

## Press Release

For release: Friday 18 November 2011

### **Sir Mark Elder awarded Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society**

Sir Mark Elder has been made an Honorary Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society in recognition of his outstanding services to music. A rare honour, the award has only been presented 129 times since the first honorary membership was made to Carl Maria von Weber in 1826.

Sir Mark Elder is Music Director of the Hallé and works regularly with the world's leading symphony orchestras, in the UK enjoying close associations with both the London Philharmonic and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He appears frequently in many of the most prominent international opera houses, including the Royal Opera House, the Metropolitan Opera New York, and the Opéra National de Paris and was the first British conductor to conduct a new production at the Bayreuth Festival. He previously won the prestigious RPS Music Award for Conductor in 2005.

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

*The Royal Philharmonic Society is delighted to present Honorary Membership to Sir Mark Elder.*

*This award celebrates his international recognition as one of the leading conductors of our day, but more particularly it is given in admiration of his cultural leadership. Over more than three decades he has carefully and systematically transformed the fortunes of two great British musical institutions. As musical director at English National Opera, and latterly with the Hallé, he has focused on fostering exceptional musical standards, creating pride at every level of these organisations and entralling audiences with both the sheer impact of his music making and his passionate advocacy for music. As a spokesman for the music profession he has never been afraid to put his head above the parapet. He is a true leader and, of course, a truly great musician.*

The presentation of the certificate of Honorary Membership was made by RPS Chairman, John Gilhooly, on Thursday 17 November on stage at the Hallé's concert at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, conducted by Sir Mark Elder.

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## **Notes:**

Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society is given in recognition of outstanding services to music. 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, José Antonio Abreu (2008) Sir Brian McMaster (2009) Graham Johnson, Fanny Waterman (2010) and George Benjamin, Tony Fell (2011).

## **Royal Philharmonic Society**

The Royal Philharmonic Society [RPS] is a charity dedicated to creating 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 (with the inaugural award recently presented to Hallé double bass player Beatrice Schirmer); 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 RPS celebrates its bicentenary in 2013. 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.