

Press Release

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Royal Philharmonic Society and Association of British Orchestras launch first national award for orchestral musicians

The Salomon Prize

The UK boasts many of the world's finest orchestras, many of which have trophy cabinets bursting with awards in testimony to their brilliance on the concert platform and in the recording studio. Yet, the contribution of individual musicians within an orchestra often goes unnoticed. Until now

To highlight the talent and dedication within UK orchestras, the Royal Philharmonic Society and Association of British Orchestras are launching a new annual award – the Salomon Prize – for the first time celebrating orchestral players - the 'unsung heroes' that make our orchestras great.

Named after renowned violinist Johann Peter Salomon*, one of the founding members of the Philharmonic Society in 1813, the £1000 Salomon Prize will be awarded each year to a musician who has shown commitment and dedication above and beyond the expected service asked by their orchestra over a single concert season. They will have been *"an inspiration to their fellow colleagues and engendered a greater spirit of teamwork within the orchestra"*.

The first award will be made in Autumn 2011, with professional orchestras based in the UK invited to make nominations by 31 August 2011, for final consideration by an independent jury.

Full details of the nomination procedure can be found at:

www.royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk

Further press information from:

Sophie Cohen on

020 7428 9850

07711 551 787

sophiecohen@blueyonder.co.uk

Notes:

* **Johann Peter Salomon** was born in Bonn and was the second son of Philipp Salomon, an oboist at the court in Bonn. His birth home was at Bonngasse 515, coincidentally the later birth home of Beethoven. At the age of thirteen, he became a violinist in the court orchestra and six years later became the concert master of the orchestra of Prince Heinrich of Prussia. He moved to London in the early 1780s, where he worked as a composer and played violin both as a celebrated soloist and in a string quartet. He made his first public appearance at Covent Garden on 23 March 1781.

Salomon brought Joseph Haydn to London in 1791-92 and 1794-95, and together with Haydn led the first performances of many of the works that Haydn composed while in England. Haydn wrote his symphonies numbers 93 to 104 for these trips, which are sometimes known as the Salomon symphonies (they are more widely known as the London symphonies). Salomon is also said to have had a hand in providing Haydn with the original model for the text of *The Creation*.

He was one of the founder members of the Philharmonic Society and led the orchestra at its first concert on 8 March 1813. Salomon died in London in 1815, of injuries suffered when he was thrown from his horse. He is buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey.

The Salomon Prize is named in honour of this versatile and influential musician.

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; **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.

The **Association of British Orchestras** (ABO) was founded in 1947 as the Orchestral Employers' Association, primarily to negotiate with the Musicians' Union and other bodies on behalf of its membership, which consisted almost entirely at that time of those orchestras receiving annual funding from the newly established Arts Council of Great Britain. In 1982 the Association took on limited company status, becoming the Association of British Orchestras. It continues to negotiate the ABO/MU Freelance Orchestral Agreement with the MU and represent its membership in discussions and negotiations with a number of other national organisations.

The past decade has seen a substantial development in the organisation in terms of its size (an increase from 35 in 1989 to over 150 organisations today) and its role, which has expanded to include a diverse range of activities designed to support the development of the UK's orchestral life. The ABO now has an extensive programme of Events from Specialist Manager Meetings and training to Seminars and the Annual Conference.

In past years, the Association of British Orchestras has developed a role as co-ordinator of various national

projects, including two major sponsorship programmes involving the participation of a large number of member orchestras. As a champion of the education and community work of the UK's orchestras, one of the ABO's key objectives has been the support and development of this core area of work. A series of nationally co-ordinated education projects over the past years resulted in a well established Orchestras in Education programme, which existed to promote the education work of member orchestras and to develop the relationship between schools, teachers and orchestral players.

The Association of British Orchestras has also mounted a number of research initiatives, with a series of important industry reports being produced, such as a comprehensive statistical survey of the UK's orchestral profession, Knowing the Score, and the highly influential report on noise damage to musicians, A Sound Ear.