harmony with nature. It is a much nicer approach than dedicating a forest to one type of tree as it leaves nature to do nature's work."*

Martin Doyle is now fully committed to using FSC-certified African blackwood in all future flute production and is pursuing plans to become fully FSC-certified as soon as possible.

Sound & Fair partner, Rhode-based - Just Forests, is in the process of setting up an FSC producers group aimed specifically at Irish instrument manufacturers and it is hoped that Martin Doyle who is already one of a number of Irish musicians who have become [FRIENDS of Wood](#), will become a founder member of the group. The Just Forests initiative was launched in Tullamore in November 2010 with the [Sound of Wood Concert](#) and featured Ireland's internationally renowned traditional folk group The Chieftains.

**ENDS**

## **Background on African blackwood:**

1. African blackwood is a slow growing hardwood tree used primarily in the manufacturing of woodwind instruments, such as clarinets, oboes, flutes, recorders and bagpipes. The wood is highly prized for its strong structural and tonal qualities. The wood is also increasingly used in components for other musical instruments, especially guitars.
2. African blackwood is also known by the trade name Grenadilla, the Swahili name, Mpingo, and the scientific name, Dalbergia Melanoxylon.
3. African blackwood was once common across Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique. It is now commercially extinct in Kenya and remaining stocks are confined to remote areas of Southern Tanzania and Northern Mozambique.
4. Although African blackwood is still relatively abundant in southern Tanzania, there is huge pressure on remaining stocks, illegal logging is widespread and forest-dependent communities generally receive little benefit from logging on the land around their villages.
5. [The Forest Stewardship Council \(FSC\)](#) is an NGO 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 to make purchasing decisions that benefit people and the environment. FSC is recognised as the global gold standard for responsible forest management.

## **Background on the Sound and Fair Campaign:**

The [Sound & Fair](#) campaign aims to realise a sustainable trade in African blackwood through an FSC-certified chain of custody linking village communities in Tanzania to woodwind instrument musicians throughout the world.

Tanzanian partner, [Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative](#), has established the first FSC-certified community-managed forests in Africa. Four Tanzanian village forests have been certified to date covering a total area of 17,151 hectares.

In December 2009, the [world's first harvest of FSC-certified African blackwood](#) took place in Kikole village, Tanzania. Local community income increased 400 times over what would have previously been received for the harvested wood.

Additional FSC-certified chain of custody partners include [Sandaliwood Industries](#), Tanzania (sawmill), Klicksi Ltd, UK (wood distribution) and [Hanson Clarinets](#), UK, who in January 2011, launched the [world's first FSC-certified woodwind instrument](#).

Sound & Fair partner, [Just Forests](#) is an Irish NGO that aims to increase public awareness and critical understanding of the link between sustainable forest management (SFM) and poverty reduction in the third world.

Sound & Fair is funded by [Comic Relief](#) and is licensed under FSC®-N001630 to promote the use of FSC certified sources of wood in the music industry. In May 2011, Sound & Fair received an [Outstanding Achievement Award from FSC-UK](#).

## **Further Information:**

[soundandfair.org](http://soundandfair.org)

[martindoyleflutes.com](http://martindoyleflutes.com)

[justmusic.ie](http://justmusic.ie)

[Sound of Wood Concert](#)

Images are available on request from:

Tom Roche - Mobile 086 8049389

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