

PRESS RELEASE

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Winners announced for Royal Philharmonic Society [RPS] Music Awards

rpsmusicawards.com

- **Composer Harrison Birtwistle becomes most honoured musician in RPS Music Awards history**
- **Distinguished musicians and brilliant young talent celebrated: Daniel Barenboim, Joyce DiDonato, George Benjamin, violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja and pianist Igor Levit amongst the winners.**
- **A good year for contemporary music, with success for the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and Southbank Centre's *The Rest is Noise* festival.**
- **Music-loving couple who built a chamber music venue alongside their home triumph**
- **Singer Sir John Tomlinson presented with Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal**

Conductor **Daniel Barenboim**, mezzo-soprano **Joyce DiDonato** and two of the UK's most distinguished composers, **Harrison Birtwistle** and **George Benjamin** were amongst the big names scooping the silverware at this year's RPS Music Awards, the UK's most prestigious awards for live classical music and musical excellence, presented in association with BBC Radio 3. It was Harrison Birtwistle's fifth RPS Music Award, making him the most honoured musician in the awards history.*

The RPS Music Awards, presented in association with BBC Radio 3, celebrate outstanding achievement in classical music during 2013. Winners in 13 categories, chosen by independent juries, were announced at a glittering ceremony at London's Dorchester Hotel hosted by BBC Radio 3's **Petroc Trelawny** and **Sara Mohr-Pietsch**, with silver lyre RPS trophies presented by pianist **Graham Johnson**, an Honorary Member of the Society.

A special programme devoted to the RPS Music Awards will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on Sunday 18 May at 10pm.

Daniel Barenboim won the RPS Music Award for Conductor, and **Joyce DiDonato** the Singer Award. An emerging generation of dynamic musicians also proved winners, with Moldovan violinist **Patricia Kopatchinskaja** awarded the RPS Music Award for Instrumentalist and pianist **Igor Levit** chosen as the winner of the Young Artists award.

It was also a good year for major venues and ensembles, with the **Southbank Centre** and **London Philharmonic Orchestra** both winning awards for concerts focused on 20th century and contemporary music, and **Glyndebourne** recognised for *Imago*, a multi-generational community opera that tackled current social challenges – from ageing to the cyberworld. **Britten100**, an international initiative of vast scope celebrating the centenary of the birth of composer (and RPS Gold Medallist) Benjamin Britten, took the prize

for Audiences and Engagement. **George Benjamin** won the RPS Music Award for Large-Scale Composition for his opera *Written on Skin* at the Royal Opera House.

Champs Hill, a 160-seat concert hall built as a labour of love alongside the home of a music-loving Sussex couple, David and Mary Bowerman, and now a thriving performance venue, record label and warmly nurturing environment for emerging musical talent, took the prize for Chamber Music and Song.

Classical Music for the iPad generation was recognised, with the RPS Music Award for Creative Communication going to **Touch Press** for their elegant, stimulating classical iPad apps, including their brilliant exploration of a symphony that the Philharmonic Society commissioned in 1824, **Beethoven's 9th**.

In a special presentation, the Society's highest honour, the RPS Gold Medal, was presented to the celebrated English bass **Sir John Tomlinson**, described as "*a giant of a musician, not only in the rich resonance of his voice, but in his magnetic presence on stage and in his utmost generosity to his fellow musicians*".

Speaking at the RPS Music Awards ceremony, **John Gilhooly**, Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society saluted "*a great year*" for music, but warned against taking "*musical riches*" for granted:

"2013 was a great year for classical music in the UK. It was a year when the grand anniversaries – the bicentenaries of Wagner and Verdi and the centenary of Benjamin Britten – were celebrated in style, and this is reflected in the list of winners this evening. 2013 also brought us fantastic contemporary music that drew impressive audiences to 20th and 21st century music. Work on and off stage embraced new technology, and it was a year when distinguished names lined up alongside astounding younger talent, marking the way to a bright, adventurous future for classical music.

Mostly, however, this was a year about audiences; what unites all our winners is their desire to inspire existing enthusiasts and to reach out to new audiences with a boldness founded on passion and compellingly brilliant musicality.

I often feel that classical music is underrated in this country, and whilst celebrating the success of a wonderful year, I think we should not be blasé. We need to say, loud and clear, that music matters, shout loudly about outstanding talent, great concerts, inspirational opportunities to participate in music - show how it makes a difference - and understand that inertia and complacency can be every bit as detrimental to culture as a challenging economic climate."

Roger Wright, Controller of BBC Radio and Director of BBC Proms comments:

"It is good for BBC Radio 3, the home of classical music, to be in partnership with the Royal Philharmonic Society again, as we celebrate another terrific year of classical music. The range of the year's awards is another sign of the high quality in live music making and new work. We are thrilled to have broadcast so much of the award winning music and performers – and, in particular, to have been responsible through the BBC Proms for the remarkable Ring cycle conducted by Daniel Barenboim."

RPS MUSIC AWARDS – WINNERS

RPS Music Award for Conductor – **Daniel Barenboim**

RPS Music Award for Singer – **Joyce DiDonato**

RPS Music Award for Instrumentalist – **Patricia Kopatchinskaja**

RPS Music Award for Ensemble – **London Philharmonic Orchestra**

RPS Music Award for Young Artists – **Igor Levit**

RPS Music Award for Large-Scale Composition – **George Benjamin**

RPS Music Award for Chamber-Scale Composition – **Harrison Birtwistle**

RPS Music Award for Opera and Music Theatre – **Welsh National Opera**

RPS Music Award for Chamber Music and Song – **Champs Hill**

RPS Music Award for Learning and Participation – **Glyndebourne: *Imago***

RPS Music Award for Audiences and Engagement – **Britten-Pears Foundation: *Britten100***

RPS Music Award for Concerts Series and Festivals – **Southbank Centre: *The Rest is Noise***

RPS Music Award for Creative Communication – **Touch Press**

RPS Gold Medal – **John Tomlinson**

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* *Harrison Birtwistle also won the RPS Music Award for Large-Scale Composition in 1995 & 2003, and the award for Chamber-Scale Composition in 1990 & 2008*

About the RPS Music Awards

Presented in association with BBC Radio 3, the RPS Music Awards are the highest recognition for live classical music and musical excellence in the United Kingdom.

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 organisations to learning, participation and engagement. This year's awards are for achievement in the UK during 2013. The list of winners since 1989 reads as a roll call of the finest living musicians.

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RPS MUSIC AWARDS - THE WINNERS

CONDUCTOR

Daniel Barenboim was a popular winner of the prestigious RPS Music Award for Conductor, with the jury describing his widely acclaimed Wagner Ring Cycle with the Staatskapelle Orchestra at the BBC Proms as *"the musical experience of a lifetime for the thousands who heard it live or on air"*.

INSTRUMENTALIST; YOUNG ARTIST

"One of the most imaginative violinists around today", **Patricia Kopatchinskaja** won the RPS Music Award for Instrumentalist, described by the jury as an *"irresistible force of nature: passionate, challenging and totally original in her approach"*. The *"exceptionally gifted"* pianist **Igor Levit** scooped the Young Artists award, demonstrating *"exceptional maturity in terms of pianism and interpretation"* in *"spellbinding recitals"* of late Beethoven sonatas at Wigmore Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall.

SINGER; OPERA & MUSIC THEATRE

"A supreme exponent of the art of *bel canto*", American mezzo-soprano **Joyce DiDonato** was awarded the RPS Music Award for Singer, for singing with "*transcendent beauty and musical style*" in Rossini's *Donna del Lago* at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, and for her bravado performance at the Last Night of the Proms. This is the second time that DiDonato has won the award.

Welsh National Opera was awarded the RPS Music Award for Opera and Music Theatre for a season featuring three "*bold, contrasting productions*" – *Lulu*, *Lohengrin* and *Paul Bunyan* – "*each of the highest musical and theatrical standard*" with the work of its ensemble, orchestra, chorus and of Welsh National Youth Opera, including boys choir – *Only Boys Aloud* – all commended by the jury.

ENSEMBLE; CONCERT SERIES & FESTIVALS; CHAMBER MUSIC & SONG

The **London Philharmonic Orchestra** took the RPS Music Award for Ensemble, with the jury applauding the orchestra's "*courageous decision*" to devote an entire year's concerts to 20th century music. The resulting concerts, performed with "*scrupulous care and blazing conviction*" proved that "*taking risks can win an audience's loyalty*".

In a particularly good year for contemporary music, Southbank Centre's "*game-changing*" **The Rest is Noise** season was awarded the RPS Music Award for Concert Series and Festivals, described by the jury as "*an outstanding, bold concept, which through rich and intelligent programming, took new audiences on a journey through the 20th century*".

The Chamber Music and Song award went to **Champs Hill**, a unique venture in West Sussex which offers holistic support for chamber music and song: promoting excellence in performance and through their own record label and nurturing young talent and exploring unusual repertoire in a calm and supportive environment. Music lovers David and Mary Bowerman built the 160-seat The Music Room at Champs Hill alongside their own home, which over the last 15 years has "*become a venue of choice for recitalists and chamber ensembles*".

CHAMBER SCALE COMPOSITION; LARGE-SCALE COMPOSITION

Two of the UK's most distinguished composers took home the composition awards at this year's RPS Music Awards.

Harrison Birtwistle, who celebrates his 80th birthday this year, became the most honoured composer in RPS Music Awards history, winning the Chamber-Scale Composition award for *The Moth Requiem* (performed by the BBC Singers at the BBC Proms). The jury was "*captivated by this very personal work*" which incorporated the names of extinct British moths, describing it as "*exciting to experience, with textures that entice and ravish the ear... distinctive, deft, dark and delirious.*"

George Benjamin scooped the Large-Scale Composition prize for his opera *Written on Skin*, which received its UK premiere at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The jury saluted Benjamin's "*technical skill in the service of expression, depth of emotional impact, vividly colourful orchestration and a brilliant libretto*" by Martin Crimp.

AUDIENCES & ENGAGEMENT; LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION; CREATIVE COMMUNICATION

Britten100, an "*unprecedented collaboration between the Britten-Pears Foundation and partners national, international and local*" to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Benjamin Britten, won the RPS Music Award for Audiences and Engagement. Britten100 was applauded by the jury for its "*scale, ambition and diversity*" and for the "*exceptional number of performances, projects and resources drawing new, appreciative audiences to Britten worldwide*".

Glyndebourne's ambitious community opera, *Imago*, with a score by Orlando Gough and libretto by Stephen Plaice, took the RPS Music Award for Learning and Participation. Co-commissioned by Glyndebourne and Scottish Opera, the opera addressed contemporary issues such as ageing and the digital age. Spectacularly staged, it "*achieved artistic, educational and technical excellence*".

Touch Press's classical iPad apps, "*a new pinnacle in the marriage of performance, interpretation and new technology*" won the RPS Music Award for Creative Communication. Their three apps – The Orchestra, Beethoven's Ninth and Liszt's B minor Sonata – "*possess a rare power to take every listener – regardless of age and expertise – straight to the music's beating heart.*"

Full citations available at rpsmusicawards.com

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY GOLD MEDAL PRESENTED TO SIR JOHN TOMLINSON

The celebrated English bass, Sir John Tomlinson, himself a three-time winner of the RPS Music Award for Singer, was presented with the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal.

The Philharmonic Society Gold Medal, the Royal Philharmonic Society's – and one of classical music's - highest honours, was created to commemorate the centenary of Beethoven's birth in 1870 and celebrates the close relationship between the Society and the composer (the RPS commissioned Beethoven's 9th Symphony and championed his work).

Sir John Tomlinson joins an illustrious list of current RPS Gold Medallists including: Simon Rattle, Dame Janet Baker, Daniel Barenboim, Mitsuko Uchida, Thomas Quasthoff, Bernard Haitink, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Alfred Brendel, Plácido Domingo, Pierre Boulez, György Kurtág and András Schiff.

The medal was presented by RPS Chairman **John Gilhooly**, and in its citation the Society said:

"Sir John Tomlinson is a great British Wagnerian with a truly international reputation. For more than 40 years his magnificent bass voice has thrilled audiences around the world in opera and in concert.

He is a giant of a musician, not only in the rich resonance of his voice, but in his magnetic presence on stage and in his utmost generosity to his fellow musicians.

*He sings with all the major British opera companies, and for the Royal Opera in 2008 he gave a towering performance creating the title role of Harrison Birtwistle's *The Minotaur*. For eighteen consecutive seasons he appeared at Bayreuth, performing the leading roles in many of Wagner's works. The role of Wotan he made his own – living out the tragedy in a portrayal that is both epic and human and in which every word and nuance is heard.*

There are no pretensions about John Tom. For him celebrity status is irrelevant – the crucial thing is singing; and it is the desire to sing and communicate, and the obsession to get it right every time, that drive him.

Sir John Tomlinson is an international treasure and an inspiration to the next generation."

RPS Music Awards sponsors

The RPS Music Awards are presented in association with BBC Radio 3. The Society is grateful to sponsors of individual awards: **ABRSM**, the exam board of the Royal Schools of Music (Learning and Participation); **Boosey & Hawkes**, in memory of Tony Fell (Chamber-Scale Composition); **Bowerman Charitable Trust** (Young Artists); **BBC Music Magazine** (Conductor); **Incorporated Society of Musicians** (Opera and Music Theatre); **Lalita Carlton-Jones** (Concert Series and Festivals); **Rosenblatt Recitals** (Singer); **The Stradivari Trust** (Instrumentalist); **Yellow Car Charitable Trust** (Ensemble) and an anonymous donor (Large- Scale Composition).

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 9th 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.

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About BBC Radio 3

BBC Radio 3 broadcasts distinctive classical music and wider arts programming in three dimensions, through radio, live events and context. As the home of classical music, 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 the most significant commissioner of new musical works in the country and is committed to supporting new talent, from composers to writers and new young performers, through schemes such as New Generation Artists and New Generation Thinkers.

www.bbc.co.uk/radio3