



Press Release

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ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY YOUNG MUSICIANS PROGRAMME MAKES AWARDS TO THE TUNE OF £91,000

Thanks to the generosity of a number of new donors the Royal Philharmonic Society has increased its funding for its Young Musicians Programme this year and is investing £91,000 in supporting outstanding instrumentalists, ensembles and composers in ongoing professional development. There are 13 commissions for young composers, rare opportunities for further study abroad and recognition for two outstanding chamber ensembles and a young violinist. £20,000 has been made available to enable music students in financial need to purchase much needed quality instruments.

Each year, the RPS supports around 30 young musicians during crucial years of study and nascent professional life. The RPS Young Musicians Programme is broad in scope and ambitious in its aims. It includes professional mentoring that pairs extraordinary young musicians with distinguished artists, support for outstanding young singers, awards for string players, and commissions new works and offers mentoring opportunities for emerging composers. The RPS also offers non-repayable grants to help music students purchase the quality instruments that can make a profound difference to their musical development and celebrates the achievements of school-aged musicians and composers. As part of its commitment to mentoring musicians, the Society has joined forces with *Women Conductors* on a series of workshops designed to encourage more women to conduct.

Rosemary Johnson, Executive Director of the RPS comments: *"The RPS takes huge pleasure and pride in helping talented young musicians who in keeping with our ethos, are serious of purpose and adventurous of spirit. Time and time again we hear from them that this support is life-changing. We are hugely grateful for the generosity of private donors and trusts, and to all those who contribute to our annual appeal*, who make this possible at a time when the cost of an extended music education is increasingly beyond the financial grasp of many young people. These RPS young musicians demonstrate, if ever a demonstration were needed, that music transcends borders and barriers. We are pleased to support young performers in studying abroad, and to support composers and instrumentalists of all nationalities who are based in the UK, and who add so much to our cultural life."*

The most recent RPS Young Musicians Programme awards are:

COMPOSERS

£28,000 to commission and support the work of emerging composers

- Six new works commissioned by the RPS Composition Prize. **Eugene Birman, Austin Leung and Freya Waley-Cohen** will write for the Philharmonia Orchestra as part of Music of Today series; **Bethan Morgan-Williams** will write a new work for Cheltenham Festival, **Emmanuel Charalabopoulos** for Presteigne Festival, and **Laurence Osborn** for Music in the Round, Sheffield, for performances in 2018.
- In a new initiative with support from the Boltini Trust, the RPS has joined forces with Classic FM to commission works by seven young composers as part of the station's 25th birthday celebrations. Aged between 16 and 23 years old, works by **Alexander Woolf, Alexia Sloane, Jack Pepper, Benjamin Rimmer, Dani Howard, Marco Galvani** and **Oliver Muxworthy** will be premiered throughout the summer and autumn, and recorded for broadcast on Classic FM.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENT MUSICIANS

£30,500 has been awarded for further study abroad

- Since pianist Stephen Hough became the first RPS Julius Isserlis Scholar in 1980, the Society has enabled outstanding young musicians to study with the finest teachers worldwide, including across Europe, the USA and Ghana. This year, the scholarship is enabling two musicians to complete their studies in Holland and Switzerland. 19 year old percussionist **Tom Pritchard** from West Yorkshire will be supported to complete a Bachelors degree at the Conservatorium Van Amsterdam where he is taught percussion and timpani by members of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and studies with renowned marimba player, Rachel Xi Zhang. 24 year old harpist **Richard Allen** from County Antrim will continue his Masters studies with Letizia Belmondo at the Haute École de Musique in Lausanne.

£20,000 is being made available to help music students in financial need purchase their own instruments essential to their professional studies through the RPS Instrument Purchase Grants. In a welcome change from the model of student loans, the Society provides one-off non-repayable awards. Payback comes purely in the form of the startling musical progress that can be made on an appropriate, quality instrument.

This year, the Young Musicians Programme will help towards the purchase of instruments for 14 music students from seven conservatoires nationwide. Instruments include clarinets, trumpets, bassoons, bass trombone, two French horns, an oboe, baritone saxophone, piccolo, classical guitar and a baroque alto recorder.

INSTRUMENTALISTS AND ENSEMBLES

This year, a new award joins the roster of RPS prizes for instrumentalists and ensembles. The **RPS Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award**, supported by Charles Henderson, offers £5,000 to an emerging, UK-based chamber ensemble to be used to develop performance opportunities. The first winner of the award is the **Pelléas Ensemble**. Dedicated to performing new music, the ensemble formed at the Guildhall School of

Music and Drama in 2011 and are Park Lane Group Young Artists.

The £5,000 **RPS Albert and Eugenie Frost Prize**, which also develops performance opportunities for violin, viola or cello players, in a trio or quartet has been awarded to the **Marmen String Quartet**, current holders of Music in the Round's 'Bridge' Scheme.

26 year old Dutch violinist **Amarins Wierdsma** has been selected as the winner of the £2,500 **RPS Emily Anderson Prize** for violinists, 50 years after the first prize was awarded in 1967. In 2013 Amarins moved to London to study with David Takeno at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, completing her Masters with distinction, and is currently on the Artist Diploma scheme.

SCHOOL-AGED COMPOSERS AND MUSICIANS

Applications are now open for the RPS Duet Prizes for outstanding young instrumentalists and composers of secondary school age. The biennial prizes, first awarded in 2016, are part of 'Ensemble Philharmonic', an initiative by the Royal Philharmonic Society and The Duet Group, designed to build links between exceptional young musicians and secondary music departments, and the music profession through concerts, talks, masterclasses and creative collaborations.

The RPS Duet Prizes, supported by the Duet Group Charitable Foundation, aim to encourage and recognise musical excellence in formative years, and the inaugural RPS Duet Prizes in 2016 revealed a wealth of extraordinary young talent. The first RPS Duet Prize winners were 16-year-old cellist **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** from Nottingham (who went on to win the BBC Young Musician of the Year 2016) and 18-year-old Cheltenham composer **Freya Ireland** (an association which has been further developed with her appointment as RPS/Wigmore Hall Apprentice Composer-in-Residence).

The RPS Duet Prizes are open to student musicians from schools and Hubs, but not specialist music schools, who are 18 or under on 31st August 2018. The deadline for applications is Midday, Wednesday 1 November 2017.

**FULL DETAILS OF THE RPS YOUNG MUSICIANS PROGRAMME,
HOW TO SUPPORT IT, AND RECENT AWARD RECIPIENTS CAN BE
FOUND AT www.philharmonicsociety.uk**

Further press information from:
Sophie Cohen on 020 7482 3466 07711 551 787
sophiecohen@blueyonder.co.uk

*** RPS Young Musicians Programme Funders**

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Composers

www.eugenebirman.com

www.freyawaleycohen.com

www.soundcloud.com/austinleung

www.soundcloud.com/betthanmorganwilliams

www.laurenceosborn.com

www.classicfm.com/win/25-birthday-commissions/

Instrumentalists and Ensembles

www.pelleasensemble.com

www.marmenquartet.com

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/amarinswierdsmaviolinist/>

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/RichardAllenHarpist/>