

RPS Music Awards

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the UK's live classical music awards

Press Release

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Winners announced for RPS Music Awards

Presented in association with BBC Radio 3

- Double triumph for the Philharmonia Orchestra's Stravinsky *re-rite*
- Tenor Philip Langridge honoured
- Keynote speaker Grayson Perry warns: beware of 'cool'*

Classical music ground-breakers proved true to form by taking many of the plaudits at this year's RPS Music Awards, the UK's most prestigious accolades for live classical music. Composers **Kaija Saariaho** and **Kevin Volans**, the **London Sinfonietta**, the **Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival** and conductor **Oliver Knussen** all emerged triumphant.

The **Philharmonia Orchestra** scooped two awards and there was a posthumous award for tenor **Philip Langridge** who died earlier this year, 21 years after he won the first ever RPS Music Award for Singer.

Winners of the 21st RPS Music Awards, which celebrated outstanding achievement in live classical music in 2009, were announced at an awards ceremony at London's Dorchester Hotel on Tuesday 11 May, hosted by **Sean Rafferty**, presenter of BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* and **Sara Mohr-Pietsch**, presenter of BBC Radio 3's *Breakfast*. Award-winners were presented with the traditional silver RPS lyre trophies by **Sir John Tomlinson**, and artist **Grayson Perry** made artistic connections in the evening's keynote speech, warning an audience of classical music's leading lights to "*beware the dreaded 'c' word... cool*".* A special programme devoted to the Awards is broadcast on **Wednesday 12 May at 7pm on Performance on 3, BBC Radio 3**.

Graham Sheffield, Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society comments:

"This is an exciting time for classical music in the UK. The quality, ambition and musical intelligence of our award winners – distinctive music makers from across the generations – speaks volumes. Whether through a fresh approach to traditional repertoire or a desire to seek out the new and different, nurture young talent or engage with new audiences, they are turning bold, often daring, artistic ambitions into dazzling reality. Living proof that, even in straitened times, bold thoughts and brilliance can win through."

Roger Wright, Controller of BBC Radio 3, comments:

"This is the eighth year that Radio 3 has been the proud partners of the RPS Music Awards as it champions so much of what Radio 3 cherishes about the classical music world. Congratulations to all the winners for the quality and commitment that they have shown, which serves to remind us all of the outstanding talent at work in today's industry."

21st RPS Music Awards – The Winners

The **Philharmonia Orchestra** was the night's only double-winner, with *re-rite*, an interactive performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* over four floors of a Thames warehouse, which gave visitors the experience of conducting, playing and being inside an orchestra. *re-rite* which is now touring outside London won the RPS Music Award for Audience Development and the RPS Music Award for Creative Communication, for *"a simple idea, beautifully realised."*

Tenor **Philip Langridge** won the first ever RPS Music Award for Singer in 1989, and was still singing at the peak of his powers throughout his 70th birthday year. He was named, posthumously, as the winner of this year's award for the *"humanity"* that he brought to the role of Eschenbach in *Death in Venice* at the 2009 St Endellion Festival. Commenting on Langridge, who was presented with the award shortly before his death in March, the jury said that he was *"an artist admired for his extraordinary versatility and loved for his musical and professional generosity – to colleagues and, especially, to young artists starting out – as well as to audiences... he is, first and last, an exemplary musician."*

An *"outstanding artist"* of a new generation, countertenor **Iestyn Davies** led the field in a strong shortlist of candidates for the RPS Music Award for Young Artists, praised for his *"expressiveness of tone, intensity of sound... and natural sense of drama [which] stole many a show."*

Pianist **Stephen Hough** was a popular winner of the RPS Music Award for Instrumentalist, honoured for *"outstanding success"* on the concert platform in 2009, culminating in universally acclaimed Proms performances of all four of Tchaikovsky's piano concertos.

The *"open-minded, inspirational"* composer and conductor **Oliver Knussen** scooped the RPS Music Award for Conductor. The jury described him as *"a uniquely influential musician in the British music world for many years... blessed with the best pairs of ears in the business"* and praised performances *"illuminated with authority and interpretive insight"...*

The **BBC Symphony Orchestra**, of which Knussen is Artist-in-Association, took the RPS Music Award for Opera and Music Theatre for its *"revelatory"* concert staging of the rarely performed French version of **Martini's Juliette**, given 50 years after the death of the composer.

Opera also took the plaudits in the Education category. **English Touring Opera** with Hall for Cornwall's *One Day, Two Dawns*, a large-scale community opera that reflected the Cornish community in which it was devised and performed. The opera united a fantastically broad spectrum of participants; a *"flagship example of open-access musical celebration."*

Two festivals, at opposite ends of the repertoire spectrum, also found success. The **Wigmore Hall's Haydn Bicentenary Season Celebrations**, picked up the RPS Music Award for Chamber Music and Song, praised for its *"extraordinary range of established and young artists"* and *"the richness of the whole experience"*. **Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival's** 20th anniversary season, triumphant in the Concert Series and Festivals category, was described by the jury as *"a shining example of global ambition"* and praised for a programme that *"did not shy away from the difficult, drew on major international links and attracted large, young, enthusiastic audiences."*

A particularly strong year for contemporary music continued when the **London Sinfonietta** was awarded the RPS Music Award for Ensemble. Described by the jury as “*in a class of its own*”, the ensemble was lauded for “*the diverse range and quality of its programming*” and “*its encouragement of young creators of new music.*”

This year, the two RPS Music Awards composition prizes went to distinguished international composers. The “*exquisite sound world*” of Finnish composer **Kaija Saariaho**, ***Notes on Light***, premiered in the UK in 2009 as a dance score to a new work by choreographer Wayne MacGregor at the Royal Opera House, moved the jury by its “*immediacy and vibrancy.*” It was awarded the RPS Music Award for Large-Scale Composition. South African-born composer **Kevin Volans** took the RPS Music Award for Chamber-Scale Composition for ***viola:piano***, “*a distinctive distillation*” of the “*mysterious magic*” of the composer’s recent music.

Sponsors

The RPS Music Awards are presented in association with BBC Radio 3. The Society is grateful for BBC Radio 3’s continuing support – the sixth year that the awards have been presented in association with BBC Radio 3 - and to its individual award sponsors, donors and supporters: **BBC Music Magazine, Anthony Bolton, David W. Bowerman CBE, Peter Bull, Classic FM, Vernon Ellis, The Guardian, Rosenblatt Recital Series** and the **Yellow Car Charitable Trust**.

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* Grayson Perry – RPS Music Awards Speech

Turner prize-winning artist Grayson Perry warned an audience of the leading lights in UK classical music, to guard against the need to be cool, when he delivered the keynote speech at this year's Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards.

He comments: *“Cool is a word that often crops up when describing art or artists. It's always been a term that has bugged me. The minute something is described as cool my instincts tell me that it is on the wane. For me being creative is being un-self conscious, being prepared to make a fool of myself, in a nutshell, the opposite of cool. In my experience embarrassment is not fatal. Coolness somehow implies that there is a right thing to do, whereas creativity is mistakes.”*

Instead, in a wide ranging speech, he told his audience to *“keep doing insanely difficult things...”* and discussed the social conditioning that can make people feel excluded from one art form or another, confessing *“I still feel like I'm pretending when I listen to classical music.”* Discussing possible cuts in government spending on the arts, he said: *“the arts are central in promoting the idea of a happiness economy where decisions are made about what makes a better life, not what makes us richer”* and called on the arts to *“set a good example”* commenting *“one of my guiding principals in life is to follow the path of most resistance.”*

The speech can be heard on BBC Radio 3 as part of the RPS Music Awards broadcast at 7pm on Wednesday 12 May.

RPS Music Awards Winners and Citations

Award	Winner	Winners citation
Audience Development in partnership with Classic fm	Philharmonia: re-rite Also shortlisted: BBC Proms 2009 London Contemporary Orchestra	Combining artistic vision and digital expertise, the Philharmonia's re-rite project in a Warehouse on London's South Bank introduced people of all ages to the powerful experience of being inside an orchestra. Many were new to the Philharmonia and have since been encouraged to attend the orchestra's live concerts, while re-rite will tour on to Leicester and overseas.
Chamber Music and Song donated by David W Bowerman CBE	Wigmore Hall: Haydn Bicentenary Season Celebrations Also shortlisted: Schubert Ensemble Takacs Quartet	The jury declared the pre-eminent UK chamber music event of 2009 to be Wigmore Hall's unique live celebration of Haydn's bicentenary . It praised the extraordinary range of established and young artists, the consistently high level of performances, and the richness of the whole experience, with imaginative ancillary events reaching out to younger audiences.
Chamber-Scale Composition	Kevin Volans: viola:piano Also shortlisted: Pierre Alexandre Tremblay: un clou, son marteau, et le béton Huw Watkins: Piano Trio	viola:piano is a distinctive distillation of the mysterious magic of Kevin Volans's recent music. It's a piece that is spare yet rich, abstract yet expressive, economical in its resources yet maximal and memorable in its impact, and which will go straight to the heart of the viola duo repertoire.
Concert Series and Festivals	Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival Also shortlisted: CBSO: Igorfest Southbank: Sounds Venezuela Wigmore Hall: Jörg Widmann Focus	HCMF 2009 featured a wide range of major international composers not often heard in the uk, and reasserted itself as a important international and national event in the world of contemporary music - one all aspiring composers should experience. The programme, which did not shy away from the difficult, drew on major international links and attracted large, young, enthusiastic audiences. It puts Huddersfield firmly on the cultural map and is a shining example of global ambition that justifies the support the festival receives locally and nationally.
Conductor supported by the BBC Music Magazine	Oliver Knussen Also shortlisted: Kirill Karabits Andris Nelsons	A uniquely influential musician in the British music world for many years, he also happens to be a world class conductor, who appears regularly across the length and breadth of the UK. Blessed with one of the best pairs of ears in the business, his performances are illuminated with authority and interpretative insight, be it Schumann, Stravinsky or the latest work of a young composer. Open-minded, inspirational, with the ability to cast new light on all he touches, he is Oliver Knussen .
Creative Communication sponsored by The Guardian	Philharmonia: re-rite Also shortlisted: In Search of Beethoven (Seventh Art Productions) Daniel Snowman: The Gilded Stage: a Social History of Opera	A simple idea, beautifully realised, the Philharmonia's re-rite was a free installation which revealed, on many levels, the intricacies of Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring, making unobtrusive use of digital technology in an atmospheric and enticing venue.
Education	English Touring Opera with Hall for Cornwall - One Day, Two Dawns Also shortlisted: HCMF: Piano Phasing On the Rim of the World Project Sing Up	The award goes to a collaborative project led by English Touring Opera working alongside Hall for Cornwall . One Day, Two Dawns was a musically driven large-scale community opera, reflecting the Cornish community in which it was devised and performed. The opera united a fantastically broad spectrum of participants – a flagship example of open-access musical celebration. The jury felt the whole process and performance had real educational and artistic substance, achieving an impressive balance between honouring tradition whilst saying something artistically fresh and vibrant.

<p>Ensemble donated by the Yellow Car Charitable Trust</p>	<p>London Sinfonietta</p> <p>Also shortlisted: Aurora Orchestra BBC Symphony Orchestra Birmingham Contemporary Music Group</p>	<p>The Ensemble Award goes to the London Sinfonietta for the consistent excellence of its music-making, the diverse range and imaginative quality of its programming, the variety of its ground-breaking projects including the first London Sinfonietta Academy in 2009, and its encouragement of young creators of new music combined with its championing of established composers – all of which puts it in a class of its own.</p>
<p>Instrumentalist donated by Vernon Ellis</p>	<p>Stephen Hough</p> <p>Also shortlisted: Alina Ibragimova Leonidas Kavakos</p>	<p>Stephen Hough is a leading British pianist with a big international profile, who regularly pushes out the boundaries in terms of repertoire; he is also a very stimulating writer about music. In 2009 he enjoyed outstanding success on the concert platform, culminating in universally acclaimed Proms performances of all four of Tchaikovsky's piano concertos.</p>
<p>Large-Scale Composition donated by Anthony Bolton</p>	<p>Kaija Saariaho: Notes on Light</p> <p>Also shortlisted: Diana Burrell: Concerto for Violin with Singer and Three Ensembles Michael Zev Gordon: The Impermanence of Things Colin Matthews: Violin Concerto</p>	<p>The jury were moved, not only by the exquisite sound world we've come to expect from this composer, but also the immediacy and vibrancy of the work and its original approach to development. The jury felt that this not only confirmed her status as one of the most distinctive composers working today but represents a significant milestone for her as a composer. The award goes to Kaija Saariaho's Notes on Light.</p>
<p>Opera and Music Theatre</p>	<p>BBC Symphony Orchestra: Juliette</p> <p>Also shortlisted: Birmingham Opera Company: Othello English National Opera: Peter Grimes</p>	<p>From a range of very high quality work, both large and small-scale, the panel unanimously selected the BBC Symphony Orchestra's revelatory concert staging of the rarely performed French version of Martinu's Juliette. Given in his anniversary year this musically outstanding performance enhanced the reputation of both the composer and the work itself.</p>
<p>Singer donated by Rosenblatt Recitals</p>	<p>Philip Langridge</p> <p>Also shortlisted: Susan Bickley Mark Padmore</p>	<p>It would have been enough to give this award to Philip Langridge simply for singing professionally - at all - in the year he turned 70. But enough is never enough for Langridge.</p> <p>That he has continued performing, still in peak form, bringing his insatiable curiosity, wit and integrity to everything he does is typical of an artist admired for his extraordinary versatility and loved for his musical and professional generosity – to colleagues and, especially, to young artists starting out - as well as to audiences.</p> <p>The humanity he brought to the role of Eschenbach in Death In Venice at St Endellion last year, characteristically squeezing every ounce of meaning from the text, will never be forgotten by those who heard it. But the music is what counts. He is, first and last, an exemplary musician.</p>
<p>Young Artists donated by Peter Bull</p>	<p>Iestyn Davies</p> <p>Also shortlisted: Lucy Crowe Adam Walker</p>	<p>Countertenor Iestyn Davies demonstrated that he is the outstanding artist of his generation. His expressiveness of tone, intensity of sound and musicianship were brought to bear in concert, and, of course, in opera, where his natural sense of drama stole many a show and, significantly, brought the spotlight back to the countertenor voice.</p>

Notes to Editors

About the RPS Music Awards

The annual RPS Music Awards, presented in association with BBC Radio 3, are the UK's most prestigious recognition of achievement in the field of live classical music. Awards, in thirteen categories, are decided by independent panels consisting of some of the music industry's most distinguished practitioners. The awards honour musicians, composers, writers, broadcasters and inspirational arts organisations. The list of previous winners reads like a *Who's Who* of classical music.

www.rpsmusicawards.com

About the Royal Philharmonic Society

The Royal Philharmonic Society [RPS] is one of the two oldest music societies in the world. It was formed on 24 January 1813 with the aim 'to promote the performance, in the most perfect manner possible of the best and most approved instrumental music', which it did principally by giving regular public orchestral concerts in London, including through two world wars.

Today the RPS seeks to create a future for music through the encouragement of creativity, the recognition of excellence and the promotion of understanding. The Society's artistic activities focus on composers and young musicians and through a programme of audience development, awards and discussion (most recently Alex Ross's RPS Lecture on concert etiquette and applause) it seeks to raise the public consciousness of the finest music making today and to create a forum for debate about the direction of classical music. Current recipients of the Society's highest honour, the RPS Gold Medal, are: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Janet Baker, Bernard Haitink, Alfred Brendel, Colin Davis, Elliott Carter, Pierre Boulez, Simon Rattle, Plácido Domingo, Joan Sutherland, Claudio Abbado, Charles Mackerras, Daniel Barenboim, Henri Dutilleux and Thomas Quasthoff.

www.royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk

About BBC Radio 3

BBC Radio 3 is the UK Station of the Year and broadcasts classical music, jazz, world music, arts programmes and drama. Last year BBC Radio 3 broadcast over 600 complete concerts and operas from venues and festivals across the UK and beyond. BBC Radio 3 is the home of The BBC Proms and broadcasts every concert live. It supports composers, writers and new young performers and last year broadcast over 40 new drama productions.

www.bbc.co.uk/radio3