



## PRESS RELEASE

For release:

STRICTLY EMBARGOED until 22.30hrs  
(UK time), Tuesday 5 May 2015

# Winners announced of Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards

The UK's most coveted live classical music awards

Presented in association with BBC Radio 3

[rpsmusicawards.com](http://rpsmusicawards.com)

#RPSMusicAwards @RoyalPhilSoc

- Big name winners include German baritone **Christian Gerhaher**, Latvian conductor **Andris Nelsons** and percussionist **Colin Currie**.
- **Sir Antonio Pappano** presented with the RPS's highest honour, the **Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal**. He becomes the 100<sup>th</sup> recipient since the medal was founded in 1870.
- **English National Opera** gets some welcome good news, scooping the RPS Music Award for Opera and Music Theatre, in an outstanding year for vocal performers and performance, with **Oxford Lieder Festival** and **Southbank Centre** also on song
- Younger talent recognised with awards for soprano **Mary Bevan** and, in only its seventh year, the London Contemporary Orchestra.
- New music celebrated with wins for Danish composer **Hans Abrahamsen**, British composer **Graham Fitkin**, and a Barbican celebration of Sir Harrison **Birtwistle at 80**
- **Breathtaking digital meets the best in live performance; bold initiatives to widen the enjoyment and understanding of music** marked with awards for the **Royal Opera House's *The Opera Machine***, and **Philharmonia's *iOrchestra***

Winners have been announced of the **Royal Philharmonic Society [RPS] Music Awards**, the UK's most coveted live classical music awards, with baritone **Christian Gerhaher**, conductor **Andris Nelsons** and percussionist **Colin Currie** amongst the

leading musicians honoured. Conductor and Music Director of the Royal Opera House, **Antonio Pappano** was presented with the Society's highest honour, the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal. He becomes the 100<sup>th</sup> recipient of the prestigious honour since the Gold Medal was initiated to commemorate the centenary of Beethoven's birth in 1870 (the Society commissioned Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony and had a close association with the composer).

The RPS Music Awards, marking outstanding musical achievement in 2014 and chosen by distinguished, independent juries, were presented at a ceremony at The Brewery in the City of London (evening – Tuesday 5 May) hosted by BBC Radio 3's **Sean Rafferty** and **Suzy Klein**, with 'silver lyre' trophies presented to the winners by soprano **Dame Felicity Lott**, and a live performance by percussionist **Colin Currie**. The new RPS Gold Medallist, **Antonio Pappano**, gave the keynote speech, asking: *How do you grow up without the Arts?*

Speaking at the awards ceremony, RPS Chairman, **John Gilhooly**, challenged a new government to *"put the strength of imagination and the power of creativity to change lives at the very centre of decision making"*, making a call for government to *"invest in the imaginations of our young people and promote creativity in every sphere – not just in the arts, but in science, mathematics, industry ... even in political thinking."* Commenting on the *"fantastic"* line up of RPS Music Award winners, he said: *"If there was ever a reason to embrace live music making in the UK, this is it: vibrancy, adventure, surprise, excellence."*

**A special programme featuring highlights from the RPS Music Awards ceremony, interviews and music will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on Monday 11 May at 7.30pm (and on BBC iplayer).**

**Alan Davey**, Controller of BBC Radio 3 comments:

*"The UK has a strong tradition of classical music and looking at the winners and shortlists for this year's RPS awards you can see the industry is in rude health. BBC Radio 3 is delighted to be at the heart of that tradition and to broadcast this important event and we congratulate the winners, and all those shortlisted, on their achievements."*

The RPS Music Awards are presented in association with **BBC Radio 3**, with individual awards supported by **ABRSM** - the exam board for the Royal Schools of Music, **BBC Music Magazine**, **Boosey and Hawkes** in memory of Tony Fell, **Bowerman Charitable Trust**, **Incorporated Society of Musicians**, **Rosenblatt Recitals**, **Schott Music**, **The Stradivari Trust**, the **Yellow Car Charitable Trust** and an **anonymous donor**.

Further press information from: Sophie Cohen on 020 7428 9850  
07711 551 787 [sophiecohen@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:sophiecohen@blueyonder.co.uk)

## LIST OF WINNERS

### RPS Music Award

**Singer – Christian Gerhaher**

**Instrumentalist – Colin Currie**

**Conductor – Andris Nelsons**

**Young Artists – Mary Bevan**

**Large-Scale Composition – Hans Abrahamsen**

**Chamber-Scale Composition – Graham Fitkin**

**Opera and Music Theatre – English National Opera**

**Ensemble – London Contemporary Orchestra**

**Chamber Music and Song – Oxford Lieder Festival**

**Concert Series and Festival – The Barbican: *Birtwistle at 80***

**Audiences and Engagement – Philharmonia *iOrchestra***

**Learning and Participation – Southbank Centre: *War Requiem***

**Creative Communication – Royal Opera House: *The Opera Machine***

**Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal – Sir Antonio Pappano**

A FULL LIST OF WINNERS AND CITATIONS CAN BE VIEWED AT

[www.rpsmusicawards.com](http://www.rpsmusicawards.com)

## RPS Music Awards – The Winners

There is a strong showing for vocal music and performers across several categories:

- In a year which has seen **English National Opera** placed under ‘special measures’ by Arts Council England, there was some welcome good news for the company, which picked up the award for Opera and Music Theatre for “consistently outstanding work” in 2014, with the awards jury commenting that: “ENO’s artistic vibrancy continues to shine”.
- The German baritone **Christian Gerhaher** won the RPS Music Award for Singer, for “the purity of spirit, exceptional clarity and sheer vocal beauty” of recitals at Wigmore Hall.
- Soprano **Mary Bevan** took the RPS Music Award for Young Artists for her “great vocal beauty and a growing maturity and versatility”, including in performances at the Royal Opera House and English National Opera.
- The **Oxford Lieder Festival** took home the RPS Music Award for Chamber Music for an ambitious three-week season that featured every song ever written by Schubert.
- The **Southbank Centre’s War Requiem** project, an intensive programme of events and learning resources centred around Britten’s masterpiece and culminating in a performance by young musicians led by conductor Marin Alsop, won the RPS Music Award for Learning and Participation.
- The Royal Opera House’s *The Opera Machine*, an online multi-angled view of the intricate theatrical process behind the scenes at a ROH Covent Garden performance of Wagner’s *Die Walküre* won the RPS Music Award for Creative Communication, described by the jury as “intuitive and gripping both for aficionados and those who have never been to Covent Garden” and admired for its “remarkable new perspective on how great art is put together.”
- Danish composer **Hans Abrahamsen’s** orchestral song cycle *Let me Tell You*, with a text by Paul Griffiths, and given its UK premiere by Canadian soprano Barbara Hannigan and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in June 2014, won the RPS Music Award for Large-Scale Composition, described by the jury as “a unique world... whose ravishing surface belies a meticulously imagined and innovative score”.

There is also a particularly youthful feel to this year’s RPS Music Awards winners, with category winners in the prestigious conductor, instrumentalist and ensemble categories all under 40:

- The Conductor award went to **Andris Nelsons**, outgoing Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, praised for his “profound interpretation of a wide repertoire... his deep commitment to nurturing new works... and his transformative music-making with the CBSO”.

- Scottish percussionist **Colin Currie**, a “fearless ambassador for his many instruments” and a former winner of the RPS Young Artists Award (in 2000) won the RPS Music Award for Instrumentalist for *Metal, Wood, Skin*, his extensive series of concerts, workshops and masterclasses as an Artist in Residence at Southbank Centre.
- “One of Britain’s brightest beacons of new music”, the **London Contemporary Orchestra**, won the RPS Music Award for Ensemble just seven years after it was first founded. In 2014, the orchestra collaborated with Radiohead’s Jonny Greenwood and played a series of concerts in both traditional and less formal spaces, with the jury commending the way it “nurtures new audiences, forges fruitful alliances across the stylistic spectrum and champions challenging scores with virtuosic flair”.

**The Royal Philharmonic Society has a long tradition of commissioning and supporting composers:**

This year, RPS Music Awards go to **Hans Abrahamsen** in the Large-Scale Composition category, British composer **Graham Fitkin** in the Chamber-Scale Composition category, and to a Barbican festival celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of the most decorated musician in RPS Music Award history, Harrison Birtwistle.

**Graham Fitkin** took the Chamber-Scale composition award for *Distil*, premiered by the Smith Quartet and percussionist Joby Burgess at Cheltenham Festival 2014. Fitkin’s work was chosen from “a strong and diverse field” for its “mature and beautifully judged writing through which magical sound worlds are evoked with minimal resources” with the jury commenting: “every step fizzes with electric charge”. The **Barbican’s** celebration of the composer’s work, *Birtwistle at 80* scooped the RPS Music Award for Concerts Series and Festivals, “an outstanding festival, of defining ambition and authority... that reached a new audience.”

**RPS Music Award for Audiences and Engagement:**

In 2012, the **Philharmonia Orchestra** won the RPS Music Award for Learning and Participation for its groundbreaking digital orchestra installation, *Universe of Sound*. This year, it took home the award for Audiences and Engagement for *iOrchestra*, which interweaves outstanding live performances with online and installation experiences, embedded in local communities in Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall and delivered via an impressive range of partnerships across arts and non-arts organisations. The orchestra was saluted for its “ability to reinvent and evolve to build on existing excellent work” in a project, which showed extraordinary levels of audience involvement and interest in areas experiencing multiple deprivation and traditionally low cultural engagement.

## Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal

The Royal Philharmonic Society's (and one of classical music's) highest honours, the **RPS Gold Medal** was presented to the Music Director of the Royal Opera House, conductor **Sir Antonio Pappano**, becoming the 100<sup>th</sup> RPS Gold Medallist since the honour was founded in 1870. In its citation, the Royal Philharmonic Society says:

*"Sir Antonio Pappano possesses a very rare combination of peerless musicianship, communication skills and leadership. Music Director of the Royal Opera House since 2002 and of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome since 2005, he is a musician who loves his job and knows it from the inside out.*

*He's superb with singers and has a particular passion for developing the talents of young performers. He takes an enormous pride in his orchestras, and has highly honed theatrical instincts. He also has a special gift for communication. He's a storyteller - able to talk simply and convey his passion and knowledge with an exuberance that is irresistible - and which is equally engaging to operatic newcomers and aficionados alike. He's endlessly energetic, a perfectionist with musicality at his very centre and he commands complete respect from his musicians and it is with great pleasure that we present him with the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society".*

Pappano joins a distinguished list of current gold medallists including **Dame Janet Baker, Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, Alfred Brendel, Placido Domingo, Bernard Haitink, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, György Kurtag, Thomas Quasthoff, Sir Simon Rattle, András Schiff, John Tomlinson and Mitsuko Uchida.**

## 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 Ninth 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. [philharmonicsociety.uk](http://philharmonicsociety.uk)

## About BBC Radio 3

Radio 3 broadcasts high-quality, distinctive classical music and cultural programming, alongside regular arts and ideas programmes, jazz and world music. The station features more live classical music programming than any other and is the home of the BBC Proms - broadcasting every Prom live and more than 600 complete concerts a year - alongside daily speech programming, 90 full-length operas, over 25 drama commissions and over 20 new BBC music commissions a year. Radio 3 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.

[bbc.co.uk/radio3](http://bbc.co.uk/radio3)

## RPS MUSIC AWARDS – WINNERS AND CITATIONS

Award	Winner	CITATION
<b>Audiences and Engagement</b>	<p><b>Philharmonia iOrchestra (SW England)</b></p> <p>Also shortlisted Crowd Out: David Lang/Birmingham Contemporary Music Group/Spitalfields Music</p> <p>Multi-Story</p>	<p>For its impressive range of partnerships; for its innovative marketing; for embedding itself in local communities in Devon and Cornwall, leaving them enriched through increased skills and connections; for interweaving outstanding live performances with online and installations; and for this organisation’s ability to reinvent and evolve. The RPS Audiences and Engagement award for 2015 goes to <b>Philharmonia’s iOrchestra</b>.</p>
<b>Chamber Music and Song</b>	<p><b>Oxford Lieder Festival</b></p> <p>Also shortlisted: Arditti Quartet</p>	<p>This year's winner celebrates a UK first, and a breadth, depth and audacity of programming that embraced a vast body of repertoire with singular focus and imagination. Over three weeks, established and upcoming artists brought Schubert's Vienna to Oxford, performing all of the composer's songs, and offering rich insight through associated educational and cultural events. Congratulations to the <b>Oxford Lieder Festival</b>.</p>
<b>Chamber-Scale Composition</b> sponsored by Boosey and Hawkes in memory of Tony Fell	<p><b>Graham Fitkin: <i>Distil</i></b></p> <p>Also shortlisted: Julian Anderson: String Quartet No.2 Liza Lim: Winding Bodies, 3 Knots</p>	<p>In a strong and diverse field, the judges were impressed by the mature and beautifully judged writing through which magical sound worlds are evoked with minimal resources. Twirling the listener across the dance floor, the music never puts a foot wrong; every step fizzes with electric charge, the effervescence gradually distilling into a gentle but remarkably resilient joy. The award goes to <b>Graham Fitkin’s <i>Distil</i></b>.</p>
<b>Concert Series and Festivals</b> sponsored by Schott Music	<p><b>Barbican: Birtwistle at 80</b></p> <p>Also Shortlisted: East Neuk Festival Oxford Lieder</p>	<p>From a strong field, the <b>Barbican’s Birtwistle at 80</b> stood out for its uncompromisingly brave, coherent programming (picking the right pieces whatever the challenges) and for the technically and stylistically superb performances. These unique works have now reached a new audience thanks to this outstanding festival, of defining ambition and authority.</p>
<b>Conductor</b> sponsored by BBC Music Magazine	<p><b>Andris Nelsons</b></p> <p>Also shortlisted: John Eliot Gardiner Vasily Petrenko</p>	<p>For his profound interpretation of a wide repertoire, most particularly Beethoven, Brahms and Strauss in 2014; his deep commitment to nurturing new works as evidenced in the recent premieres of Brett Dean and Hans Abrahamsen; and his transformative music-making with the CBSO; the 2014 award is given to <b>Andris Nelsons</b>.</p>
<b>Creative Communication</b>	<p><b>Royal Opera: The Opera Machine</b></p> <p>Also shortlisted: Fiona Maddocks : Harrison Birtwistle: Wild Tracks (Faber Books)</p> <p>Graham Johnson: Franz Schubert: The Complete Songs (Yale University Press)</p>	<p><b>The Royal Opera’s <i>The Opera Machine</i></b> lifts the curtain on the exceptional skill and craft that make opera happen, offstage and on. Intuitive and gripping, both for aficionados and those who have never been to Covent Garden, this interactive, multi-camera portrait of a production in action presents a remarkable new perspective on how great art is put together. It paves the way for further online initiatives helping everyone to get inside the creative process of making music.</p>

<p><b>Ensemble</b> donated by the Yellow Car Charitable Trust</p>	<p><b>London Contemporary Orchestra</b></p> <p>Also Shortlisted: Arditti Quartet Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra</p>	<p>Under the inspiring Hugh Brunt the <b>London Contemporary Orchestra</b> has become one of Britain's brightest beacons for new music. Its repertoire is adventurous yet it attracts sell-out crowds to extraordinary venues and has a remarkable online following. It nurtures new audiences, forges fruitful alliances across the stylistic spectrum, and champions challenging scores with virtuosic flair.</p>
<p><b>Instrumentalist</b> donated by The Stradivari Trust</p>	<p><b>Colin Currie</b></p> <p>Also shortlisted: James Ehnes Lawrence Power</p>	<p>'Metal, Wood, Skin' at Southbank Centre featured recitals, chamber collaborations, concerto performances, workshops, masterclasses and learning projects, all centred round one extraordinary artist. He is an utterly inspirational musician, a fearless ambassador for his many instruments, and a great curator and programmer, who works within all these different strands without ever compromising his artistic excellence. We're delighted to present <b>Colin Currie</b> with the Instrumentalist award.</p>
<p><b>Large-Scale Composition</b> donated anonymously</p>	<p><b>Hans Abrahamsen: <i>Let me tell you...</i></b></p> <p>Also shortlisted: John Casken: Apollinaire's Bird Simon Holt: Morpheus Wakes</p>	<p>The winner of this year's Award for Large-Scale Composition is a work of exquisite beauty whose ravishing surface belies a meticulously imagined and innovative score. With a text from Paul Griffiths's novel, chosen by composer, author and soloist, the listener is plunged into a unique world from the first second. The Award goes to <b>Hans Abrahamsen's <i>Let me tell you.</i></b></p>
<p><b>Learning and Participation</b> sponsored by the ABRSM, the exam board for the Royal Schools of Music</p>	<p><b>Britten's War Requiem, Southbank Centre</b></p> <p>Also shortlisted: Manchester Camerata: Music in Mind Sage Gateshead</p>	<p><b>Britten's War Requiem, Southbank Centre</b> was a truly immersive experience introducing, exploring and ultimately performing Britten's epic War Requiem. An ambitious project encompassing talks, participatory workshops, films and the creation of a new Children's Choir. The Southbank team – including the committed input of Marin Alsop - drew participants of all ages and experience into the creative and rehearsal process. The project reflected the profound nature of Britten's work and was distinctive for its overall quality and its attention to detail.</p>
<p><b>Opera and Music Theatre</b> sponsored by the Incorporated Society of Musicians</p>	<p><b>English National Opera</b></p> <p>Also shortlisted: Royal Opera House: Die Frau ohne Schatten  Taliesin Arts Centre: Under Milk Wood by John Metcalf</p>	<p><b>English National Opera</b> 's consistently outstanding work, illustrates this company's adventurous and challenging approach to making opera. Across a range of repertoire, from Rodelinda and The Girl of the Golden West to Benvenuto Cellini and The Thebans, the latter under the inspirational musical leadership of Ed Gardner, ENO's artistic vibrancy continues to shine.</p>
<p><b>Singer</b> sponsored by Rosenblatt Recitals</p>	<p><b>Christian Gerhaher</b></p> <p>Also shortlisted: Mark Padmore Nine Stemme</p>	<p>In an outstanding shortlist, this singer's Wigmore Hall recitals shone out – for their selfless service to the music, honesty of communication, purity of spirit, exceptional clarity and sheer vocal beauty. The winner is <b>Christian Gerhaher</b>.</p>

<p><b>Young Artists</b> donated by the <b>Bowerman</b> Charitable Trust</p>	<p><b>Mary Bevan</b></p> <p>Also shortlisted: Andrés Orozco-Estrada JACK Quartet</p>	<p>In a notably strong shortlist, the jury remarked on the level of commitment and energy demonstrated by leading young professionals to extend engagement with audiences.</p> <p>From concert platform to stage <b>Mary Bevan</b> exhibited great vocal beauty and a growing maturity and versatility in appearances including her debut at Royal Opera House and as a Harewood Young Artist at English National Opera.</p>
<p><b>Presentation of</b> <b>the RPS Gold</b> <b>Medal</b></p>	<p><b>Antonio Pappano</b></p>	<p><i>Antonio Pappano possesses a very rare combination of peerless musicianship, communication skills and leadership. Music Director of the Royal Opera House since 2002 and of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome since 2005, he is a musician who loves his job and knows it from the inside out.</i></p> <p><i>He's superb with singers and has a particular passion for developing the talents of young performers. He takes an enormous pride in his orchestras, and has highly honed theatrical instincts. He also has a special gift for communication. He's a storyteller - able to talk simply and convey his passion and knowledge with an exuberance that is irresistible - and which is equally engaging to operatic newcomers and aficionados alike. He's endlessly energetic, a perfectionist with musicality at his very centre and he commands complete respect from his musicians and it is with great pleasure that we present him with the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society.</i></p>