

Press Release

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Tony Fell awarded Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society



Tony Fell has been made an Honorary Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society in recognition of his outstanding services to music, the first music publisher to be honored in this way and only the 129th recipient since the first honorary membership was made to Carl Maria von Weber in 1826.

Tony Fell was Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society from 1997 to 2005, having previously enjoyed a distinguished role in music publishing, latterly as Managing Director of Boosey and Hawkes. In its citation, the Council of the Royal Philharmonic Society says:

"We in classical music have been lucky that Tony Fell has chosen to direct his extraordinary enthusiasm and energy in our direction.

At the helm of Boosey and Hawkes for over 25 years, he completely revived their strategy for new music for which he has an infectious passion and eager curiosity. He has always been a true and generous friend to composers and musicians of all ages, offering wise and pragmatic advice and, often as not, quietly rolling up his sleeves and sorting out solutions.

He was appointed Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 1997 and both galvanised and re-shaped the Society into an organisation that responds imaginatively to the challenges of the 21st century. In 2002, he led the sale of the RPS archive to the British Library, which opened this important collection to music scholars and the public, and generated the funds to secure the future of society and to develop new projects to support classical music today."

The presentation was made by RPS Chairman, John Gilhooly, on Thursday 9 June at a Philharmonia Orchestra's Music of Today concert which featured new works by RPS Composition Prize-winning composers Steven Daverson, Edward Nesbit and Mark Simpson.

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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 (2010) and George Benjamin (2011).

Royal Philharmonic Society

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; 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, 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.

Photo caption: left to right

Tony Fell receives the certificate of Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society from John Gilhooly, RPS Chairman.