



## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**of the Royal Philharmonic Society**

**7.00pm on Tuesday 12 May 2026**

**Waldo Williams Suite, Friends House, 173–177 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ**

Members present: Angela Dixon (Chair), Rikesh Shah (Honorary Treasurer), Sarah Gee (Honorary Secretary), James Murphy (Chief Executive), Harriet Wybor (General Manager), Alison Pavier (Development Consultant), Leon Bosch (RPS Council), Sam Jackson (RPS Council), Alexander Dragonetti, Alexandra Dariescu, Alison Pavier, Andrew Blankfield, Ann Sheffield, Atholl Swainston-Harrison, Charlotte Smith, Fiona Harvey, Ishani O'Connor, Jon Jacob, Julian Debreuil (RPS Premier Corporate Member) Leon Bosch, Madeleine Mitchell, Matilda Lloyd, Merve Karal, Meurig Bowen, Philip Reed, Raymond Yiu, Ruth Cooper-Dickson (RPS Advance Corporate Member), Sally Groves

Also attending: Emily Porter (Administrator), Andreas Flohr (guest), Benedicte Payombo (ABRSM – RPS Corporate Supporter), David Taylor (guest), Esther Yoo (guest), Jordan Fan (Wildkat PR – RPS Corporate Supporter), Phillippa Steel (Presto Music – RPS Awards Principal Supporter), Richard Gowers (guest), Wayne Arthur (Wildkat PR – RPS Corporate Supporter)

Apologies received (and proxy votes cast by): Anthony Pinching, Carol Nixon, Brian Elias, Helena Gaunt, Stephen Hough, Hannah French, Joseph Middleton, Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason, Jo Buckley, Leanne Langley, Louise Mitchell, Roderick Williams

### **1 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 15 May 2025**

There were no amendments to the Minutes, which were approved by a show of hands from those present and from proxy votes cast.

### **2 Adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 August 2025**

The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts, signed by Angela Dixon and independent examiners TC Group, had been circulated to Members several weeks prior to the AGM.

Chief Executive James Murphy summarised key elements of the Annual Report:

- Significant celebrations led by the RPS marking 200 years since its original Members brought their commission – Beethoven's Symphony No.9 – to the UK for the first time.
- The huge success of the RPS Awards presented for the first time in Birmingham, at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, to a capacity audience of music-lovers and music-makers, with notably three big wins for disabled musicians: Paraorchestra (RPS Ensemble Award), Open Arts Community Choir, Belfast (RPS Inspiration Award) and Sarah Lianne Lewis (RPS Chamber-Scale Composition Award).

- Notable premieres for composers supported by the RPS at locations including Portsmouth, Norwich, Sheffield, Cardiff, Presteigne and London.
- The introduction of the significant new RPS Thea Musgrave Fund, made possible by its generous namesake and her husband Peter Mark; demand amongst musicians for such measures was noted with £500,000 of applications sought for an initial round of £20,000 in grants.
- Multiple opportunities for performers included the ongoing RPS Conductors programme in partnership with Royal Northern Sinfonia, this year showcased at the Association of British Orchestras Conference, leading other orchestras to seek to emulate and learn from its model.
- £18,000 of grants given to music college students in urgent need of funds to buy instruments of their own.
- The RPS Gold Medal presented to three international talents: composer Arvo Pärt in the week of his 89<sup>th</sup> birthday, composer/conductor Thomas Adès, and cellist Yo-Yo-Ma; RPS Honorary Membership presented to composer/conductor James MacMillan, and two musical trailblazers – Amelia Freedman and John Wallace who both sadly died in the year since their presentations.
- Financially, the RPS broke even on unrestricted funds for a fifth consecutive year: an achievement only possible thanks to the ongoing support of RPS Members and a range of trusts and companies who believe in the charity and its mission.
- An investment management review in-year, with the resolution to stay with Cazenove Capital, in whom Trustees continue to have faith; the year overall saw a moderate gain on investments, despite unsettled global markets.
- At year end, unrestricted reserves stood at £160,780, slightly short of the reserves policy target of £170,000 which Trustees deem necessary to cover six months of operating costs.

James thanked Trustees and Council, and colleagues Harriet, Cathy, Emily and Alison for their role in all the Society's achievements over the year.

Angela commended James and the team. There were no further matters arising, and the Annual Report and Accounts will be submitted to the Charity Commission and Companies House. Angela noted that Trustees are satisfied with the work of auditors at TC Group in their independent examination of the Accounts and will look to appoint them again next year.

### **3 Ordinary Resolution to approve Board appointments**

The re-appointment to the Board of Angela Dixon, the annual re-appointment of Rikesh Shah to the role of Honorary Treasurer, and the appointment to the Board of Joseph Middleton and Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp, was approved by a show of hands from those present and from proxy votes cast.

Angela noted that, as Sarah Gee stands down from the Board, a new Honorary Secretary will be co-opted from among the Trustees in due course.

### **4 Ordinary Resolution to approve Council appointments**

The re-appointment to the Council of Helena Gaunt, Jess Gillam, Sam Jackson and Stephen Hough, the annual re-appointment of Leanne Langley to the role of Honorary Librarian, and the appointment to the Council of Leon Bosch, Roderick Williams and Sarah Gee, was approved by a show of hands from those present and from proxy votes cast.

Angela thanked Gillian Moore and Edward Blakeman who both step down from the Council with effect from this meeting, having also served significant prior terms on the Board. She also thanked Anthony Bolton who was stepping down from the Council and had been especially helpful in the recent investment review. The charity will continue to value and draw insight from all three as RPS Members.

## 5 **Ordinary Resolution to approve the Board and Council's nominations for the Gold Medal**

A vote was passed by a show of hands from those present and from proxy votes cast to approve awarding the RPS Gold Medal to pianist Yuja Wang and to composer/conductor John Adams. Presentations will be organised for later in the coming year, and the news remains confidential for now. Angela thanked all Members for respecting this.

## 6 **Any other business**

No further business was proposed.

James updated Members on forthcoming activities, in particular:

- The Board and Council has resolved to present RPS Honorary Membership in the year ahead to the much-loved baritone Thomas Allen for all his services to music. This news also remains confidential for now.
- The charity has launched the new RPS Ambache Fund, having been entrusted with the residual funds of the former Ambache Charitable Trust by its namesake (and RPS Member) Diana Ambache, to continue its cause, supporting the performance and promotion of music by historic women composers. Here too interest and demand has proven exceptionally high, with £250,000 worth of applications received for £16,000 of initial grants.
- The next fixture in the RPS's ongoing series of conversational events (date to be confirmed shortly) is set to reunite BBC Young Musician 2016 finalists Ben Goldscheider, Jess Gillam and Sheku Kanneh-Mason to reflect together on a decade in UK music-making, ahead of their BBC Proms Triple Concerto.
- Over the Summer, the RPS will run its next high-level RPS Conductors course in Gateshead with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, and thanks to kind donations from two supporters, will coordinate a major new course with a chamber orchestra in London.
- The RPS Awards will return in 2027 to the Queen Elizabeth Hall at London's Southbank Centre on Thursday 11 March 2027. Tickets will go on sale (with priority booking for RPS Members) in October 2026.

Angela thanked RPS Members and supporters for their continued faith in the charity and all it does for the good of music.

The formal business of the AGM was immediately followed by 'RPS In Conversation' on the broad-ranging theme of Britishness in classical music today, with a panel comprising three RPS Members with fascinating perspectives: Sam Jackson, Controller of BBC Radio 3 and BBC Proms – two treasured national institutions where homegrown and international talents share the limelight; popular pianist Alexandra Dariescu, a British citizen with Romanian heritage who performs the music of countless nations; and the acclaimed London-based composer Raymond Yiu who grew up in Hong Kong.

Following this, RPS Members had the opportunity to talk to the panel, to RPS management and Trustees, and to fellow RPS Members.