

## Press Release

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## Composer Sir Peter Maxwell Davies awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal

One of classical music's highest honours, the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal, has been awarded to composer **Sir Peter Maxwell Davies**. He becomes the 102<sup>nd</sup> recipient since the medal was founded in 1870 in celebration of the centenary of the birth of Beethoven (London's Philharmonic Society commissioned Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and enjoyed a close association with the composer). The medal was presented to him at his home in the Orkney Islands by RPS Council Member, Sally Groves MBE.

In awarding the medal, the Society said:

*It is the brilliance of his writing, the searing power of his imagination, the vivid theatricality and the quality of craftsmanship that engage us with the music of Peter Maxwell Davies.*

*Over six decades he has been part of our public consciousness; an extraordinary musician who has moved from iconoclast and enfant terrible of the avant garde, to a leading cultural figure, appointed Master of the Queens Music in 2004. He continues to create wonderful, richly imagined works which are warmly welcomed by musicians and audiences at home and abroad.*

*Max is our foremost champion of creative music education, drawing on his early teaching experience and demonstrating that all children can compose music and perform given the minimum of opportunity. He is never reluctant to speak out or upset the status quo on matters about which he feels passionately (and there are many) – whether it be to admonish the government on arts funding or on green issues, to march against the invasion of Iraq, or to take on restaurants blighted by muzak.*

*And yet, while taking a very public role he has simultaneously embedded himself in the community of the Orkney Islands, his home since 1970. Here, as one of the founders of the St Magnus International Festival, he has put into action his belief (which he stated in his 2005 RPS Lecture), that "...a place cannot come to life musically*

*unless or until the inhabitants make and perform their own songs which are relevant to that place, and to the lives of the people who live in it."*

*Peter Maxwell Davies has redefined what it means to be a composer and inspired new generations of musicians. We applaud him for his generosity of spirit and are proud to present him with the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal.*

Peter Maxwell Davies commented:

*"I am absolutely delighted and couldn't be more honoured to receive the RPS Gold Medal. That's the one I wanted!"*

**Peter Maxwell Davies** joins a distinguished list of current RPS Gold Medallists including **Marta Argerich, Janet Baker, Daniel Barenboim, Alfred Brendel, Placido Domingo, Bernard Haitink, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, György Kurtag, Antonio Pappano, Thomas Quasthoff, Simon Rattle, András Schiff, John Tomlinson and Mitsuko Uchida.**

The extraordinary list of composers who have been awarded the RPS Gold Medal includes: **Brahms, Delius, Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Sibelius, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Kodály, Prokofiev, Olivier Messiaen, William Walton, Malcolm Sargent, Arthur Bliss, Benjamin Britten, Michael Tippett, Lutoslawski, Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, Ligeti, Elliott Carter, Henri Dutilleux** and most recently **György Kurtág.**

[www.philharmonicsociety.uk](http://www.philharmonicsociety.uk)

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