

# Turing, the opera ... (it's got some great numbers)

■ Centenary show bid for tragic maths genius

YAKUB QURESHI

**A** COMPOSER is hoping to bring an opera inspired by maths genius Alan Turing to Manchester.

Julian Wagstaff wants to stage his acclaimed production *The Turing Test* at a festival marking a century since the computer pioneer's birth.

The musician was asked by organisers of the Turing Centenary to revive the production for next year.

The hour-long opera received rave reviews at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival four years ago but has not been staged since.

The production, which features six singers and a 12-piece chamber orchestra, is inspired by the mathematician's famous

test for whether a machine could think for itself.

Manchester University scientist Turing, who lived in Wilm-slow until his tragic death in 1954, theorised that a computer could one day trick people into believing it was a human.

Mr Wagstaff, 40, an acclaimed



**CENTENARY**  
Maths genius Alan Turing, who helped to invent the computer

Scottish composer who has previously worked as a computer programmer, said he was inspired by Turing's story while visiting an exhibition about computing history in America.

But he said a new production will depend on whether spon-

sorship can be found, and he is now talks with a number of firms for financial support.

Although Mr Wagstaff hopes to take the production to a number of cities, including Manchester, Cambridge and London, he says extra funding is crucial as the ticket price alone won't cover costs.

He said: "Staging opera is an expensive business.

"It is not something that is undertaken lightly. You've got to pay for top class performers as well as covering touring costs. We're hoping that companies which might not traditionally think about sponsoring an opera will get on board."

Next year's Turing Centenary festival will see dozens of computer and codebreaking-themed events across the country, including events at Manchester University and Manchester town hall.



**MAKING NUMBERS STACK UP**  
The Turing Test opera and, inset composer Julian Wagstaff



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A survey of 3,400 jobseekers and 240 interviewers found a lack of preparation on both sides.

The poll, by recruitment firm Monster.co.uk, showed that candidates complained of being asked irrelevant questions by arrogant or poorly-prepared managers.

Just over half the interviewers questioned admitted they took an instant dislike to someone they were seeing about a job.

Isabelle Ratinaud of Monster UK & Ireland said: "It is apparent that both candidates and interviewers are not putting in the necessary groundwork to ensure a smooth, productive interview process.

"It's no wonder that candidates are so stressed out if nearly a third of employers can't even be bothered to remember a candidate's name. Unless an interviewer takes the time to absorb the candidate's CV, they will find it hard to establish whether they are right for the role."

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