

PRESS RELEASE

25 February 2019



Fiona Robertson wins major contemporary music award

Fiona Robertson, Director of the acclaimed Scottish new music organisation **sound**, is to be awarded the prestigious **Leslie Boosey Award** by the **Royal Philharmonic Society**.

The Award is presented every two years in recognition of those who work tirelessly ‘backstage’ to champion new music. The Award is not for composers or performers, but for programmers, publishers, broadcasters, administrators, educationalists and figures from the recording industry.

Based in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, **sound** supports composers, organises outreach and community work and runs the **soundfestival**, Scotland’s festival of new music. Fiona helped establish the organisation in 2004 and has since worked tirelessly transforming its scope, commissioning over 120 new works from a range of composers and supporting many others. She has produced hundreds of events, brought many distinguished composers to North East Scotland, and nurtured a vibrant audience and community for new music in Scotland beyond the strongholds of Glasgow and Edinburgh. She was also instrumental in setting up New Music Scotland, bringing together promoters, composers and performers in Scotland.

The Award is given in memory of Leslie Boosey (1887 – 1979), the music publisher who merged his family firm to establish Boosey & Hawkes, one of the world’s leading publishing companies. He was responsible for cultivating and promoting a range of eminent composers as well as striving to achieve better rights and royalties in perpetuity for composers internationally.

Previous recipients have included Amelia Freedman CBE, founder and director of the Nash Ensemble; Southbank Centre’s Director of Music Gillian Moore CBE; music publishers Sally Groves MBE, Sally Cavender and Bill Colleran; Jackie and Stephen Newbould for their work running the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group; NMC Recordings and Colin Matthews OBE, not for his work as a composer but in founding NMC and his work on behalf of the Britten Estate and the Red House at Aldeburgh. Fiona Robertson is the first person based in Scotland to win the Award.

James Murphy, Chief Executive of the Royal Philharmonic Society, says: ‘Comprising leading figures from the music profession, our panel was unanimously impressed by the quality and scope of all Fiona has accomplished. She has made new music resound in an area where it may otherwise scarcely be heard.’

Fiona Robertson says: ‘I am thrilled to be the recipient of the Leslie Boosey Award, and proud to join a list of such illustrious previous recipients. Its great recognition for the work that many other people as well as myself have put in to developing **sound** and creating new music opportunities in Scotland, in particular in the North East.’

The Award – a resplendent bronze eagle commissioned from renowned sculptor Dame Elisabeth Frink – will be presented to Fiona shortly.

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ABOUT FIONA ROBERTSON

Fiona Robertson is Director of **sound**, a new music organisation based in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, which supports composers, organises outreach and community work and runs the **soundfestival**, Scotland's festival of new music.

Brought up in Aberdeenshire where she was a keen young musician, playing viola in youth orchestras, Fiona went on to study politics and economics at Manchester University, followed by a postgraduate qualification in Arts Administration at Dauphine University in Paris. After many years living and working in France, she returned to Scotland, and was approached by Professor Pete Stollery from the University of Aberdeen and Mark Hope, Chair of Woodend Barn, about setting up sound. She has spent the past 14 years working alongside an enthusiastic staff team and supportive local network to increase the reach of new music to as many people as possible in North East Scotland and beyond. During this time she has been involved in the commissioning of over 120 new works from a range of composers, and supporting many others. Fiona was also instrumental in setting up New Music Scotland, an organisation bringing together promoters, composer and performers in Scotland.

ABOUT sound

sound is a new music incubator based in north-east Scotland encouraging new music creation and discovery. We run the annual **soundfestival**, as well as year-round activity supporting a wide range of composers, engaging with local communities and providing educational opportunities.

sound aims to give composers the opportunity to experiment, develop and create new works, and to have these works performed and heard. We encourage audiences of all ages and backgrounds to experience all kinds of new music and cross-art form experimentation.

We are strongly influenced by our geographic location, covering both urban areas and remote rural communities, and respond to its specificities and gaps in provision. We often work closely with local arts and other community organisations to share ideas and deliver joint activity to the benefit of the local area.

Highlights from 2018's **soundfestival** can be seen here:

<https://vimeo.com/307098234>

The next **soundfestival** runs 23 October to 3 November 2019.

<https://sound-scotland.co.uk>

ABOUT THE ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

For over 200 years, the Royal Philharmonic Society has been at the heart of music, creating opportunities for musicians to excel, championing the vital role that music plays in all our lives.

It all began in 1813 when a group of musicians set out to establish a series of orchestral concerts in London. The Society's regular performances attracted world-class artists including Mendelssohn and Wagner, and it commissioned exhilarating new music for an eager public to hear: most famously, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In its founding gesture, the Society created a lasting culture. Other orchestras found their footing and their music resounds across Britain today.

200 years later, the Society continues to celebrate and empower musicians who – like our founders – strive to enrich society with all that they do. Through grants, commissions and performance opportunities we help exciting young performers and composers find their voice. Through our renowned annual Music Awards, we celebrate the quality, impact and ingenuity of the finest artists and creative forces at work today. Through all our endeavours, we are dedicated to proving classical music's rightful and powerful place in society.

<https://royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk/>