



**Royal Northern
Sinfonia**

at The Glasshouse
International Centre for Music

RPS CONDUCTORS

in association with **Royal Northern Sinfonia**
at The Glasshouse International Centre for Music



Pictured: Sinéad Hayes sets the tempo with the Royal Northern Sinfonia and Chorus / front cover: Peggy Wu (photos: Ben Hines)

RPS CONDUCTORS

We are pleased to announce a new chapter in our programme supporting underrepresented talents to find their rightful place on the conducting podium.

In 2016, the **Royal Philharmonic Society** joined forces with trailblazing conductor **Alice Farnham** in her mission to address gender inequality, coaching women to further their skills, confidence and aspiration as conductors. Since then, our RPS Women Conductors programme has empowered over 500 individuals, with a significant number proceeding to fruitful conducting careers. Our positive action has been key in changing national perceptions around who gets to conduct, and many more women are being recognised in this field than when we started.

This issue is far from resolved: in January 2025, still 86% of conductors represented by UK artist managers were male, and 87% of titled conducting roles at UK orchestras were held by men. Addressing this remains a priority, and the opportunities we present remain primarily for women, trans and non-binary conductors. Nonetheless, under the new name **RPS Conductors**, we are pleased to welcome applications from any conductors at a sufficiently high level who can articulate how such experience has not yet been afforded them and why it would duly be transformative to their prospects.

We are now newly welcoming applications for the principal strand of our RPS Conductors programme, delivered at The Glasshouse International Centre for Music in Gateshead with **Royal Northern Sinfonia**. Read on to discover more about this opportunity and if it's suitable for you.

If you may like this information in a different format, for accessibility reasons, please get in touch. In the first instance, please contact Emily Porter, RPS Administrator, by email at admin@philharmonicsociety.uk or phone on 020 7287 0019.

What is the opportunity?

This is a chance for a cohort of exceptionally promising conductors (as detailed below) to spend quality rehearsal time with one of the UK's foremost professional orchestras, and reflect together on the principles of fruitful interaction between conductors and orchestras.

Twice yearly, some of the cohort (usually four individuals) will gather with the orchestra in Gateshead for two days, in February 2026 and June 2026, then likely January/February 2027 and May/June 2027.

On each visit, participants will spend quality time conducting the orchestra, with coaching from Alice Farnham. They will spend time reflecting on progress with players, sharing feedback and ideas in a positive and encouraging environment. Between visits, the cohort will have some contact time – usually on Zoom – with Alice and with select RNS players, and residual career support from RPS and RNS staff.

The experience is free for participants, and the RPS will cover standard travel in the UK and Ireland and two nights of accommodation (plus breakfast) in Gateshead for each trip. Participants themselves will need to cover the costs of other meals and provisions.

We have offered this experience with Royal Northern Sinfonia since 2022 and it has proven highly rewarding for all involved. Recent participants include Charlotte Corderoy who has consequently made her debuts with the ENO and CBSO; Helen Harrison who has since conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra for broadcast on BBC Radio 3; and Tess Jackson who proceeded to conduct the National Youth Orchestra at the BBC Proms. Several conductors already involved will stay on for further sessions, whilst others previously involved will move on to other professional opportunities. We therefore expect to recruit 3 to 4 conductors to join the cohort, and – availability permitting – they will all likely have the opportunity to visit Gateshead twice.

Who can apply?

This is our highest-level experience, for conductors based in the UK and Ireland, each already managing to amass professional orchestral conducting work and make this their primary vocation. Strictly, you should have completed any formal studies, though we are willing to consider exceptional postgraduates and junior fellows already undertaking professional engagements. Please do not devote the time to producing an application if you are not at this high level: we will be advertising other RPS Conductors courses at different vocational levels later this year, set to take place in 2026. These will be more suited to those at earlier stages in their conducting career, or for whom conducting is one element of their musical life they would like to strengthen. If this sounds like you, please wait for those opportunities to be advertised.

As noted, this programme exists to address imbalance in the conducting profession. As we continue to address stark gender inequality in this field, the opportunity is principally for women, trans and non-binary conductors. Nonetheless, we are pleased to welcome applications from conductors of any gender at a sufficiently high level who can strongly express in their application how – through their lived experience, background or personal characteristics – they have encountered barriers to progress or limited access to an experience like this, and why it would therefore be transformative to their prospects.



'The RPS has given me an exceptional amount as I've transitioned from full-time study into the "real world". It's so rare to be given podium time with a professional orchestra, specifically designed to be focused on feedback and constructive criticism. The RPS and RNS create a wonderful, supportive atmosphere, every time without fail.'

Charlotte Corderoy pictured conducting Royal Northern Sinfonia

How to apply

Applicants are required to complete our online application form, or elect another person to do so on their behalf if needed. We encourage you to take time and care in completing the application form to ensure it represents you well.

In your application, you are asked to:

- Upload a CV of no more than **one page** detailing your professional conducting experience and training. This should conclude with details of two referees who can vouch for your accomplishments: name, role and contact details (ideally email and/or phone) for each. Your CV should be saved as a PDF (not a Word document) and titled: Forename Surname CV
- Provide links* for up to **two filmed excerpts** of you conducting contrasting pieces, in concerts or rehearsals. We will only be able to watch ten minutes maximum of your footage so in the application form you should specify particular passages as relevant within each excerpt. These may be filmed on a smartphone (ideally landscape not portrait) and we do not expect high-quality audio. Where possible, the footage should present a clear and close view of your face, arms and upper body, but the ensemble you are conducting should also be visible at some point.
- A link* to a **short film of yourself** talking to camera, **not exceeding 2 minutes**, telling us what you feel you would gain from this experience at this stage in your career, and what aspects of your musical and professional development you feel this opportunity could help you advance. As noted, within the film you should clearly express why – through some aspect of your lived experience, background or personal characteristics – experiences like this have been limited for you or you have encountered barriers to progress. Your film need not be high-quality and we welcome it being filmed on a smartphone.

*Your filmed excerpts and short film should be submitted as a link to YouTube, Vimeo or equivalent platforms, and the footage should remain visible there till at least the end of October 2025. We regret we cannot accept footage in any other format. You may send links to films that are privately listed online if you prefer, but please ensure to include any passwords with your links in the application form. If you are the standard required for the courses but anticipate you may not be able to supply any of the materials required, please do contact us to discuss your circumstances further.

As you submit your form, our website will invite you to take a moment to answer some standard inclusivity monitoring questions. Doing this is so helpful to us all collectively in classical music. We are committed to working with colleagues sector-wide to ensure we are representing excellence, creativity and innovation in music-making within a diverse, multicultural society. Thank you for playing your part in this. The information you provide in your application will only be used in accordance with our Privacy Policy as found on our website.

Applications open on the RPS website on Tuesday 24 June 2025 and the **closing date** is 11am on **Monday 1 September 2025**. If for access reasons or exceptional personal circumstances, you may not be able to submit an application by the closing date, please be in touch to discuss the possibility of a short extension to make your submission. In the first instance please contact Emily Porter, RPS Administrator, by email at admin@philharmonicsociety.uk or phone on 020 7287 0019.

Next steps

Applications will be reviewed by Alice Farnham and RPS / RNS management. We aim to notify all applicants of outcomes for each opportunity by the end of October 2025. Given these experiences are only for a few participants, please do not be too disappointed if your application is not successful. As noted, we are planning to advertise further RPS Conductors courses later this year, set to take place in 2026.

We endeavour to provide a little feedback where useful to applicants who are not selected, where we feel there is something we can suggest that may be useful to how you apply for other opportunities. This is only brief,

given the large number of applications our small team has to process. Nonetheless, if for any reason you do not want to receive feedback, there is an opportunity to indicate this in the application form.

If you have any queries not addressed in these guidelines, please get in touch. In the first instance please contact Emily Porter, RPS Administrator, by email at admin@philharmonicsociety.uk or phone on 020 7287 0019.

Thanks so much for your interest, and for helping us spread the word about this opportunity to anyone you know who may be eligible and benefit from the experience.



'The opportunities I've received from the RPS have transformed my career. As a participant on their unique programme working with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the constructive and insightful feedback from the players, my colleagues and coach Alice Farnham, has proven hugely powerful in my development in a way that is simply not possible in a one-off masterclass setting. So many musical doors have been opened to me thanks to the guidance and support from the RPS.'

Helen Harrison pictured conducting Royal Northern Sinfonia