

## Press Release

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## WINNERS ANNOUNCED OF ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY MUSIC AWARDS Presented in association with BBC Radio 3

[rpsmusicawards.com](http://rpsmusicawards.com)

#RPSMusicAwards #LiveMusicals

- Soprano Karita Mattila, conductor Richard Farnes, violinist James Ehnes and pianist Joseph Middleton take home top individual RPS Music Awards
- Rebecca Saunders wins her third RPS Music Award and becomes the RPS's most decorated female composer
- Manchester Camerata, who will open this summer's Glastonbury Festival, named Ensemble of the year
- In a good year for music-making in the regions, there are also RPS Music Award wins for Opera North, the UK's first disabled-led youth orchestra, South-West Open Youth Orchestra and two Scottish festivals - East Neuk Festival and Lammermuir Festival.
- Viol consort Fretwork, composer Philip Venables and violinist and author, Edward Dusinberre, also celebrate notable successes
- Veteran filmmaker Barrie Gavin made an Honorary Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society.
- Royal Philharmonic Society launches #LiveMusicals... campaign featuring musicians across the UK
- BBC RADIO 3 TO BROADCAST SPECIAL RPS MUSIC AWARDS PROGRAMME ON SUNDAY 14 MAY AT 19.30HRS

Full details at [www.rpsmusicawards.com](http://www.rpsmusicawards.com)

The winners of the Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards, the UK's most prestigious awards for live classical music, have been announced at a ceremony at The Brewery in the City of London (evening Tuesday 9 May 2017). This year's awards, presented in association with BBC Radio 3, celebrate the unique experience of live music-making and this year recognise outstanding musical achievement across the UK in 2016, with award winners chosen by independent juries of leading music practitioners from hundreds of nominations nationwide.

## THE WINNERS

It was a good night for conductor **Richard Farnes**, who scooped the RPS Music Award for Conductor. **Opera North's "magnificent" Ring Cycle**, which Farnes conducted, won the RPS Music Award for Opera and Music Theatre. Farnes, who stepped down as Music Director of Opera North in 2016 after a 12 year tenure, was described by the RPS jury as *"one of the finest Wagnerian interpreters of our time"* and *"an inspiring example of tireless and self-effacing musical leadership"*.

*"Astounding"* Finnish soprano **Karita Mattila** won the RPS Music Award for Singer, for the *"nakedly communicative power of her mature vocal and dramatic artistry"* in *"spellbinding"* performances in two Janacek operas: Kostelnicka in *Jenufa* at the Royal Festival Hall and Emilia Marty in *The Makropoulos Case* at the BBC Proms 2016.

Canadian violinist **James Ehnes** won the RPS Music Award for Instrumentalist with the RPS jury citing a *"wonderfully productive 40<sup>th</sup> birthday year"* in which *"he delivered an extraordinary breadth of communication through his eloquent music-making"* as Artist in Residence at the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, in concerts and recitals nationwide, and in inspirational visits as part of the In Harmony programme.

A *"born collaborator"* equally at home in partnership with leading international artists or supporting young performers, pianist (and director of the Leeds Lieder Festival) **Joseph Middleton** collected the RPS Music Award for Young Artists, for his *"dedication to the field of chamber music and song."*

The RPS Music Award for Chamber Music and Song was won by viol consort **Fretwork** for their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, described by the jury as an ensemble that has *"consistently excelled in a specialist repertoire, always with exquisite taste and polish"* and has provided a *"welcome expansion of the repertoire through commissioning new works"*.

The two RPS composition awards both went to works with theatrical roots. Composer **Rebecca Saunders** won the RPS Music Award for Chamber-Scale Composition (her third RPS Music Award) for *Skin*, which takes its lead from words by Samuel Beckett: *"an exhausting, and at times disturbing ride"* written by a composer *"at the height of her powers"*. **Philip Venables** won the RPS Music Award for Large-Scale Composition for his *"brilliantly written"* opera *4.48 Psychosis*. Based on the play by Sarah Kane, and staged by the Royal Opera at the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, the opera was described by the jury as *"arrestingly relevant, uncomfortable yet gripping"*.

Outstanding music-making in the regions scooped several awards: **Manchester Camerata** won the RPS Music Award for Ensemble for *"boldly reinventing itself"* over the past few years and *"blazing a trail for what a 21<sup>st</sup> century orchestra can do"* which has made it an *"indispensable cultural asset."* Manchester Camerata will open the Pyramid stage at this year's Glastonbury Festival with Hacienda Classical.

Two Scottish festivals were also amongst the winners. **Lammermuir Festival** took home the RPS Music Award for Concert Series and Festivals, for a *“wide-ranging programme, inspired by the historic architecture and landscape of its East Lothian location, whether hillfolds or fields, fishing villages or market towns”* which features *“the very best of Scotland’s artists at the heart of its music-making.”* **East Neuk Festival, in collaboration with 14-18 NOW**, won the RPS Music Award for Audiences and Engagement for **Memorial Ground** by American composer David Lang, *“a piece of special local significance to celebrate the centenary of the Battle of the Somme”*. With *“meticulous planning,”* the piece, performing materials and resources were then made available without charge to choirs around the UK, achieved thirty-seven additional performances in its first year alone.

Other regional winners included: Leeds-based **Opera North** for the culmination of its *“magnificent” Ring Cycle*, with performances over five years reaching huge audiences in five cities in England.

The UK’s first disabled-led youth orchestra, Bristol-based **South-West Open Youth Orchestra**, brought to life by Open Music won the RPS Music Award for Learning and Participation. The judges saluted the inclusive nature of the process, which develops bespoke instruments according to the needs of the individual musicians that can be played with any part of the body, and the orchestra’s *“practical, inspirational and vital role in bringing together the worlds of disabled and mainstream music-making”*.

First violinist of the Takacs Quartet, **Edward Dusinberre** won the RPS Music Award for Creative Communication for his *“honest and lucid”* book, **Beethoven for a Later Age: The Journey of a String Quartet** (Faber). Dusinberre *“shares an important but intimate musical experience: that of living for decades with one of the greatest of all artistic achievements, Beethoven’s quartets.”* The jury remarked: *“Few have told so well of the musician’s life, or offered such illuminating insights to players and listeners alike.”*

Veteran filmmaker **Barrie Gavin**, who has made more than 200 films about music and more than 250 live relays of performances, was presented with **Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society** (see below for further details).

**John Gilhooly, Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society, comments:** *“This year’s RPS Music Award winners take no prisoners, united in their excellence and their commitment to removing barriers to listening or participation in classical music. The awards celebrate live music of extraordinary quality and ambition, taking place across the width and breadth of the country (closer to home than many might think). I’d urge those who have yet to experience its multifarious pleasures to get out there and listen and make music, in the moment, of the moment. Live Music Is... more vibrant than ever.”*

**A special programme dedicated to the RPS Music Awards, featuring highlights from the ceremony, interviews and music will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on Sunday 14 May at 19.30hrs.**

**Alan Davey, Controller of BBC Radio 3, comments:** *“Live classical music is the lifeblood of what we do at BBC Radio 3, it is part of our vital role to connect audiences with remarkable*

music and culture. Many congratulations to all the winners here tonight and to the RPS who have helped to contribute to that live classical music scene, a scene that is the envy of the world and is alive and vibrant! I can't wait to share the highlights from tonight with our millions of listeners who, like concert-going audiences, continue to be thirsty for the enrichment that classical music brings. "

## RPS MUSIC AWARDS – LIST OF WINNERS

Audiences and Engagement	East Neuk Festival, in collaboration with 14-18 NOW: <i>Memorial Ground</i> (composer: David Lang)
Chamber Music and Song	Fretwork
Chamber-Scale Composition	Rebecca Saunders: <i>Skin</i>
Concert Series and Festivals	Lammermuir Festival
Conductor	Richard Farnes
Creative Communication	Beethoven for a Later Age: <i>The Journey of a String Quartet</i> by Edward Dusinger (Faber)
Ensemble	Manchester Camerata
Instrumentalist	James Ehnes
Large-Scale Composition	Philip Venables: <i>4.48 Psychosis</i>
Learning and Participation	South-West Open Youth Orchestra
Opera and Music Theatre	Opera North: <i>The Ring Cycle</i>
Singer	Karita Mattila
Young Artists	Joseph Middleton

Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society    Barrie Gavin

## AWARDS PRESENTATION AND SPEECHES

The RPS Music Awards were presented at a ceremony in London hosted by BBC Radio 3 presenters **Andrew McGregor** and **Sarah Walker**. Pianist **Stephen Hough** (the first ever RPS Julius Isserlis Scholar and winner of the RPS Music Award for Instrumentalist in 1992) presented RPS silver lyre trophies to the winners, and also spoke from the stage. Whilst speaking passionately about the importance of giving everyone the chance to experience classical music, and to ensure that opportunity is not denied through social or financial exclusion, Hough also said that we should accept that *"in the end some people will just not respond to this art form we love - and that's just fine. There's nothing wrong with them, and, more importantly, there's nothing wrong with the music."* He also cautioned against underselling classical music, in all its complexity, especially to young people: *"We invite them to climb Primrose Hill when they are ready for Ben Nevis."*

German Bass-baritone and RPS Gold Medallist, **Thomas Quasthoff** (in a recorded message) offered a personal reflection on the Brexit vote: *"living together in peace is the most important thing"*. He spoke of the RPS's role in *"unifying musicians"* and the importance of a *"borderless Europe so that we can enjoy the music and friendship of different countries and cultures"*.

The ceremony included a live performance from viol consort **Fretwork**, winners of the RPS Music Award for Chamber Music and Song, and marked the launch of the RPS's online/photographic **#LiveMusicals** campaign, which features words chosen by musicians and music goes across the UK that reflect their own feelings about the special quality of the live music experience.

**BBC Radio 3 will broadcast a special RPS Music Award programme, including interviews with some of the night's winners, on Sunday 14 May at 19.30hrs (and on BBC iPlayer).**

## **BARRIE GAVIN AWARDED HONORARY MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY**

Filmmaker Barry Gavin was awarded Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society, the 140<sup>th</sup> recipient since the first Honorary Membership was made to Carl Maria von Weber in 1826. In its citation, the Royal Philharmonic Society said: *"Barrie Gavin has spent a lifetime single-mindedly documenting the arts through film: above all classical music, with the composers of today as an overriding priority. The hallmarks of his work are the care and attention to detail which he invests in each and every subject, and his ability to demonstrate insightful authority and profound understanding, while always allowing the music to speak for itself.*

*His close collaboration with composer Pierre Boulez lasted for 40 years, while his many documentaries on key figures in 20th century music - including Boulez himself, along with Stockhausen, and Berio - illuminate the art of composition as well as the historical, cultural and philosophical origins of the mainstream of 20th century art music.*

*His other most fruitful collaborations have been with Simon Rattle, Gerard McBurney, and with German television, for whom he was responsible for more than 250 live broadcast performances. With his portraits of the leading composers of our time, too numerous to itemise, but including Toru Takemitsu, Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davies, Hans Werner Henze, Jonathan Harvey, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Colin Matthews and Oliver Knussen, he has created and continues to create an unprecedented legacy and treasure trove for musicians and curious listeners alike to discover."*

Illustrious Honorary Members have included Rossini (1839), Brahms (1882), Clara Schumann (1887), Stravinsky (1921), Aaron Copland (1970), Paul Sacher (1991) and Lady Evelyn Barbirolli (2001). Recent recipients have included founder of El Sistema José Antonio Abreu (2008) Sir Brian McMaster (2009) Graham Johnson, Fanny Waterman (2010) George Benjamin, Tony Fell, Mark Elder (2011) John Stephens (2012), Dr Ahmad Sarmast, Rosemary Nalden, Aaron Dworkin, Ricardo Castro, Armand Diangienda (2013) Martin Campbell-White, Marin Alsop (2014) Evelyn Glennie (2015) and Graham Vick (2016).

## RPS MUSIC AWARDS SPONSORS

The RPS Music Awards are presented in association with BBC Radio 3, with individual category sponsors: **ABRSM**, the exam board for the Royal Schools of Music [RPS Music Award for Learning and Participation]; **BBC Music Magazine** [Conductor]; **The Boltini Trust** [Large-Scale Composition]; **Boosey and Hawkes**, in memory of **Tony Fell** [Chamber-Scale Composition]; the **Bowerman Charitable Trust** [Young Artists]; **Sir Simon and Victoria, Lady Robey OBE** [Opera and Music Theatre] and **Schott Music** [Concert Series and Festivals].

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### Notes:

**About the Royal Philharmonic Society:** The Royal Philharmonic Society unites the music profession and its audiences to create a vibrant future for music: supporting and working creatively with talented young performers and composers, championing excellence, and encouraging audiences to listen to, and talk about, great music. The Society has been at the heart of music for over 200 years, with direct links to Beethoven (it commissioned the composer's Ninth Symphony), Mendelssohn, Wagner and many of the iconic figures of classical music. **Champions of Excellence:** The Society sets the standard and lets the world know about the finest classical music-making. From its historic Gold Medal to the annual RPS Music Awards for live music, recognition by the RPS is a guarantee of outstanding musical achievement.

**Young Musicians:** The RPS invests in talented young performers, offering much needed funding to buy instruments, teaching tailored to their individual needs, or the chance to be mentored by an experienced, established performer.

**Composers:** The Society supports new music through commissioning new work, repeat performances, workshops, residency schemes and encouraging interaction between composers and audiences.

**Audiences:** The RPS is a voice for music, putting music at the centre of cultural life. Whether a regular listener or just beginning to explore classical music, the RPS actively promotes greater engagement with live music performance and encourages people to listen and talk about music through events and debate. [www.philharmonicsociety.uk](http://www.philharmonicsociety.uk)

**About BBC Radio 3:** Since it launched in 1946, the Third Programme, which became BBC Radio 3, has been a bold pioneer in the cultural world. It is one of the world's foremost presenters, creators, commissioners and curators across classical, folk, world, jazz and contemporary music as well as drama, philosophy and ideas. The station is also the most significant commissioner of new and contemporary music in the UK, with 35 new works commissioned annually and it broadcasts over 600 concerts a year, including live broadcasts from the greatest classical music festival in the world (BBC Proms). Radio 3's In Concert programme alone reaches the equivalent of 250 packed concert halls a week. The station has always nurtured extraordinary artistic talents, provided a platform for important scientific and political debates/announcements, and broadcast groundbreaking experimental drama – always while delivering its core aim of connecting audiences with pioneering music and culture. [www.bbc.co.uk/radio3](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3)

Award	Citation
<b>Audiences and Engagement</b>	<i>The winning project inspired the panel by deliberately placing commissioning at its centre as a route to reach new and existing audiences. Composer David Lang was asked to write a piece of special local significance to celebrate the centenary of the Battle of the Somme. With meticulous planning, the piece, performing materials and resources were then made available free of charge to choirs around the UK. This resulted in thirty-seven additional performances, and thirty seven different audiences, in its first year alone. The Award goes to <b>East Neuk Festival, in collaboration with 14-18 NOW, for Memorial Ground.</b></i>
<b>Chamber Music and Song</b>	<i>The winners have consistently excelled in a specialist repertoire, always with exquisite taste and polish. 2016 – their 30th anniversary year - again demonstrated their inventive programming and welcome expansion of the repertoire through commissioning new works. This year's RPS Chamber Music and Song Award goes to <b>Fretwork.</b></i>
<b>Chamber-Scale Composition</b> sponsored by Boosey and Hawkes in memory of Tony Fell	<i>With each piece this composer enters genuinely new territory, here creating an intensely dramatic work for the soprano, Juliet Fraser, and ensemble which demands the listener's engagement. Taking its cue from lines of Samuel Beckett, <b>Rebecca Saunders' Skin</b> makes for an exhausting and at times disturbing ride. It shows Saunders at the height of her powers, displaying an ability to hear and reproduce astonishing sounds with an artistry and technique which leave us gasping in admiration.</i>
<b>Concert Series and Festivals</b> sponsored by Schott Music	<i>'Beautiful music in beautiful places' is this festival's strapline. <b>Lammermuir Festival</b> is also beautifully curated. It features a wide-ranging programme, inspired by the historic architecture and landscape of its East Lothian location - whether hillfolds or fields, fishing villages or market towns. And the very best of Scotland's artists are at the heart of its music-making.</i>
<b>Conductor</b> sponsored by BBC Music Magazine	<i>The panel were unanimous in declaring <b>Richard Farnes</b> the clear winner of this year's Conductor's Award. His twelve years as Music Director of Opera North provide an inspiring example of tireless and self-effacing musical leadership, of which the universally-praised Ring Cycle, given six times in venues across the UK, formed the magnificent climax and demonstrated that he is one of finest Wagnerian interpreters of our time.</i>
<b>Creative Communication</b>	<i>The winner shares an important, but intimate, musical experience: that of living for decades with one of the greatest of all artistic achievements, Beethoven's quartets. Few have told so well of the musician's life, or offered such illuminating insights to players and listeners alike. This is writing that is as learned as it is honest and lucid, and has engaged both its readers and listeners to BBC Radio 4's Book of the Week. The Award goes to the leader of the Takács Quartet, <b>Edward Dusinberre for Beethoven for a Later Age.</b></i>
<b>Ensemble</b>	<i>Over the past few years the winner has boldly re-invented itself and blazed a brilliant trail for what a 21st-century orchestra can do. Through its exuberant Hacienda Classical events it has brought an entirely new audience to its concerts – and, more importantly, wooed them back again and again. It has also done pioneering work in the crucial fields of education, health and wellbeing and community engagement. In the crowded orchestral market of north-west England, and through imaginative partnerships further afield, <b>Manchester Camerata</b> made itself an indispensable cultural asset.</i>
<b>Instrumentalist</b>	<i>Blessed with a generosity of spirit and an innate musicality, <b>James Ehnes</b>, even by his own standards, had a wonderfully productive 40th birthday year. Whether as Artist in Residence at the Liverpool Philharmonic; acclaimed country-wide concerto, recital and quartet performances or participation in the 'In Harmony' programme, he delivered an extraordinary breadth of communication through his eloquent music making.</i>

<p><b>Large-Scale Composition</b> donated by the Boltini Trust</p>	<p>The winning work is arrestingly relevant, uncomfortable yet gripping. The vocal lines are unique and brilliantly written, sitting alongside spoken word, recorded elements, and instrumental lines which take over where words fail, translating deep internal psychological states into sound. This opera speaks with uncompromising directness to its audience, bringing out the irony as well as the anguish of Sarah Kane's play. The winner is <b>Philip Venables</b> for <b>4.48 Psychosis</b>.</p>
<p><b>Learning and Participation</b> sponsored by the ABRSM, the exam board for the Royal Schools of Music</p>	<p>The UK's leading disabled-led regional youth orchestra is an ambitious vision brought to life by Open Up Music and sustained by its committed partners. The judges were particularly struck by the inclusive nature of the process, which develops bespoke instruments for the individual musicians that can be played with any part of the body.</p> <p>The orchestra's premiere performances had great musical integrity, bringing together existing and newly commissioned repertoire, and incorporating ground-breaking music technology alongside brass band, choir, organ and narrator. For its practical, inspirational and vital role in bringing together the worlds of disabled and mainstream music-making, the winner is <b>South-West Open Youth Orchestra</b>.</p>
<p><b>Opera and Music Theatre</b> donated by Sir Simon and Victoria, Lady Robey OBE</p>	<p>The Award goes to <b>Opera North</b> for the completion of its magnificent <b>Ring Cycle</b>, a feat of planning and musical excellence led by conductor Richard Farnes with British and international casts. This culmination of 6 cycles, following 5 years of concert stagings, reached huge audiences in 5 cities in England.</p>
<p><b>Singer</b></p>	<p>It's a cliché of judges deliberating awards to announce that a field crowded with excellence made their decision hard to make. However, they finally decided to honour a singer, who in two unforgettable concert performances held huge audiences at both the Royal Festival Hall and the Proms spellbound through the nakedly communicative power of her vocal and dramatic artistry.</p> <p>For her unforgettable incarnations of both the Kostelnicka in Jenufa and Emilia Marty in The Makropoulos Case, the award goes to the astounding Finnish soprano <b>Karita Mattila</b>.</p>
<p><b>Young Artists</b> donated by the Bowerman Charitable Trust</p>	<p>In a shortlist notable for creativity, artistic excellence and impact, the winner in this category has been hailed as a born collaborator, equally at home in partnerships with leading international artists and also supporting young performers whose careers he nurtures. Demonstrating dedication to the field of chamber music and song, his commitment is exemplified as Director of Leeds Lieder, a festival of imaginative programming, wide-ranging activity and community engagement. The winner of the Young Artists category is the pianist <b>Joseph Middleton</b>.</p>
<p><b>Presentation of Honorary Membership</b></p>	<p><b>Barrie Gavin</b> has spent a lifetime single-mindedly documenting the arts through film: above all classical music, with the composers of today as an overriding priority. The hallmarks of his work are the care and attention to detail which he invests in each and every subject, and his ability to demonstrate insightful authority and profound understanding, while always allowing the music to speak for itself.</p> <p>His close collaboration with composer Pierre Boulez lasted for 40 years, while his many documentaries on key figures in 20th century music - including Boulez himself, along with Stockhausen, and Berio - illuminate the art of composition as well as the historical, cultural and philosophical origins of the mainstream of 20th century art music.</p> <p>His other most fruitful collaborations have been with Simon Rattle, Gerard McBurney, and with German television, for whom he was responsible for more than 250 live broadcast performances. With his portraits of the leading composers of our time, too numerous to itemise, but including Toru Takemitsu, Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davies, Hans Werner Henze, Jonathan Harvey, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Colin Matthews and Oliver Knussen, he has created and continues to create an unprecedented legacy and treasure trove for musicians and curious listeners alike to discover.</p>