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**Press Release**  
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## Royal Philharmonic Society – 200 years at the heart of music The UK's oldest concert society celebrates its Bicentenary in 2013

### New Commissions for Spring 2013

Major series of new works, co-commissioned with  
Britten-Pears Foundation, to be premiered at  
Aldeburgh Festival

*Anyone for tennis?*  
BBC Symphony Orchestra gives world premiere of  
Jonathan Lloyd's "Old Racket" and "New Balls",  
RPS Elgar Bursary commission

Huw Watkins, RPS/PRSF Composer in the House at the  
Orchestra of the Swan: world premiere of new commission for string orchestra

Music of Today: Young Composers Academy  
Premieres of works by RPS Composition Prize Winners

### RPS Music Awards

Winners of RPS Music Awards announced on Tuesday 14 May

One of the world's most illustrious musical institutions, **the Royal Philharmonic Society [RPS]** turns 200 in 2013.

The focus of RPS's Bicentenary celebrations in May and June is on newly commissioned work, continuing a two century-long commitment to supporting composers and new music. By commissioning some of the most distinctive composers of our day, the RPS is continuing to make a significant contribution to classical repertoire today, and for the future, echoing the pioneering, adventurous spirit of its founding fathers, who commissioned Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony and many other important and enduring works.

RPS200 in May and June features premiere performances of newly commissioned music by eleven leading and emerging composers: **Harrison Birtwistle, Magnus Lindberg, Jonathan Lloyd, Wolfgang Rihm, Poul Ruders, Huw Watkins, Judith Weir, and Sally Beamish, Charlotte Bray, Anna Meredith and Thea Musgrave**, who have each contributed works to a new children's songbook. RPS Composition Prize commissions from young composers **Tom Coult, Arne Gieshoff and Christopher McAteer** are premiered in the Philharmonia's Music of Today series.

## RPS200 Commissions

12 April & 17 May: world premiere of Jonathan Lloyd's "New Balls" and "Old Racket", commissioned by the RPS Elgar Bursary

**Jonathan Lloyd's** new work for strings, *Old Racket*, commissioned by the RPS Elgar Bursary, receives its world premiere, with the **BBC Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Sir Andrew Davis** on Friday 12 April at the Barbican. The work is part of a diptych; *New Balls* for wind will be premiered by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by **James Gaffigan**, at the Barbican on Friday 17 May. *Old Racket* and *New Balls* are Lloyd's first new orchestral works in 20 years.

The Royal Philharmonic Society enjoyed a long and fruitful association with Elgar, and the RPS Elgar Bursary was set-up by the surviving members of Sir Edward Elgar's family, using the royalties of Anthony Payne's elaboration of Elgar's sketches for the unfinished Third Symphony. The bursary is specifically for mature composers, and provides financial support to a composer over the age of 29 to allow for the creation of a new work that may push back musical boundaries, but not at the expense of accessibility. Distinguished previous RPS Elgar Bursary recipients have included **Lyell Cresswell, Dominic Muldowney and Edwin Roxburgh**.

[barbican.org.uk](http://barbican.org.uk)

## June:

### Reflections on Britten at Aldeburgh Festival

#### World premiere performances of major new commissions



The Royal Philharmonic Society and Britten-Pears Foundation have co-commissioned a series of major new works to mark the Society's Bicentenary in 2013, and the Centenary of Benjamin Britten's birth. The RPS/BPF commissions, which were instigated by RPS Trustee and BPF Director of Music **Colin Matthews**, involve leading international composers who have been asked to write works for different ensembles to reflect the range of Britten's composition output, including symphony orchestra, chamber orchestra, string quartet, large-scale ensemble, children's choir and tenor with piano. All six works will be performed at the 2013 Aldeburgh Festival in June, with five receiving their world premieres by ensembles and musicians including: **Britten Sinfonia** conducted by **Ryan Wigglesworth**, **Birmingham Contemporary Music Group** conducted by **Oliver Knussen**, the **Hallé** conducted by **Mark Elder**, **New London Children's Choir** conducted by **Ronald Corp**, the **Vertavo Quartet**, **Mark Padmore** and **Till Fellner**.

**Wolfgang Rihm** has written a new work for symphony orchestra, **Judith Weir** for chamber orchestra, **Magnus Lindberg** for large-scale ensemble, **Poul Ruders** for string quartet, **Harrison Birtwistle** for

tenor and piano (with words by **David Harsent**). **Sally Beamish, Charlotte Bray, Anna Meredith** and **Thea Musgrave** have contributed songs to a new children's songbook based on William Blake's famous illustrated poetry collection, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*; the new works will be premiered by the New London Children's Choir alongside Britten's own enduringly popular songbook, *Friday Afternoons*.

Aldeburgh Festival 2013 – World Premiere Performances:

Saturday 8 June – Judith Weir – *I give you the end of a golden string* – Britten Sinfonia, conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth

Sunday 9 June – Sally Beamish, Charlotte Bray, Anna Meredith and Thea Musgrave – *Innocence and Experience* –

New London Children's Choir, conducted by Ronald Corp

Monday 10 June – Poul Ruders – *String Quartet No.4* – Vertavo Quartet (2<sup>nd</sup> performance)

Thursday 13 June – Harrison Birtwistle/David Harsent (words) – *Songs from the Same Earth* – Mark Padmore / Till Fellner

Friday 22 June – Magnus Lindberg – BCMG, conducted by Oliver Knussen

Saturday 23 June – Wolfgang Rihm – *A Tribute (Über die Linie VIII)* – Hallé, conducted by Mark Elder

A series of pre-concert talks with the commissioned composers will run before the performances – see Aldeburgh programme for details.

He who pays the piper

Thursday 13 June – 5.30pm – Peter Pears Rectial Room

Writer and Broadcaster **Tom Service** chairs a panel exploring how new music is commissioned. Who wants commissions – composers? Audiences? Should commissions be allowed 'to fail' and if so, in these precarious economic times, who will pay? What can be expected of the commissioning process in the future? Panel to include: **Colin Matthews**, Composer, **Janis Susskind**, Managing Director of Boosey & Hawkes, **Rosemary Johnson**, Executive Director, Royal Philharmonic Society, **Philip Cashian**, Composer and Head of Composition, Royal Academy of Music.

aldeburgh.co.uk

21 June: Huw Watkins, Composer in the House

World premiere of new work for string orchestra



**Huw Watkins'** new work for string orchestra, commissioned as part of his RPS/PRS for Music Foundation Composer in the House residency at Orchestra of the Swan, receives its world premiere on **Friday 21 June**.

Huw Watkins, one of the UK's most admired musicians – both as a composer and pianist – joined forces with Stafford-upon-Avon based Orchestra of the Swan in September 2012 as part of an imaginative scheme which aims to re-establish composers at the heart of orchestral life. Composer in the House was created by the Royal Philharmonic Society and the PRS for Music Foundation in 2005. The scheme enables composers and performers alike to have space to create new work, and seeks to engage audiences more actively with new music through long-term involvement with a composer.

Huw Watkins has built a strong reputation with a body of distinctive orchestral, chamber and vocal works and is working with the Orchestra of the Swan over a two-year period until summer 2014. As well as writing new works for the orchestra, Huw is at the heart of a new partnership between the orchestra and composition students from a range of institutions including the Royal College of Music, with performances of short works by five young composers. His considerable skills as a pianist will also be heard on the concert platform and in community performances.

Friday 21 June, Civic Hall, Stratford upon Avon  
Orchestra of the Swan, conducted by David Curtis

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

### 27 June, Royal Festival Hall: Philharmonia Music of Today: Composers' Academy

New works young composers, **Tom Coult, Arne Gieshoff and Christopher McAteer**, winners of the 2012 RPS Composition Prize, will be premiered in the Philharmonia's Music of Today concert series on 27 June (the culmination concert of the orchestra's Young Composer's Academy, in partnership with the Royal Philharmonic Society).

[philharmonia.org.uk](http://philharmonia.org.uk)

### RPS Music Awards

Winners of the RPS Music Awards, for outstanding musical achievement in 2012, will be announced at the **RPS Music Awards ceremony at London's Dorchester Hotel on the evening of Tuesday 14 May**. A special programme devoted to the RPS Music Awards will be broadcast on **BBC Radio 3 at 2pm on Sunday 19 May**. Awards in 13 categories are chosen by eminent independent juries from the music profession and are unique in the breadth of musical achievement they span – from performers, composers and inspirational arts organizations to learning, participation and engagement. This year's awards are for achievement in the UK during 2012. The list of winners since 1989 reads as a roll call of the finest living musicians.

Presented in association with BBC Radio 3, the RPS Music Awards are the highest recognition for live classical music in the United Kingdom. This year, as part of RPS200, there will also be a series of special international awards.

Shortlists for this year's awards will be announced on Thursday 11 April.

## RPS200 Events

Bicentenary celebrations throughout the year bring the music profession and classical music lovers together to celebrate the Society's unparalleled contribution to music, with the emphasis as much on the music of the future as the many triumphs of the past.

Those taking part in RPS200 include many of the UK's leading orchestras, ensembles and organisations including the Philharmonia Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the Hallé, Britten Sinfonia, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and National Youth Choir; BBC Radio 3 and the BBC Proms; Classic FM; The British Library, Southbank Centre, Aldeburgh Festival and Wigmore Hall. The programme features concerts nationwide (with many broadcast live on BBC Radio 3), an unprecedented 19 new RPS commissions in one year from leading and emerging composers, talks, debates and exhibitions on both sides of the Atlantic, and extensive online activities. New York celebrations, in Autumn 2013, are led by the New York Philharmonic, Juilliard School and Morgan Library.

Full details of all RPS 200 events at: [www.rps200.org](http://www.rps200.org)

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## Notes: About the Royal Philharmonic Society

philharmonic: adj. devoted to music; music loving

The Royal Philharmonic Society is for people who love music and live music making and who want to ensure a vibrant future for classical music. It offers support to talented young performers and composers, champions excellence and encourages audiences to listen, and talk about, great music. Watch what our members have to say in My RPS [www.rps200.org](http://www.rps200.org)

The Society's work is supported by many leading musicians, including distinguished RPS Gold Medallists Sir Simon Rattle, Dame Janet Baker, Dame Mitsuko Uchida, Thomas Quasthoff, Sir Colin Davis, Sir Bernard Haitink, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Alfred Brendel, Placido Domingo, Pierre Boulez, Claudio Abbado and Henri Dutilleux. The RPS receives no public funding. It is a registered charity supported by member subscriptions, partnerships and the generosity of individual donors.

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; the Salomon Prize, for orchestral musicians; Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society, for services to music, which has been awarded to composers, conductors, performers, patrons, commentators programmers and educationalists; and the Society's highest honour, the RPS Gold Medal.

The Society's artistic activities focus on opportunities for 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.

The history of the Royal Philharmonic Society is also the history of two centuries of classical music in Britain. In 1813, the aims of the fledgling Philharmonic Society were 'to promote the performance, in the most perfect manner possible, of the best and most approved instrumental music' and to 'encourage an appreciation by the public in the art of music'. The Philharmonic Society was determined to make a case for serious music and lost no time in forming associations with composers, including Beethoven. Audiences for Philharmonic Society concerts were unified in 'one great object: the love of their art.' By founding the Philharmonic Society, British musicians opened the doors to the world's best music and performers, and created a channel of communication that has hummed ever since. These aims hold true today and 200 years on, the Society still stands at the heart of music in the UK.

Royal Philharmonic Society:                      Champions of Excellence  
   Creative thinking for Music  
   Understanding Music