

Press Release

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Winners announced for Royal Philharmonic Society [RPS] Music Awards

- **Two legendary Italian performers Claudio Abbado and Maurizio Pollini amongst big name winners**
- **Pianist Mitsuko Uchida presented with Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal**
- **A good night for contemporary classical music with awards for composers Jonathan Harvey and Sally Beamish, cellist Oliver Coates, and chamber ensemble Apartment House**
- **Two awards for East London's Spitalfields Music**
- **Scottish youth choir scoops the Ensemble of the Year Award**

Winners have been announced of the **Royal Philharmonic Society [RPS] Music Awards**, the UK's most prestigious awards for live classical music, presented in association with BBC Radio 3 (Evening - Tuesday 8 May, Dorchester Hotel).

Conductor **Claudio Abbado** and pianist **Maurizio Pollini** were the big name winners on a night that celebrated revelatory live music making. Pianist **Mitsuko Uchida** was presented with the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal, the society's (and one of classical music's) highest honours. Wins for composers **Jonathan Harvey** and **Sally Beamish**, cellist **Oliver Coates** and chamber ensemble **Apartment House** made it a strong night for contemporary classical music. East London's **Spitalfields Music** was the night's only double-winner, honoured for a pioneering community opera and a 'route one' ticket scheme that encourages ticket buyers to their two annual festivals to 'gift' a second ticket to a first time attendee. The **National Youth Choir of Scotland** became the first large choir to scoop the coveted Ensemble Award.

The awards, for outstanding achievement in 2011, were presented at the Dorchester Hotel by BBC Radio 3's **Katie Derham** and **Petroc Trelawny**. Tenor **John Mark Ainsley**, himself a former RPS Music Award winner, presented the silver lyre trophies, and **Gareth Malone** gave the evening's keynote speech, talking of the public's perception of classical music and the importance of participation. RPS Chairman, **John Gilhooly**, referring to the founding aims of the Royal Philharmonic Society, which celebrates its bicentenary in 2013, spoke of the need to encourage *'an appreciation by the public in the art of music'*. Pointing to the outstanding work of the night's winners, he called on classical music not to *"underplay our strengths.... We are trying to create extraordinary artistic experiences with one eye on the bank balance and the other on the political agenda. However, as the cultural imperative becomes increasingly squeezed by economic and social concerns, there has never been a more important time to unite, and to speak with one voice."*

A special RPS Music Awards programme will be broadcast by BBC Radio 3 on Sunday 13 May at 2pm.

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The Winners

Claudio Abbado won the RPS Music Award for Conductor for revelatory concerts with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall in 2011 that the RPS Music Award jury said “*changed perceptions and raised the bar on what is possible for a group of musicians to achieve*”. **Maurizio Pollini**, a “*giant of the piano*” of “*uncompromising brilliance*” scooped the RPS Music Award for Instrumentalist for “*one of the great musical events of recent years*”, *The Pollini Project* at the Royal Festival Hall. Curated especially for London audiences, the “*imaginative and inspiring*” programming took listeners through piano repertoire from Bach to Boulez.

In a good night for **English National Opera**, Deborah Warner’s acclaimed production of Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin* won the RPS Music Award for Opera and Music Theatre and tenor **Toby Spence**, who sang the part of the tortured Russian poet Lensky in the production, won the RPS Music Award for Singer. 2011 was a breakthrough year for Toby Spence, who demonstrated “*vocal beauty and dramatic maturity*” in a range of repertoire on the opera stage and concert platform – from a recital at the Cheltenham Music Festival to Lensky at ENO and David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Royal Opera House

The night’s only double winner was East London’s **Spitalfields Music**, which took awards for pioneering work that encourages participation and engages with new audiences; the RPS Music Awards were the first and remain one of the very few to recognise outstanding achievement in these areas. Spitalfields Music’s community opera, *We Are Shadows*, took the Learning and Participation award. The opera, which had at its root the startling fact that you are never more than three meters away from a rat in London, featured over 300 local participants ranging in age from 8-68, including adults and children’s choirs alongside members of The Sixteen. Local involvement even extended to the hat making workshop from Crisis and knitting groups from local elder centres each taking a full part in creating the sets and costumes. Members of the Sixteen sang music from the opera (**John Barber**/music; **Hazel Gould**/libretto) at the RPS Music Awards ceremony.

Spitalfields Music’s ‘route one’ approach to building new audiences, the **Buy One, Donate One** ticket scheme, invites ticket buyers for its Summer and Winter Festivals to donate an additional ticket (or two) to a first time attender from Tower Hamlets. The scheme, which has proved hugely successful with regular ticket buyers who together have donated over 1200 tickets for Spitalfields Music to pass on, also proved popular with the awards jury, which awarded it the RPS Music Award for Audiences and Engagement.

The **National Youth Choir of Scotland** triumphed in the Ensemble category. Now in its 15th year, the NYCoS was praised for leading “*by example*” through its training and development programme, by commissioning and publishing choral music and by taking choral singing to the most prestigious platforms in the country.

Contemporary classical music hit the mark in several categories: The two composition prizes had distinguished winners. **Jonathan Harvey** won the Large-Scale Composition category for his choral work *Messages*, “*a work of exceptional epic and spiritual quality and a ...compelling experience for audiences*”. The Chamber-Scale Composition Award, presented in memory of former RPS Chairman **Tony Fell** who died in December 2011, was

awarded to **Sally Beamish** for the *“hauntingly beautiful and expertly crafted” Reed Stanzas (String Quartet No.3)*, which *“demonstrates an intimate and genuine relationship with its many sources of inspiration”*. Violinist, **Donald Grant** from the **Elias Quartet**, which premiered *Reed Stanzas* at the 2011 BBC Proms, played the opening solo from the work live at the Awards ceremony. Cellist **Oliver Coates** won the RPS Music Award for Young Artists. Still in his twenties, Coates received the award for diverse and virtuosic performances with ensembles including Aurora Orchestra, London Contemporary Orchestra and London Sinfonietta and for his playing and eclectic programming in the Harmonic Series at the Southbank Centre (where he is artist-in-residence) which has drawn a new classical audience. Avant-garde chamber ensemble **Apartment House** became the first contemporary ensemble to win the RPS Music Award for Chamber Music and Song for their revelatory performances of John Cage’s music at the Queen Elizabeth Hall London. **BBC Radio 3’s Hear and Now Fifty** scooped the RPS Music Award for Creative Communication. A year-long series of exploratory features on works by 50 composers from the second half of the 20th century, nominated by 50 figures from the worlds of new music and the arts, and all made available for free download, was recognised for *“dispelling, with such elegant brevity, the myths which for too long have isolated so many of the wonders of 20th-century music from wider appreciation”*.

In its 64th year the **Aldeburgh Festival** won the RPS Music Award for Concert Series and Festivals for *“the intelligent and arresting mix of work, approaches and settings”* under its artistic director Pierre-Laurent Aimard, encapsulated by Aldeburgh’s innovative choral and visual exploration of Sizewell Nuclear Power plant.

Commenting on the RPS Music Awards winners, RPS Chairman **John Gilhooly** said: *“The Royal Philharmonic Society Awards are a byword for musical excellence and from over 300 nominations nationwide, our independent juries have come up with a truly outstanding list of winners across all thirteen categories.*

2011 was a strong year, with memorable performances in opera, orchestral, instrumental and new music. Contemporary classical music is finding an increasingly enthusiastic audience in our concert halls, with a new generation embracing new music in the same way as they relish “the shock of the new” in other art forms, such as visual art, dance and theatre. In keeping with the Society’s core mission, these awards publicly salute those organisations and individuals who dare to be a little different and who offer audiences dynamic, revelatory musical experiences. Through their excellence and creativity, they are revivifying the art. It promises well for the future.”

The Royal Philharmonic Society is grateful to **BBC Radio 3** for their support, and to individual award sponsors: **David W Bowerman CBE, Peter Bull, BBC Music Magazine, Incorporated Society of Musicians, Rosenblatt Recitals, Musicians Benevolent Fund, the Yellow Car Charitable Trust** and an anonymous donor.

Mitsuko Uchida presented with Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal

Pianist **Mitsuko Uchida** was presented the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal during the awards ceremony by John Gilhooly. One of classical music's highest honours, 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, Thomas Quasthoff and Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

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).

In awarding the RPS Gold Medal to Mitsuko Uchida, the Society commented:

"Mitsuko Uchida has been enthralling audiences for decades with the sensitivity, insight, and unshowy brilliance of her playing. She is beloved by audiences the world over and held in special affection in Britain, where she now lives.

But she is not an artist who craves the limelight, devoting much of her time to rehearsal and study. Her luminous and penetratingly intelligent playing of the classical composers, especially the Viennese trio of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, has justly gained her worldwide respect and acknowledgement as one of the great pianists of our time. Through the Borletti-Buitoni Trust she is also a tireless mentor to young artists.

We salute Mitsuko Uchida therefore as both a peerless musician and a great humanist."

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List of RPS Music Award Winners

Audiences and Engagement – Spitalfields Music: *Buy One, Donate One*

Chamber Music and Song – Apartment House

Chamber-Scale composition – Sally Beamish: *Reed Stanzas*

Concert Series and Festivals – Aldeburgh Festival 2011

Conductor – Claudio Abbado

Creative Communication – BBC Radio 3: Hear and Now 50

Ensemble – National Youth Choir of Scotland

Instrumentalist – Maurizio Pollini

Large-Scale Composition - Jonathan Harvey: *Messages*

Learning and Participation - Spitalfields Music: *We Are Shadows*

Opera and Music Theatre - ENO: *Eugene Onegin*

Singer -Toby Spence

Young Artists - Oliver Coates

Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal: Mitsuko Uchida

RPS Music Award Winners - Citations

Award	Winner	Winners citation
Audiences and Engagement	Spitalfields Music: Buy One, Donate One shortlisted BBC Proms - Horrible Histories Prom	The jury was struck by the perfect simplicity of Spitalfields Music's Buy One Donate One ticket scheme. This encourages regular audiences to play a part in enabling others in the community to attend. Buy One Donate One ingeniously adds value to the experience of both new and existing audiences; it engages imaginatively with a widening festival constituency and creates a model for other organisations.
Chamber Music and Song donated by David W Bowerman CBE	Apartment House shortlisted Music in the Round	Their performances are always revelatory, and the concert of John Cage's music at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in September 2011 was an epiphany, confirming the status of Apartment House as one of the most innovative and exciting chamber ensembles in Europe.
Chamber-Scale Composition In memory of Tony Fell	Sally Beamish: Reed Stanzas (String Quartet No.3) shortlisted Gary Carpenter: Piano Trio Martin Butler: Rondes d'Automne Thomas Adès: The Four Quarters	This hauntingly beautiful and expertly crafted winning work arose from particularly close collaboration with its first performers and demonstrates an intimate and genuine relationship with its many sources of inspiration, which include birdsong, Arabic reed flute techniques and, more specifically, Celtic folk music and the reed bed landscapes at Snape in Suffolk. The Award goes to Sally Beamish for her Reed Stanzas (String Quartet No.3).
Concert Series and Festivals	Aldeburgh Festival 2011 Shortlisted Glasgow Music: MINIMAL Opera Holland Park RAM: Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata Series	In its 64th year the Aldeburgh Festival has scaled new heights of musical excellence and engagement. Under its artistic director Pierre-Laurent Aimard, the intelligent and arresting mix of work, approaches and settings, including an innovative choral and visual exploration at Sizewell, made this year's festival outstanding.
Conductor supported by BBC Music Magazine	Claudio Abbado Shortlisted Gianandrea Noseda Donald Runnicles	Every one of the infrequent but annual appearances by this conductor produces a performance of indelible, life-changing moment. His extraordinary, revelatory concerts with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall in 2011 changed perceptions, and raised the bar once again on what it is possible for a group of musicians to achieve. The Award goes to Claudio Abbado.
Creative Communication	BBC Radio 3 : Hear and Now 50 Shortlisted György Ligeti: Of Foreign Lands and Strange Sounds - edited by Louise Duchesneau and Wolfgang Marx (Boydell Press) K364 - Douglas Gordon BBC Four and BBC Radio 3: Symphony	From an excellent, challengingly diverse shortlist BBC Radio 3's ongoing series Hear and Now 50 won for dispelling, with such elegant brevity, the myths which for too long have isolated so many of the wonders of 20th-century music from wider appreciation. The availability of the broadcasts for download in perpetuity enhances their value, and the clever mixture of personal perspective and expertise shows Radio 3 at its best.
Ensemble donated by the Yellow Car Charitable Trust	National Youth Choir of Scotland Shortlisted BCMG Exaudi Pavel Haas Quartet	In its 15th year, the winning ensemble demonstrated its versatility and excellence in acclaimed concerts of Duruflé at Edinburgh Festival, and of Terry Riley and Brian ENO at Glasgow's MINIMAL festival. The ensemble galvanizes and inspires the youth choirs of Scotland through its training and development programmes, by commissioning and publishing choral music, and by example - taking choral singing to the most prestigious platforms in the country: The National Youth Choir of Scotland.

Instrumentalist supported by Musicians Benevolent Fund	Maurizio Pollini Shortlisted Marc-André Hamelin Christian Tetzlaff	This award is for one of the great musical events of 2011 – and indeed of recent years. The Pollini Project, five recitals at the Royal Festival Hall curated especially for London audiences, featured imaginative and inspiring programming, taking listeners through the piano repertoire from Bach to Boulez, in performances of the utmost musical integrity, perfectly marrying intellect to emotion. Here is a giant of the piano, an international figure whose fame has nothing to do with hype and everything to do with uncompromising brilliance: Maurizio Pollini.
Large-Scale Composition donated anonymously	Jonathan Harvey: Messages shortlisted Graham Fitkin: Cello Concerto Harrison Birtwistle: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra Rebecca Saunders: Stasis	With Messages, Jonathan Harvey has created a work of exceptional epic and spiritual quality - a most welcome addition to the repertoire of both professional and amateur choirs. The choir's incantation of ancient angelic names is set within a sound world that is both profoundly rooted and ethereal, a compelling experience for audiences.
Learning and Participation	Spitalfields Music: We Are Shadows Shortlisted: Cape Farewell / Eden Project: Unplugged - Winning The Clay Music in Offices	Spitalfields Music's We Are Shadows is a large-scale opera involving the diverse community of Tower Hamlets in London. The performance was brave and ambitious, uniting a broad spectrum of participants through work that was musically fresh and vibrant. The jury felt the project had significant educational and artistic substance, with performers who showed exceptional development – their sense of pride was inspirational in itself.
Opera and Music Theatre donated by the Incorporated Society of Musicians	ENO: Eugene Onegin Shortlisted RAM: Kommilitonen! ROH: Il Trittico	After a lively debate which considered a range of excellent work, including some outstanding new commissions, the jury chose English National Opera's beautifully realised production of Eugene Onegin for its superb orchestral playing and singing led by Music Director Edward Gardner which made a familiar work fresh and dynamic for today's audiences.
Singer donated by Rosenblatt Recitals	Toby Spence Shortlisted Michelle Breedt Eva-Maria Westbroek Roderick Williams	This was a break through year for Toby Spence, who in a wide range of repertoire on the opera stage and concert platform demonstrated vocal beauty and dramatic maturity culminating in the roles of Lensky and David.
Young Artists donated by Peter Bull	Oliver Coates Shortlisted Sophie Bevan Benjamin Grosvenor	Still in his twenties, cellist Oliver Coates receives the award for diverse and virtuosic performances with ensembles including Aurora Orchestra, London Contemporary Orchestra and London Sinfonietta. Meanwhile, the playing and eclectic programming of his Harmonic Series has drawn a new classical audience to the Southbank Centre, where he is artist-in-residence.
Presentation of the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal	Mitsuko Uchida	Mitsuko Uchida has been entralling audiences for decades with the sensitivity, insight, and unshowy brilliance of her playing. She is beloved by audiences the world over and held in special affection in Britain, where she now lives. But she is not an artist who craves the limelight, devoting much of her time to rehearsal and study. Her luminous and penetratingly intelligent playing of the classical composers, especially the Viennese trio of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, has justly gained her worldwide respect and acknowledgement as one of the great pianists of our time. Through the Borletti-Buitoni Trust she is also a tireless mentor to young artists. We salute Mitsuko Uchida therefore as both a peerless musician and a great humanist.

Notes to editors:

About the Royal Philharmonic Society

The Royal Philharmonic Society [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.

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; the newly launched Salomon Prize, for orchestral musicians; 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, Placido Domingo, Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Henri Dutilleux, Thomas Quasthoff and Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

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.

www.royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk

About BBC Radio 3

BBC Radio 3 has over 2 million listeners and is the home of classical music. The station also broadcasts a wide range of cultural programming including jazz, world music, arts and over 30 new drama programmes a year. BBC Radio 3 features more live classical music programming than any other and is the home of the BBC Proms, broadcasting every Prom live and over 600 complete concerts a year. The station is also the largest commissioner of new musical works in the country and is committed to supporting new talent; composers, writers and new young performers through schemes such as World Routes Academy, New Generation Artists and New Generation Thinkers.

www.bbc.co.uk/radio3