



Press Release

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Royal Philharmonic Society joins forces with Women Conductors

The **Royal Philharmonic Society** has announced a new partnership with **Women Conductors**, the internationally award-winning programme of conducting workshops designed to support and encourage women to be conductors of classical music.

Women Conductors (formerly known as Women Conductors at Morley) was founded in 2014 by Artistic Director **Alice Farnham**, and former Director of Music at Morley College, **Andrea Brown**, specifically to encourage more women to be conductors. It has put on a number of workshops for young, inexperienced women conductors and existing professionals all over the country from Cardiff to Glasgow. Over 100 women have taken part, with many more coming to watch the confidence-building workshops, as well as top women conductors providing expert tips on how to conduct specific repertoire. Women Conductors was a finalist in the Classical:Next Innovation Award 2015 and two previous Women Conductor workshop participants, **Tianyi Lu** and **Chaowen Ting** have been selected to take part in Dallas Opera's prestigious Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Women Conductors residency (26 November - 11 December), where Alice Farnham has also been invited as part of their faculty.

The Women Conductors programme runs as two-day workshops over weekends throughout the year, across the UK; they provide participants with an opportunity to discover communication and leadership qualities that they perhaps never thought they had. Each workshop, with a maximum of 12 participants, is led by a celebrated female conductor - which in the past has included **Jessica Cottis**, **Sian Edwards**, **Jane Glover**, **Julia Jones**, **Sarah Tenant-Flowers**, **Rebecca Miller** and **Andrea Quinn** - supported by professional pianists and instrumental ensembles.

Alice Farnham, Artistic Director of Women Conductors comments: *"As the programme has grown in size and popularity it has been clear that it needed a partner organisation with contacts all over the UK (and beyond) and a clear agenda to promote young talent and gender equality. The RPS, with its long experience of professional development, outstanding support for young musicians and strong commitment to widening understanding and enjoyment in music is key to taking Women Conductors to the next level of professionalism, outreach and UK-wide profile and the partnership is energizing all involved."*

The future aims of Women Conductors are simple: to get more female music students, professional musicians and music teachers to consider conducting as a viable profession for women. By normalising the idea of women on the podium, it seeks eventually to eliminate any remark about whether a conductor is a man or a woman, so that conductors are judged on their talent alone.

Rosemary Johnson, Executive Director of the Royal Philharmonic Society comments: *"The RPS is delighted to be joining forces with Women Conductors as part of the Society's commitment to mentoring musicians, and to welcome Alice and the Women Conductors team to the RPS family. Women Conductors is brilliant in its simplicity and chimes perfectly with the Royal Philharmonic Society's passion for encouraging more people, regardless of who they are, or where they come from, to listen, love and engage in live music making. Having experienced the enthusiasm and energy of a Women Conductors course first hand, I am excited to play a part in bringing their work to a wider audience, in the hope that, one day, it may not be needed at all!"*

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER WOMEN CONDUCTORS WORKSHOPS NOW BOOKING...

The two-day Women Conductors workshops are run on weekends throughout the year across the UK, with two different phases available.

Phase one, led by Alice Farnham, is for women aged 16+ who are full-time students or have recently finished studying.

Phase two is for female professional musicians of all ages (minimum age 18) wishing to develop their careers by adding conducting to their professional portfolios. Workshops in 2017 will include **Jane Glover** on Classical Symphony, **Sian Edwards** on Romantic Symphony and **Julia Jones** on Opera (in collaboration with ROH's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme).

The next **phase one** workshop is now booking, on **Sunday 25 September AND Sunday 2 October** at Trinity Laban, London, SE10 9JF. Visit www.womenconductors.org.uk for further details, and how to apply.

Women Conductors was launched in 2014 with funding and support from Arts Council England, The Worshipful Company of Musicians and the Colwinston Charitable Trust. The RPS and Women Conductors are currently raising funds for the ongoing programme.

Further press information from:

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Notes to Editors:

ABOUT ALICE FARNHAM – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, WOMEN CONDUCTORS

Alice is Music Director of Welsh National Youth Opera, and received critical acclaim for their award-winning production of Britten's *Paul Bunyan*. She will conduct Maxwell-Davies's *Kommilitonen!* from 27-30 July 2016 (as part of an all-female creative team). She has recently been a Guest Conductor at the Royal Opera House (*Firework Maker's Daughter*), Mariinsky Theatre (*Rape of Lucretia*), FolkOperan Stockholm (*Carmen Moves*) where she returns to conduct Phillip Glass's *Satyagraha* in autumn 2016.

Other recent engagements include Women of the World Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, Malta Philharmonic, Kensington Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Lyric Opera, Tête à Tête Opera, Grange Park Opera and Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Mahogany Opera Group.

Alice has been a Guest Conductor at the Royal Ballet Covent Garden, Danish Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, English National Ballet and Rambert Dance Company. She has been on the Guest Music Staff at Covent Garden Royal Opera since 2005.

A student of the legendary pedagogue Ilya Musin, Alice studied conducting at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire from 1997-2000. She held an Organ Scholarship at St. Hugh's College Oxford University and at St. Thomas' Church Fifth Avenue, New York.

Twitter: [@batonalice](https://twitter.com/batonalice)

ABOUT THE ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

The Royal Philharmonic Society unites the music profession and its audiences to create a vibrant future for music: supporting and working creatively with talented young performers and composers, championing excellence, and encouraging audiences to listen to, and talk about, great music. The Society has been at the heart of music for over 200 years, with direct links to Beethoven (it commissioned the composer's Ninth Symphony), Mendelssohn, Wagner and many of the iconic figures of classical music.

CHAMPIONS OF EXCELLENCE: The Society sets the standard and lets the world know about the finest classical music making. From its historic Gold Medal to the annual RPS Music Awards for live music, recognition by the RPS is a guarantee of outstanding music achievement.

YOUNG MUSICIANS: The RPS invests in talented young performers at the start of their careers, offering much needed funding to buy instruments, teaching tailored to their individual needs, or the chance to be mentored by an experienced, established performer.

COMPOSERS: The Society supports new music through commissioning new work, repeat performances, workshops, residency schemes and encouraging interaction between composers and audiences.

AUDIENCES: The RPS is a voice for music, putting music at the centre of cultural life. Whether a regular listener or just beginning to explore classical music, the RPS encourages people to listen and talk about music through a series of events, talks and debates.