



**ROYAL
PHILHARMONIC
SOCIETY
AWARDS
2026**



SHORTLIST GUIDELINES

Congratulations on being shortlisted for a Royal Philharmonic Society Award!

We are pleased to share here everything you need to know about being shortlisted for the RPS Awards. We hope this is a useful guide for you to refer to at all stages between now and the big night.

Please take the time to read this document, to ensure that we can make the most of your nomination, and that you've supplied everything we need to do that.

Please don't hesitate to ask us any questions not covered here.

If you may like this information in a different format, for accessibility reasons, in the first instance please contact Emily Porter, RPS Administrator, by phone on 020 7287 0019 (weekdays 9:30am – 5:30pm) or email at admin@philharmonicsociety.uk and we will do our best to help.

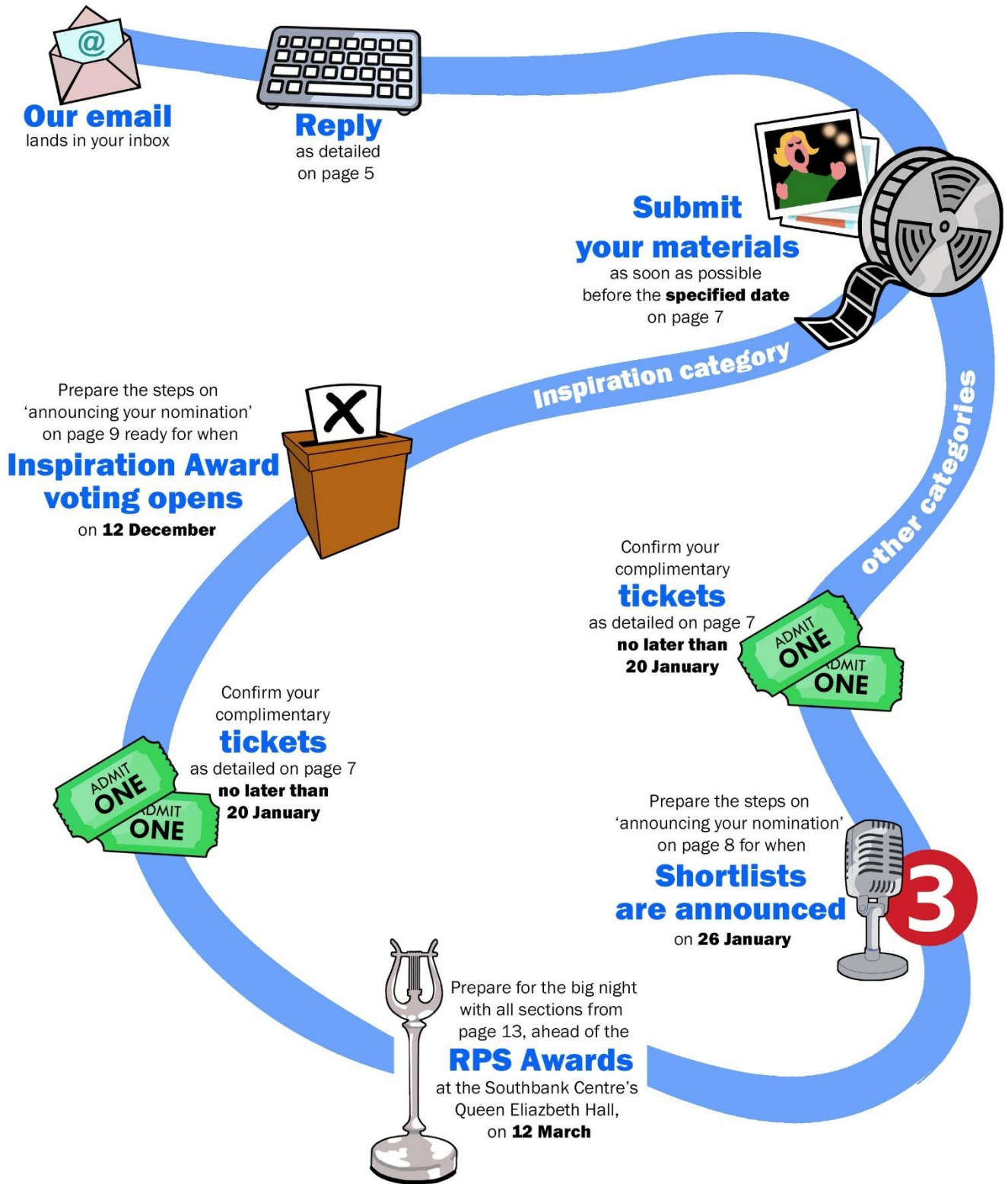
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Key dates

To make the most of your nomination, there are key things we need from you at certain stages in the weeks ahead. These guidelines aim to present clear, helpful information, and here's the journey to RPS Awards night at a glance...



About the RPS Awards

‘the biggest night in UK classical music’ *The Sunday Times*

Regarded by many as the BAFTAs for classical music, the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards are classical music’s annual good news story, shining much-needed light on inspirational individuals, groups and initiatives whose music has lifted hearts and minds across the nation.

Annually, we welcome nominations for the RPS Awards from anyone who is an RPS Member (which is for anyone who loves classical music: you can find out more about becoming an RPS Member on our website [here](#) and we’d be so pleased to welcome you) and from colleagues who work in the classical music profession. Nominations are welcomed for 11 of 13 categories: Chamber-Scale Composition, Large-Scale Composition, Conductor, Ensemble, Impact, Instrumentalist, Opera and Music Theatre, Series and Events, Singer, Storytelling, and Young Artist. To find out more about each category and the criteria, please visit the dedicated **RPS Awards** area of our website, as linked below. There are two further awards: Gamechanger, for which a sole recipient (without a shortlist) is chosen by the RPS Board of Trustees and advisory Council, and Inspiration celebrating the nation’s non-professional music-makers. For this latter award, an expert panel defines a shortlist then we open it for public vote on our website. If you are shortlisted for the Inspiration Award, you should still read all the guidelines: the ‘Announcing your nomination (Inspiration)’ section on page 11 will be particularly helpful in explaining the process for it.

Annually, the RPS Awards celebrate achievements in the previous classical season. Our upcoming Awards, which take place on Thursday 12 March 2026, will celebrate achievements from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025. Throughout November and December 2025 we are convening expert panels for each award, newly drawn each year from across the music profession, to review nominations and decide upon shortlists and winners. Please note, we are notifying shortlistees of outcomes after panels have met for each award, rather than waiting till all the panels have met. It is likely that, while your shortlist has now been decided, other panels are yet to meet.

Shortlists in all categories (except Gamechanger and Inspiration) will be publicly announced on Monday 26 January 2026, in association with RPS Awards partner BBC Radio 3.

Since 2021, we have presented the RPS Awards in a refreshed and open format, with a vastly-reduced ticket price giving more music-lovers and music-makers than ever before the opportunity to get together and feel part of the festivities. Given the national story they tell, our most recent RPS Awards took place in Birmingham (March 2025) and Manchester (March 2024). For a flavour of what the RPS Awards are like, you can watch the film of 2025’s event [here on our website](#). This year, we are set to return to London and the 2026 RPS Awards will be at **7:00pm on Thursday 12 March 2026** at the **Southbank Centre’s Queen Elizabeth Hall**. More details about the occasion can be found below. RPS Awards winners receive a trophy in the form of a silver lyre, designed by former RPS Council member Laurie Watt. Central to the story of Orpheus, the lyre is one of the earliest symbols of music’s power to see us through difficult times, as it certainly has in recent years.

The RPS Awards have their own [dedicated area](#) of our website which you can also easily find through our homepage: royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk. A registered charity, the Royal Philharmonic Society has been at the heart of music for over 200 years, supporting musicians and championing the vital role that music plays in all our lives. The Society’s tradition of recognising excellence among musicians dates back to the 19th Century with the presentation of RPS Honorary Membership and the RPS Gold Medal presented to the likes of Mendelssohn, Brahms, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Elgar, Strauss, Stravinsky, Bernstein and more recently Martha Argerich, Jessye Norman, George Benjamin, Marin Alsop, John Williams and Arvo Pärt, among many others.

Confidentiality

Please note, all shortlisted nominations are **strictly confidential**. News of shortlistees in all categories (except for the Inspiration Award) must remain embargoed until the official shortlist announcement at 9:30am on Monday 26 January 2026. Shortlistees for the Inspiration Award must remain embargoed until 11:00am on Friday 12 December 2025. Please find directions on what to do on the day your shortlist is announced in the 'Announcing your nomination' sections below. You may need to share that you are nominated with select colleagues in order to prepare to maximise coverage around the announcement, but please keep this on a solely **need-to-know** basis and ensure that the embargo is respected by those with whom you need to share it. Thank you so much for this.

First steps

If you haven't already, please **simply reply** to the email sent to you with these Shortlist Guidelines to confirm it has arrived, just so we know you have safely received our news of your nomination. If you are not the best person to be our **primary contact** going forward for this nomination, please share the Shortlist Guidelines with the person who is, and introduce them to us by email. We will update our records so they are our primary contact for all matters going forward.

If, in your reply to us, you are able to indicate whether the nominee or a representative is likely to be **able to attend** the RPS Awards on Thursday 12 March 2026 in London, we would be most grateful. (Further information about tickets can be found in the dedicated section below.)

There are then some important things we need from you to promote your nomination. As soon as possible, and no later than the date indicated for your award category on page 7, we kindly ask you to fulfil the following two steps:

Step 1

Please supply the following by email to the member of RPS staff who contacted you about being shortlisted:

- If you did not provide this already, an indication of whether the nominee or a representative is **able to attend** the RPS Awards on Thursday 12 March 2026 in London.
- A **phone number** on which we can reach you / the primary contact for this nomination should we need to do so between now and the RPS Awards.
- The most appropriate website **URL** for your nomination that we can link to from our website when the shortlists are announced.
- Your **social media** details on the following platforms, if you use them – Instagram, Facebook, X, BlueSky, LinkedIn – so we have these to hand when announcing and promoting shortlists on our own social media posts.
- If you have a publicist or someone who deals with **PR** for you, their contact details (name, email address and phone number) so we may share this with our PR specialists at Rebecca Driver Media Relations (more details about their role below).
- A **phonetic spelling** or **voice note** of any words in the nominated person or entity's title that may need to be pronounced in a particular way, to ensure we get this right in our RPS Awards script.
- (**Inspiration Award** only): For each shortlistee in your category, we create a webpage to share with the public when voting opens. Take a look at the [sample linked here](#) to see what this entails. To prepare this, we need two things from you: a) a **short paragraph** or **set of bullet points** detailing key activities between September 2024 and August 2025 which we can draw from to write our own brief account of your achievements, and b) two written **testimonials** from non-professional participants in your activities

– these should be no more than 100 words each, saying what they love about it, particularly in the last year, and why it matters to them and the community. For this, we would also like their first name and their role in what you do, for example: ‘Sheila, flute’ or ‘Bob, tenor’.

Step 2

Please take the time to gather **footage** and **photos**, as prescribed below, which you feel strongly reflect the nomination. These will be vital in helping us to promote your nomination and showcase it at the RPS Awards event, where every nominee gets their own dedicated moment in the script and in the digital projections cast on a big screen. The better the materials you supply, the better we can represent you amid the other nominees.

Before sending us these materials, please ensure you have clearly labelled them to include the name of your shortlisted entry. Rather than email these to us given their likely file size, please submit them to us via our Shortlist Dropbox, access to which you will find linked here:

https://royalphilharmonicssociety.org.uk/awards/rps_music_awards/submit-your-shortlist-materials

Footage

We are particularly grateful to receive footage appropriate to this nomination so we can showcase your achievement in the digital projection at the RPS Awards. Please read what follows for a clear picture of what we need. To give you a good impression of what the footage will be used for, we urge you to click this link – <https://vimeo.com/874049758> – which shows how the footage was presented for one of the categories recently.

Footage should be audiovisual if at all available (otherwise audio if possible). You should submit **original / edited film or sound files** rather than URLs. Film files should ideally be in **.mp4** format, and the **highest resolution** you have available, and at least 1080p (1920 x 1080 pixels) where possible. We ask that film footage does not have a company logo or watermark embedded in it, nor overlaid text or sub/surtitles – as we need to overlay some text of our own. We also cannot use footage of interviews or spoken materials as we need to overlay audio spoken by our presenters, as demonstrated in the clip linked above. There is one exception to this: for any books nominated in the Storytelling category, we request a spoken extract of around a minute or more, read by the author: 1 or 2 clips totalling a minute or two will suffice but you are welcome to send longer footage from which we can take some excerpts.

Photos

At least 3 good-quality hi-res **colour** images appropriate to this nomination – optimally in **‘landscape’ format** as opposed to ‘portrait’ where possible – cleared for press use. Images should be the highest resolution you have, and at least 1920 pixels wide where possible. Please **do not** supply black-and-white / monochrome photos. Please include any credits where necessary in their file names.

For shortlistees in the Chamber-Scale and Large-Scale Composition categories, please provide not only photos of the composer but also some, where at all possible, of the performance(s) / rehearsal(s) / performer(s).

For any books nominated in the Storytelling category, please include high-resolution cover artwork, photograph(s) of the author(s), and other images appropriate to the book’s subject.

If what your footage or photos represent is unclear, you are welcome to also upload a Word document with brief information that clarifies this. If you believe the **BBC** has footage or photos from the last year that may be ideal for us (such as at this year’s BBC Proms), and you are unable to source this easily, please email the member of RPS staff who contacted you to let them know what materials you have in mind, as – solely in this instance, given our RPS Awards partnership with BBC Radio 3 – we can put in a

collated request for such materials directly to them. But, wherever possible, please upload what materials you can via our website. Should we find we need anything else, we'll be in touch.

Submission dates

We are so grateful for you getting the elements detailed above together for us **as soon as possible**, and no later than the following dates per award:

10:00am on MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER
for **Inspiration**

10:00am on WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER
for **Conductor, Instrumentalist, Singer, Young Artist**

10:00am on TUESDAY 6 JANUARY
for **Chamber-Scale Composition, Ensemble, Gamechanger, Impact, Large-Scale Composition, Opera and Music Theatre, Series and Events, Storytelling**

Tickets

We very much hope you will be able to attend the RPS Awards on Thursday 12 March at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London so we can celebrate your achievement together. You can read more about the event below. Presenting the RPS Awards has a huge cost for our small charity, increased by our commitment to access and radically lowering ticket prices from the level of previous years. This year, all tickets are priced £10 to £35. Please note, for all events at the Southbank Centre, the venue adds its restoration levy of £2 per ticket plus a booking fee of £3.50 per booking. Given this, we have particularly strived to keep ticket prices as low as we reasonably can. Naturally this significantly reduces the revenue we might hope to recoup from the event, so we are limited in what complimentary tickets we can offer. Thank you for your understanding of this.

We are pleased to offer **three complimentary tickets** in regard to each shortlisted entity.

Shortlistees must let us know whether or not you would like to take up these tickets, **as soon as possible** and definitely no later than 10:00am on **Tuesday 20 January 2026**. To do this, please email the member of RPS staff who contacted you about being shortlisted to let them know:

- how many of the three tickets you require
- the names of each intended ticket holder
- each attendee's role or connection to the nomination, even if it's just as a personal guest, so we know who they are

On 20 January, we will release all unclaimed tickets from this allocation to the box office and will not in any circumstances be able to provide you with any later, so please do not miss out on this offer before it expires.

We are currently addressing with the Southbank Centre the optimal way to supply shortlistees with these tickets: likely you will receive an email from us a couple of days before the event confirming your seat numbers and other final details of the event, and a separate email containing your digital tickets from the Southbank Centre box office. You should bring these on a smartphone or printed out on the evening. Please note, we will not have scope to email individual tickets to individual guests. For each nomination, tickets will be emailed to your **primary contact**, and it will be their responsibility to share them with your guests.

You are also welcome to buy further tickets online, and we urge you to do so before availability gets limited. Full public booking details can be found [on our website here](#), or you can book directly on the Southbank Centre website. Owing to a complex set of allocations, not just for shortlistees but also for press, sponsors and other guests, tickets bought online will not be sat next to the complimentary tickets we can offer you as shortlistees. We trust this will not be an inconvenience, given the relatively brisk nature of the presentation, and the ample opportunity to celebrate together before the show, during the interval, and once the formal part of the evening concludes.

Announcing your nomination (most categories)

Please note, this section applies to all categories except Inspiration and Gamechanger. Inspiration shortlistees should read the next section on page 11 instead. Gamechanger recipients can skip both these sections and continue with the Crediting supporters section on page 13.

Each year, the RPS Awards generate considerable coverage across a range of print, broadcast, online and social media. This in part comes from our association with BBC Radio 3, and also from our work with PR specialists, **RDMR** (Rebecca Driver Media Relations), for whom our lead contact is **Maddie Castell** (maddie@rdmr.co.uk).

As noted above, your shortlist will be publicly announced on **Monday 26 January 2026**. On that day, some of the shortlisted nominations will be publicly announced live on air on the BBC Radio 3 Breakfast show between 6:30 and 9:30am. We are pleased to give them this exclusivity in order to generate interest in all the RPS Awards shortlistees, but duly even we are refraining from sharing any details of shortlists until the programme concludes at 9:30am. We ask you to do the same. It is entirely at BBC Radio 3's discretion how many shortlistees they can reveal, and not even we know until this happens live who may feature. Thank you for your understanding of this. We anticipate there will be further coverage and mentions of RPS Awards shortlistees throughout the day in the station's subsequent live shows.

At 9:30am on the day, the complete shortlist will be posted on the RPS website and, at that moment, you are warmly welcome to start sharing the news of your nomination with your audience and contacts, as follows:

Social media announcement

As soon as the shortlist is fully released on our website that day at 9:30am, we will post on our social media about it and, from that moment, you are welcome to share the news on social media too. If you don't already, please follow us on whatever platforms you're on, so you can keep pace with all RPS Awards news.

Instagram: [@royalphilsoc](#)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RoyalPhilSoc

X: [@RoyalPhilSoc](#)

BlueSky: [@royalphilsoc.bsky.social](#)

LinkedIn: Royal Philharmonic Society

#RPSAwards

Shortlist announcement day is a wonderful chance to tell a vast audience on social media about your achievement. There will be general coverage on our Facebook, X, BlueSky and LinkedIn profiles, but we will principally encourage people to visit our **Instagram** profile where, throughout the day, we'll be showcasing the whole shortlist in detail.

Each category and each shortlistee will have their own **specially-made graphics** using our 2026 RPS Awards ident. Below are samples of this from the 2025 RPS Awards.



We'll be posting sets of these for each category at intervals throughout the day. We cannot offer a timetable for this, but do look out for this – we will tag you as collaborators in our post abouts you, given the details you have provided, so you know when it happens, and you are welcome to share these as you wish.

We also warmly welcome and encourage you to use our specially-made graphics yourself. We will make the .jpg files for these available for all shortlistees to access in the RPS Dropbox from 9:30am on shortlist day, Monday 26 January 2026. The Dropbox is empty for now but here is the link for when the time comes:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/eklhx42b4idkvx967q61d/ALGqIF88ueICXcgNkkjrCUs?rlkey=stv7faps0mt_n46d9jyeoruzn7&st=cefq61o7&dl=0

Of course, after 9:30am you don't have to wait till we post these graphics ourselves. Please post them whenever you wish after that moment. You may also like to complement these with further posts / stories / reels of your own. This could include snapshots or footage of your achievements between September 2024 and August 2025 for which you are shortlisted, or even something specially filmed, capturing your positive feelings on being recognised this way. In this, we're grateful for saying you are 'shortlisted for the 2026 Royal Philharmonic Society [Category] Award' (that is its full and accurate title; please don't use 'of the year' or any extra terminology like that) and, where you can, encourage your followers to join us at the big event, on Thursday 12 March 2026 at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, with tickets from only £10 (plus venue fee). Further details you might like to share are in the event section of these guidelines below.

In anything you post on social media, we are pleased for you to reference **@RoyalPhilSoc** and use the hashtag **#RPSAwards**.

Once shortlist announcement day is over, we'll continue promoting shortlistees in the run-up to the RPS Awards itself. Between 27 January and 11 March, we will daily share **a dedicated post** on Instagram

about one of our shortlistees, offering more insights around your achievements of the last year. In this too, we will tag you as collaborators, and encourage you to share the post, either immediately or in the ensuing days. On Thursday 22 January, we will be in touch by email with all shortlistees to ensure you're ready and prepared for shortlist announcement day and, in that email, we'll also tell you the consequent day we'll be scheduling your dedicated post.

Press announcement

At 9:30am on Monday 26 January, RDMR will share a press release detailing all shortlisted nominations with press contacts. Should we find any opportunities for coverage of your particular nomination or receive any direct press enquiries about it, Maddie or we will make direct contact with you.

Our press release will go to a broad range of music, arts, entertainment and specialist contacts in the national media, and RDMR will also send it to local press contacts in all regions where shortlistees are based.

If you would like to complement this with your own press release, please contact Maddie at RDMR on maddie@rdmr.co.uk to discuss plans and to help ensure no overlap. If you have a publicist or someone who deals with PR for you, you should let us know their name and contact details (as per the 'First steps' section above) so we can share these with Maddie, and they are welcome to be in touch with her on your behalf. In what you say about the RPS Awards in your press release, please draw from the 'About the RPS Awards' section at the start of this document and the [RPS Awards area](#) of our website. To ensure your release is 100% accurate and primed to make the best impact, Maddie is on hand to check and approve all such copy before you dispatch it. Please let Maddie know when you intend to dispatch your press release but, in any case, do not release it before 9:30am on Monday 26 January.

You may have ideas for press coverage that could be generated by your nomination, whether you are issuing your own release or not. Equally you may already have some press coverage planned to which you can potentially add this news. In any such situation, or if you have any concerns about press coverage for your nomination, please contact Maddie at RDMR on maddie@rdmr.co.uk who will be happy to chat with you about all such matters.

General announcement

From 9:30am on Monday 26 January, you are also welcome to share the news on your website and in any communications with your organisation at large, your audience, and other stakeholders, as applicable. In this you may also wish to draw from the 'About the RPS Awards' section at the start of this document and the [RPS Awards area](#) of our website. Should you like any further information to complement this, please contact the RPS team.

From that time onwards, you may also like to add to your artist or organisation biography, where applicable, that you are 'shortlisted for the 2026 Royal Philharmonic Society [Category] Award' (again, thanks for noting this is its full and accurate title). Whoever eventually wins, we hope you will be proud to include this in your biography for the foreseeable future. Many former shortlistees have told us of the worth and recognition that came from doing this.

In everything you publicly share about the nomination, please refer to the Awards initially as the **Royal Philharmonic Society Awards** and subsequently (or if there is strictly limited space) as the **RPS Awards**.

Announcing your nomination (Inspiration)

Please note, this section only applies to those shortlisted in the Inspiration category. All other shortlistees can skip this section and continue with the Crediting supporters section on page 13.

The Inspiration Award is rather different from our others. For it, we organise a panel each year with specialist insight in the non-professional sector. They assemble a shortlist, having together considered a number of possibilities nationwide. We then publicly announce the shortlistees and invite the public to vote for a winner among these. Whoever wins, we invite you to take great pride in being shortlisted, and we hope this brings your efforts the greater recognition and profile they deserve.

For each shortlistee, we will create a dedicated page on the RPS website accounting your achievements to the public, to help them decide how they will cast their vote. For this, we dearly need your help and ask you as soon as possible by 10:00am on **Monday 24 November** to provide us with the materials detailed in the 'First steps' section above. Please note, we can only include you on the publicised shortlist if we get all required materials from you by then.

For each shortlistee's webpage, we plan to assemble a short montage of images and footage from the materials you supply, to give the public a living picture of what you have achieved this year. If we find there isn't sufficient material to create this, we may ask you to participate in a short Zoom conversation with us in the coming days in which we would film you and/or an appropriate group member, talking briefly about the group's achievements in the last year. Your webpage will also feature a paragraph that we will write to ensure relative parity with others shortlisted, drawn from the information you provide, and comprising some sense of what the panel has particularly admired about your achievements this year. We will share this with you before putting it live to ensure it accurately captures what you have done.

We will announce the shortlist for the Inspiration Award at 11:00am on **Friday 12 December**. From that moment onwards, the Inspiration Award will feature prominently on our homepage at royalphilharmonicssociety.org.uk, with links to the specially-made shortlistee pages and simple steps on how to vote. Please do not share the news you are shortlisted before this date, complying with the terms in the 'Confidentiality' section above.

Once publicly announced, you are welcome to rouse your audience and supporters, and the wider public, to consider voting for you. Please do this positively, showing the same respect for your fellow shortlistees that you would expect of them. We reserve the right to remove any shortlistee from consideration if we deem their conduct in this is unsporting in any regard. Voting is only open to people based in the United Kingdom. People may **only vote once each** and must supply a genuine email address when doing so. Any attempt at duplicate votes by people will be removed.

Public voting for the Inspiration Award will remain open until 11:00am on **Monday 2 February 2026**.

Social media announcement

As soon as the shortlist is fully released on our website that day at 11:00am, we will post on our social media about it and, from that moment, you are welcome to share the news on social media too. If you don't already, please follow us on whatever platforms you're on, so you can keep pace with all RPS Awards news.

Instagram: @royalphilsoc

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RoyalPhilSoc

X: @RoyalPhilSoc

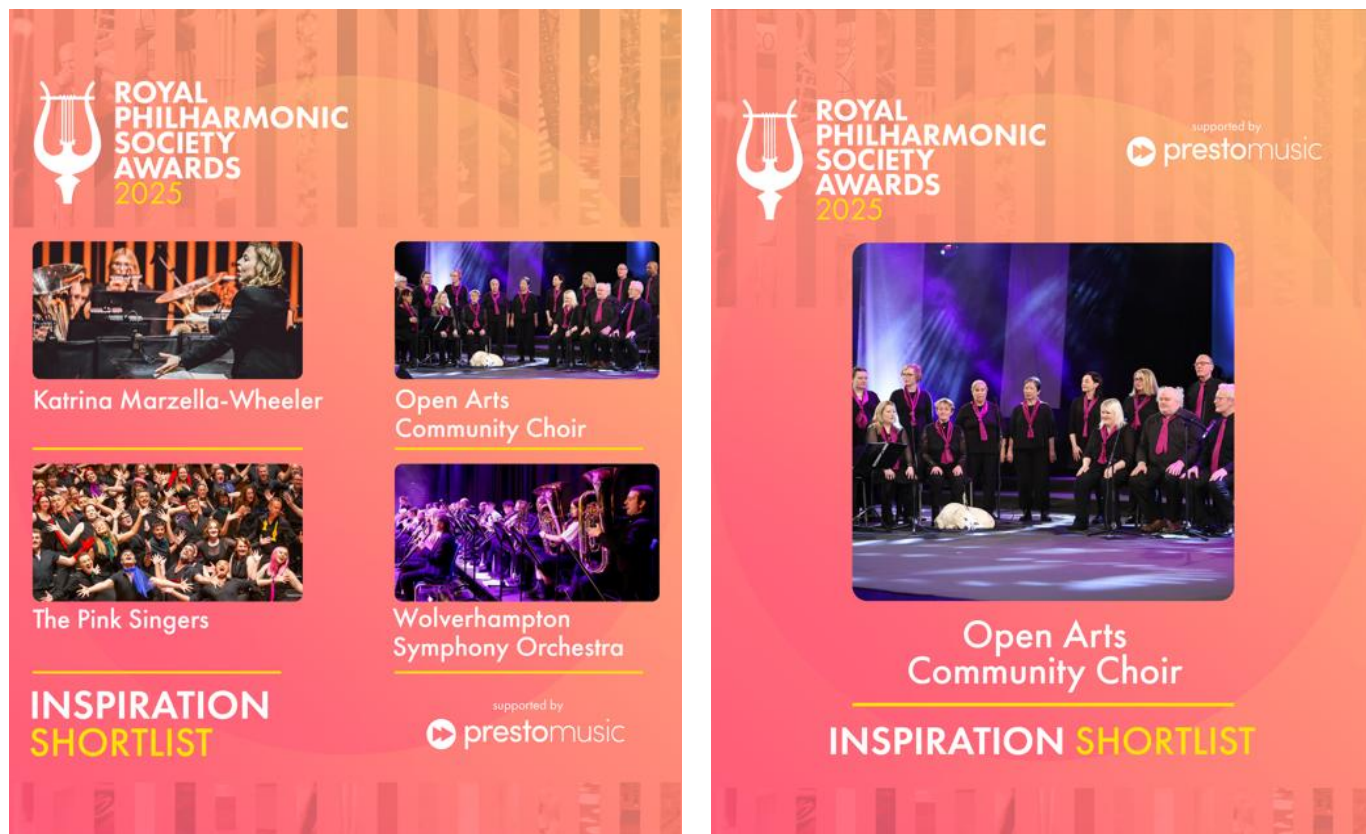
BlueSky: @royalphilsoc.bsky.social

LinkedIn: Royal Philharmonic Society

#RPSAwards

Shortlist announcement day is a wonderful chance to tell a vast audience on social media about your achievement. There will be general coverage on our Facebook, X, BlueSky and LinkedIn profiles, but we will principally encourage people to visit our [Instagram](#) profile where, throughout the day, we'll be showcasing the whole shortlist in detail.

Each category and each shortlistee will have their own **specially-made graphics** using our 2026 RPS Awards ident. Below are samples of this from the 2025 RPS Awards.



We'll be posting these on Instagram at 11:00am when we announce the shortlist. We will tag you as collaborators in our post, given the details you have provided, and you are welcome to share this.

We also warmly welcome and encourage you to use our specially-made graphics yourself. We will make the .jpg files for these available for all shortlistees to access in the RPS Dropbox from 11:00am on Inspiration shortlist day, Friday 12 December 2025. The Dropbox is empty for now but here is the link for when the time comes:

https://www.dropbox.com/sc/fo/eklhx42b4idkvx967q61d/ALGgIF88ueICXcgNkkjrCUs?rlkey=stv7faps0mt_n46d9jyeoruzn7&st=cefq61o7&dl=0

You may also like to complement this with further posts / stories / reels of your own. This could include snapshots or footage of your achievements between September 2024 and August 2025 for which you are shortlisted, or even something specially filmed, capturing your positive feelings on being recognised this way. In this, we're grateful for saying you are 'shortlisted for the 2026 Royal Philharmonic Society Inspiration Award' (that is its full and accurate title; please don't use 'of the year' or any extra terminology like that) and, where you can, encourage your followers to join us at the big event, on Thursday 12 March 2026 at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, with tickets from only £10 (plus venue fee). Further details you might like to share are in the event section of these guidelines below.

In anything you post on social media, we are pleased for you to reference [@RoyalPhilSoc](#) and use the hashtag [#RPSAwards](#).

In the new year, we're keen to rouse fresh interest in your nomination. On the morning of Thursday 8 January 2026, we will share [a dedicated post](#) on Instagram about each one of our Inspiration shortlistees, offering more insights around your achievements of the last year. In this too, we will tag you as collaborators, and encourage you to share the post, either immediately or in the ensuing days.

Press announcement

Each year, the RPS Awards generate considerable coverage across a range of print, broadcast, online and social media. This in part comes from our association with BBC Radio 3, and also from our work with PR specialists, [RDMR](#) (Rebecca Driver Media Relations), for whom our lead contact is [Maddie Castell](#) (maddie@rdmr.co.uk).

If you would like to cultivate local support for your nomination, you may like to issue a press release once the shortlist is announced. If so, please contact Maddie at RDMR on maddie@rdmr.co.uk to discuss plans. If you have a publicist or someone who deals with PR for you, you should let us know their name and contact details (as per the 'First steps' section above) so we can share these with Maddie, and they are welcome to be in touch with her on your behalf. In what you say about the RPS Awards in your press release, please draw from the 'About the RPS Awards' section at the start of this document and the [RPS Awards area](#) of our website. To ensure your release is 100% accurate and primed to make the best impact, Maddie is on hand to check and approve all such copy before you dispatch it. Please let Maddie know when you intend to dispatch your press release but, in any case, do not release it before 11:00am on Friday 12 December.

General announcement

From 11:00am on Friday 12 December, you are also welcome to share the news on your website and in any communications with your organisation at large, your audience, and other stakeholders, as applicable. In this you may also wish to draw from the 'About the RPS Awards' section at the start of this document and the [RPS Awards area](#) of our website. Should you like any further information to complement this, please contact the RPS team.

From that time onwards, you may also like to add to your artist or organisation biography, where applicable, that you are 'shortlisted for the 2026 Royal Philharmonic Society Inspiration Award' (again, thanks for noting this is its full and accurate title). Whoever eventually wins, we hope you will be proud to include this in your biography for the foreseeable future. Former shortlistees have told us of the worth and recognition that came from doing this.

In everything you publicly share about the nomination, please refer to the Awards initially as the [Royal Philharmonic Society Awards](#) and subsequently (or if there is strictly limited space) as the [RPS Awards](#).

Crediting supporters

We can only keep presenting the RPS Awards thanks to a range of generous supporters. Each of the awards is kindly supported by organisations and individuals and, in return, we strive to acknowledge their support wherever each award is mentioned. We are in the process of confirming supporters for this year and will publicly announce all those that are confirmed, on our website and social media, on Thursday 22 January 2026. On that day, we will be in touch with you directly by email to confirm who is supporting your award and we are sincerely grateful to you doing all you can to mention them wherever you are mentioning your nomination once the shortlist is announced. (If the Inspiration Award supporter is confirmed before its shortlist is announced, ahead of the others, we will contact its shortlistees with details about who it is.)

Thank you kindly for doing this. It means so much to us and is vital in ensuring we can continue to garner such support to keep the RPS Awards going.

Many such supporters (though not all) attend the RPS Awards event and we hope you will have the chance to meet them there. Several other organisations and individuals support other facets of the RPS Awards, or the occasion overall as Principal Supporters. We will share more details of them on our website and social media in due course.



Scenes from recent RPS Awards (photos: Mark Allan, Robin Clewley, Greg Milner)

The main event

There really is no occasion quite like it. The RPS Awards are a much-needed chance to get together and make some noise about all the good that classical music does nationally. *The Sunday Times* describes it as ‘the biggest night in UK classical music’.

As noted, this year’s RPS Awards take place at the Southbank Centre’s Queen Elizabeth Hall in central London, on Thursday 12 March 2026. While it was highly expensive to attend in years past, we have radically reduced ticket prices in recent years.

It promises to be a real night to remember, with presenters Georgia Mann and Petroc Trelawny from BBC Radio 3, other special guests, and live music. The foyer bars will be open pre-show, during the interval, and once the show finishes around 9:45pm the **bars will stay open late**, with last orders at 11:00pm for all attendees, so you can enjoy the occasion to the full, and make the very best of the opportunity to meet and reconnect with friends across the music profession and music lovers from around the country.

In a longstanding, much-loved tradition of the RPS Awards, guests are warmly invited, as ever, to **dress in ‘celebratory’ style**. We welcome you to interpret this as you wish; guests largely regard it as smart evening wear with a colourful flourish.

All tickets are £10 – £35, with over 100 at £10 for those who book early. As noted, for all events at the Southbank Centre, the venue adds its restoration levy of £2 per ticket plus a booking fee of £3.50 per booking. You can book directly through Southbank Centre’s website, linked by the central button on the

RPS [homepage](#). Please tell colleagues, friends and supporters so we can together draw as big a crowd as possible to celebrate your achievements.

We will be filming the event and making it available to watch at a later date and for a limited time on our website. BBC Radio 3 will also record the audio from the event, using some of it in a consequent broadcast, as detailed below.

Supporters interval reception

As noted, the RPS Awards would not be possible without a number of kind supporters. As a small thank-you to them, we will hold a reception in a cordoned area of the Queen Elizabeth Hall foyer during the interval. Some other high-level RPS supporters, VIP guests, and press representatives will also attend this. The reception needs to be relatively small so it does not occupy too much space and so it is not prohibitively costly for us. Nonetheless, we invite **your three complimentary ticket-holders** to join our supporters for this, if you would like to attend.

Your primary contact will receive an email from the RPS a couple of days before the event confirming your complimentary ticketholders whose names will be on the reception guest list. Once the interval starts, you should come to the reception together and show our stewards the email to gain access. Should you not be using all three of your complimentary tickets, access to the reception cannot be passed to others. There will be lots of opportunity to connect with other friends and colleagues before and after the show, and during the interval, they can buy drinks at the paid bars.

Access

We are dedicated to making the RPS Awards as accessible as possible. If you, any colleagues or anyone you may be planning to bring to the RPS Awards have **any access needs or queries**, please contact the member of RPS staff who contacted you about being shortlisted **as soon as possible** and we will do what we can to address these on an individual basis with you, supplying you with all the information you may personally need to feel at ease about this. Alternatively, please contact Emily Porter, RPS Administrator, by phone on 020 7287 0019 (weekdays 9:30am – 5:30pm) or email at admin@philharmonicsociety.uk and we will do our best to help.

The RPS Awards presentation will comprise a mixture of principally amplified spoken word, pre-recorded and projected audio and visuals, short acoustic chamber performances, and frequent, short periods of applause. The event will feature live **BSL** (British Sign Language) interpretation onstage.

The presentation will likely last about 2 hours 45 minutes. We expect this will comprise a first half of at least 60 minutes, then a 20-25 minute interval, then a second half of at least 60 minutes, though timings are affected by how promptly attendees take their seats for both halves, and how concise winners keep their acceptance speeches.

Preceding the event, during the interval, and after the event, the large foyers are expected to be densely populated with a considerable level of ambient chatter, as we expect to have a capacity audience of up to 900 people. Should you have any concerns or queries regarding any of these elements – or anything else detailed in these guidelines – please let us know. As we're a small team, thank you for your understanding that we have greater chance of being able to address any access matters, the more time we are given to do so.

Winners and speeches

Please do not ask us if you are the winner in your category. We do not notify shortlistees in advance if they have won, unless we know they are absolutely unable to attend the event and we need to make arrangements for them to collect their trophy on a different occasion. Yes it may sound like a cliché but, in our eyes, all shortlistees are winners given the countless magnificent things achieved nationwide in classical music this last year. In the presentation, every shortlistee will have their own special moment of celebration. We hope you will come and wholeheartedly enjoy the occasion and the recognition it brings you, regardless of who takes home a trophy.

When it comes to your category on the night, the shortlisted nominees will each be commended by our presenters and in the digital projection, and then the winner announced. If you are the winner, you are invited to **come directly to the stage to collect your trophy**. Should this present any concerns in regard to any mobility or disability – or if you have any queries about such matters in regard to the entire event – please let the RPS team know as soon as possible so we can positively address these with you as needs be.

Acceptance speeches are always a delicate matter: the audience longs for them to be as brief as possible, the recipients often want the moment to last forever. We entreat you to think of your audience and embrace the principle that 'less is more'. Though it may seem brief, the ideal acceptance speech is **no longer than a minute**. You are nominated because of your inspiring work, and we want you to inspire those present. While you may naturally want to thank a few people or supporters who have made your work possible, please keep this brisk. This is an opportunity to engage the audience with all you are musically striving to do. As the RPS exists to celebrate why music matters – a case we need to make all the stronger in challenging times – we particularly invite you to use the moment to express what music means to you, why you feel it matters to all our futures, and what good you have aimed to achieve in the work for which you have been recognised. Some winners are individuals; where a group of you is recognised, several people are welcome to come to the stage but **please elect one**, or two maximum, to be your spokesperson, to ensure you do not cause the event to run on longer than everyone hopes.

As an incentive: while BBC Radio 3 records the whole presentation, it can only include highlights in the subsequent broadcast. You raise your chances of featuring on air if you give a short, original speech. And humour is always appreciated!

If your Award has a supporter, please do simply **acknowledge them** in your thanks.

Unless you are the solitary recipient of an award for an individual performer or composer and your identity is therefore apparent, **please introduce yourself to the audience** before making your acceptance speech, so they know who you are.

We will engage a professional photographer to take photos throughout the evening. After receiving their award, **winners should not return immediately to their seats**, but will be directed by our stewards to be photographed briefly and possibly participate in a short interview for social media, at a designated area. After this, a steward will show winners back to the auditorium so they can return to their seat at a suitable moment.

Photos will be used for press and promotional purposes, for social media and the RPS website. A link to digital copies of all photos will be circulated to all shortlisted nominees and winners the following day, so you can use them too. We expect you will need to credit the photographer wherever you use the photos, and at that stage, we will let you know their name.

Announcing the winners

Public disclosure of who has won each award is **strictly embargoed** until its announcement at the event on Thursday 12 March. As the evening progresses, we will be simultaneously revealing the announcements on our social media platforms and invite you at that stage to share and retweet what we post, and join in the conversation.

From 10:00pm that evening, you are also welcome to share the news on your website and in any communications with your organisation, your audience, and other stakeholders as applicable.

RDMR will issue a press release announcing all the winners as soon as the presentation concludes that evening. We kindly ask that you don't issue your own press releases that evening but if you would like to prepare or issue a subsequent press release in the event that you may win, please do contact Maddie at RDMR on maddie@rdmr.co.uk and she can help you prepare this.

After the event

The day after the RPS Awards – Friday 13 March 2026 – our partners at BBC Radio 3 will broadcast a full-length programme devoted to the RPS Awards in their evening 'In Concert' slot. This will feature audio footage of highlights from the event itself, and a range of music, giving listeners the chance to discover more about the winners and shortlistees. It may be, especially if you are winner, that BBC Radio 3 would like to talk to you briefly on the evening of the event. If we need your help with any other aspect of the broadcast, we will let you know, and this may result in further coverage for you.

Several days after the event, we will share the filmed presentation on our website to watch on demand and we welcome you sharing this with your followers. We will let you know when the date for this is confirmed.

As noted above, whoever wins, we hope you will continue to state with pride on your website, in your biography and anywhere else you wish that you were shortlisted for the 2026 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards. We in turn will continue to celebrate your achievement as best we can. If you are a winner, we will look to be in touch after the event to talk about what more we can do together to make the most of this in the months ahead. There may be scope for us coming to present the trophy again in front of your own local audience who of course will have played a treasured part in your success. We look forward to talking further about such possibilities.

Join the cause

The RPS Awards are a golden opportunity for all of us in music to rouse national recognition of classical music's impact and worth. We can only present them, and continue our year-round charitable work supporting classical musicians, with your help. We're so grateful to a significant number of friends across the profession who show their support as **RPS Members**, and we warmly invite you to become part of this growing community of music-makers and music-lovers united by a cause.

Please take a moment to find out what a small gesture to our registered charity can do to boost our charitable ventures year-round, for the good of classical musicians nationwide. To find out more about RPS Membership, you can visit its dedicated pages of our [website](#) or find out more through our [Membership brochure](#).

Your organisation can also get involved. Together we can forge a fruitful, formal association for your company with the charity, enabling you to draw on our significant links and insights across the musical ecology. Given our unique position, we can expand your network, ignite new partnerships, and help fulfil your own strategic priorities. We can also further your profile to our extensive social media following and growing Membership of engaged music lovers. You can find out more about **RPS Corporate Membership** on our [website](#) and we'd be so pleased to have a conversation with you about all it has to offer.

Any questions?

We hope these guidelines largely cover everything you need to know about the RPS Awards, but we are here to help with anything else that arises. You are warmly welcome to contact us. In the first instance, please be in touch with the member of RPS staff who contacted you about being shortlisted, or you can call the office on 020 7287 0019 (weekdays 9:30am – 5:30pm).

Having taken the time to read through all the guidelines, we are so grateful to you embarking on the 'First steps' detailed on page 5. Congratulations again, and we very much look forward to making the most of your achievement together.