

Press Release

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Nikolaus Harnoncourt to be awarded Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal Sunday 22 April at 3pm, Barbican Hall

The distinguished conductor and pioneer of the early music movement **Nikolaus Harnoncourt** will become the latest recipient of one of music's most esteemed honours, the **Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal**, when he is presented with the coveted medal at the Barbican on Sunday 22 April. Harnoncourt will conduct the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam at the Barbican in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and will receive the medal from **John Gilhooly**, RPS Chairman, in an on-stage presentation during the afternoon's concert.

Since its initiation in 1870, recipients of the RPS Gold Medal have included Brahms (1877), Delius and Elgar (1925), Richard Strauss (1936), Stravinsky (1954), Britten and Bernstein (1987). More recently, the medal has been awarded to Sir Charles Mackerras, Daniel Barenboim, Henri Dutilleux and Thomas Quasthoff.

The award was created to commemorate the centenary of Beethoven's birth and celebrates the close relationship between the Society and the composer (the RPS commissioned Beethoven's 9th Symphony and championed his work). It is thus particularly fitting that Harnoncourt, whose performances and recordings of Beethoven's work have achieved a legendary status, will receive this award during a concert of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*.

In awarding the RPS Gold Medal to Nikolaus Harnoncourt, the citation of the society comments: *Nikolaus Harnoncourt was a pioneer in the early period instrument revival, but much more besides. As a conductor his name is legendary with singers for his extraordinary vision into early, baroque, classical and even operetta. Performances with Harnoncourt are always unique and special.*

Nearly 60 years ago he formed the Concentus Musicus Wien with period instruments, but he also works with most of the world's main orchestras using modern instruments and was one of the earliest pioneers of this dual approach. His performances of the Monteverdi operas along with the Mozart cycle in Zurich stand as landmark events. He is a man who is dedicated to music and humanity.

Full details of the Royal Philharmonic Society and its work can be found at www.royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk A full biography of Nikolaus Harnoncourt is available at www.nikolausharnoncourt.com

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