

Press Release

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Dame Fanny Waterman awarded Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society



The co-founder and Director of the Leeds International Pianoforte Competition, pianist and teacher **Dame Fanny Waterman** has been made an **Honorary Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society** in recognition of her outstanding services to music, and services to the piano in particular. The award, made by the society in 2010, was presented by RPS Chairman John Gilhooly at a piano recital by Andr s Schiff at the Royal Hall, Harrogate on Sunday 17 July. Now in her nineties, still indomitable, Dame Fanny Waterman continues to travel the world as a juror of international piano competitions. In presenting the certificate of Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society, John Gilhooly commented: *“It is with great joy that we have finally managed to make her pause long enough, in her beloved Yorkshire, to receive this very special award.”*

Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society is given in recognition of outstanding services to music. Past recipients have included composers, conductors, performers, music commentators, patrons, programmers, publishers and educationalists. Illustrious Honorary Members have included

Rossini (1839), Brahms (1882), Clara Schumann (1887), Stravinsky (1921), Aaron Copland (1970), Paul Sacher (1991) Lady Evelyn Barbirolli (2001) and most recently, the founder of El Sistema, Jos  Antonio Abreu (2008) Sir Brian McMaster (2009) Graham Johnson (2010) George Benjamin and Tony Fell (2011).

Dame Fanny Waterman occupies a pre-eminent position in the piano teaching world. After a notable performing career, she felt that her real vocation was as a teacher. Over the years she has given Master-Classes on six continents, appeared on television and radio, and with Marion Harewood (Marion Thorpe) has compiled a series of publications entitled Piano Lessons with Fanny Waterman/Marion Harewood, which now runs to thirty volumes which have achieved sales of two million copies. In 1963 with Marion Thorpe (then the Countess of Harewood) and her late husband, Dr. Geoffrey de Keyser, she founded the Leeds International Pianoforte Competition, which is regarded by the international music community as the world’s greatest international piano competition.

For the last thirty years she has become a highly sought after jury member of international competitions including the Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Horowitz, Hamamatsu, Chopin, Bach, Vina del Mar and UNISA. Forthcoming jury engagements include the China and Leipzig piano competitions. Several of her students have been prize-winners in the Leeds, Tchaikovsky, Rubinstein, Busoni, London and Geneva competitions.

In recognition of her services to music, Dame Fanny was awarded the OBE in 1971, the CBE in 1999 and in 2005 she was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire. She has also

been awarded Honorary Doctorates by the Universities of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan and York and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Music.

In its citation, the Council of the Royal Philharmonic Society says:

“Over the years, several very distinguished pianists have received Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society: Ignaz Paderewski, Clara Schumann, Solomon, Gerald Moore, Claudio Arrau and Graham Johnson to name but a few. But arguably none has done as much to further the cause of the piano and piano playing as the indefatigable powerhouse that is Fanny Waterman.

Both as a concert pianist, and later as a teacher, Fanny is led by her passion for music and rigorously high standards. Her status as a teacher is now legendary: she has inspired and instructed generations of musicians, both in person and through the millions of copies of her teaching books sold around the world.

Fifty years ago, together with Marion Thorpe, and her late husband, Dr. Geoffrey de Keyser, she founded the Leeds International Pianoforte Competition in her beloved Yorkshire, with which her name has become synonymous. She has nurtured it into one of the greatest international piano competitions in the world and launched the careers of such virtuosic young pianists as Radu Lupu, Murray Perahia, Mitsuko Uchida and Andràs Schiff.”

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Photo caption:

Dame Fanny Waterman, pictured with Andràs Schiff (left) receives the certificate of Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society from RPS Chairman John Gilhooly (right).

Notes:

Royal Philharmonic Society

The Royal Philharmonic Society [RPS] is one of the two oldest music societies in the world. It was formed on 24 January 1813 with the aim ‘to promote the performance, in the most perfect manner possible of the best and most approved instrumental music’, which it did principally by giving regular public orchestral concerts in London, including through two world wars.

Today the RPS seeks to create a future for music through the encouragement of creativity, the promotion of understanding and the recognition of excellence. To mark the achievements of distinguished practitioners across the industry the Society presents the annual RPS Music Awards, the UK’s leading awards for live music; the Leslie Boosey Award, for those who have made an outstanding contribution to further contemporary music in the UK, often in a ‘back stage’ capacity – from programmers to publishers; the newly launched Salomon Prize, for orchestral musicians; Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society, for services to music and which has been awarded to composers, conductors, performers, patrons, commentators programmers and educationalists; and the society’s highest honour, the RPS Gold Medal. Current recipients of the RPS Gold Medal are: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Janet Baker, Bernard Haitink, Alfred Brendel, Colin Davis, Elliott Carter, Pierre Boulez, Simon Rattle, Plácido Domingo, Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Henri Dutilleux and Thomas Quasthoff.

The Society’s artistic activities focus on composers and young musicians and through a programme of audience development, awards and lectures it seeks to raise the public consciousness of the finest music making today and to create a forum for debate about the direction of classical music.