

Press Release

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Royal Philharmonic Society

RPS Music Awards

In association with **BBC Radio 3**

Winners announced for RPS Music Awards

Presented in association with **BBC Radio 3**

Sir Charles Mackerras received both the popular vote when he scooped the BBC Radio 3 Listeners Award, and was awarded the UK's highest honour for classical music when he was presented by Dame Janet Baker with the Royal Philharmonic Society's Gold Medal at this year's RPS [Royal Philharmonic Society] Music Awards (Wednesday 11 May, Dorchester Hotel).

The RPS Music Awards are widely recognised as the most prestigious in the field of live classical music. Awards are decided by independent panels consisting of some of the music industry's most distinguished practitioners. The awards, in 13 categories, honour musicians, composers, writers, broadcasters and inspirational arts organisations for their work in 2004.

This year's ceremony was hosted by BBC Radio 3's Stephanie Hughes, with awards presented by conductor Sir Andrew Davis. The keynote speech was given by theatre director Jude Kelly.

The **Royal Opera House** was another big winner on the night, with three awards: Its music director **Antonio Pappano** won the Conductor award; the singer award went to **Ben Heppner** for his "towering performance" in the title role of *Peter Grimes* and composer **Thomas Adès** was awarded the RPS Music Award for Large-scale Composition for *The Tempest*. **Opera North**, however, triumphed over the Royal Opera House in the Opera and Music Theatre category, with *Eight Little Greats*, its acclaimed series of short, rarely staged operas.

Manchester's **Hallé** Orchestra took the RPS Music Award for Ensemble, the jury commenting: "*The revival of the Hallé under Mark Elder is one of the great success stories of British classical music*". **Edward Gardner**, 30 year old music director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and until recently, assistant conductor to Elder at the Hallé, was awarded the RPS Music Award for Young Artists. Pianist **Pierre-Laurent Aimard's** "*adventurous commitment to 20th century and contemporary music*" was rewarded with the award for Instrumentalist.

The RPS Music Awards also recognise the wealth of extraordinary work taking place beyond the traditional concert hall. **Birmingham Contemporary Music Group** won the RPS Music Award for Audience Development for its tours of contemporary classical music to rural village halls in Shropshire (a programme which has played to full, and enthusiastic houses for the past five years). The education award went to **Operation Hackney: On London Fields**, a ground-breaking project involving over 700 people, in which **Hackney Music Development Trust** devised and produced a new community opera celebrating Hackney's history and diversity.

The RPS Music Award for Creative Communication, a new award which recognises the contribution of words and images, across all media, in furthering the understanding of classical music was awarded to director **John Bridcut** for **Britten's Children (Mentorn for BBC)** a "*touching revelatory film [which] explored one aspect of a composer's life in great depth, avoiding the temptation of sensationalism*".

Composer **Howard Skempton** was a popular choice as winner of the Chamber Scale Composition category for his string quartet *Tendrils*. The passing of one of the 20th century's musical giants was marked with the award of the Festival and Series category to the South Bank Centre, Royal Academy of Music and London Sinfonietta for **Omaggio**, a season centred on the work of Luciano Berio (and planned with the composer shortly before his death).

Tony Fell, Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society comments:

"The overriding criterion for the RPS Music Awards is excellence and it was clear from the deliberations of all our juries, that this is not in short supply: there are literally hundreds of both professional and non-professional musicians, of all ages, from all backgrounds, up and down the country who are making a significant contribution to classical music in the UK.

However, we encourage juries to recognise not only excellence, but to seek out those who provide musical experiences which have a fundamental effect on both audiences and music makers, and are helping to shape our musical future. It is those artists and organisations which dare to submit themselves to intense self-questioning, brave and often risky enterprises, idealism and a willingness to look at music with fresh eyes and ears who have triumphed at this year's RPS Music Awards."

The Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal: Sir Charles Mackerras

The Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal is the Society's most prestigious honour, initiated in 1870 to commemorate the Centenary of Beethoven's birth. The medal bears the effigy of Beethoven, and has become one of the most privileged honours in the world of music, having been awarded only ninety times since its inception.

In making the award of the RPS Gold Medal to Sir Charles Mackerras, the RPS citation commented: "**Sir Charles Mackerras** is one of the great musicians of our age who as a conductor and scholar has illuminated a vast range of familiar and less well-known repertoire and who has maintained the highest musical standards throughout his varied and distinguished career".

Sir Charles Mackerras, who turns 80 later this year, is only the 91st recipient of the RPS Gold Medal and joins an outstanding list of musicians, composers and conductors, including (most recently) Alfred Brendel, Colin Davis, Elliott Carter, Rafael Kubelik, Pierre Boulez, Simon Rattle, Plácido Domingo, Joan Sutherland and Claudio Abbado.

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A special evening devoted to the RPS Music Awards will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Thursday 12 May at 7.30pm

RPS Music Awards – winners and citations

Award	Winner	Citation
Audience Development in partnership with Classic fm	Birmingham Contemporary Music Group: Shropshire Tours	The award goes to a company that has steadily shaped and refined a scheme to bring challenging contemporary music to new audiences in rural areas. The jury was particularly impressed by the way in which the performers engage with the audience and how the experience of the performances informs future practice. The winner is BCMG for its Shropshire Tours , now in its fifth year.
BBC Radio 3 Listeners Award	Sir Charles Mackerras	For his consistently distinguished performances, whether in Dvořák with the Czech Philharmonic at the BBC Proms, or Martinů's Greek Passion at the ROH, or Weber's Der Freischütz at the Edinburgh Festival, or in works that provided the climax of Radio 3's Janáček Day, the award goes to Sir Charles Mackerras .
Chamber-scale Composition	Howard Skempton: Tendrils	The award goes to Howard Skempton's Tendrils . A sustained feat of counterpoint, Skempton's extended single movement string quartet presents an undulating landscape that is always recognisable but always changing. With astonishing economy of means he communicates an absolutely personal vision.
Concert Series and Festivals	Omaggio – A Celebration of Luciano Berio (South Bank Centre, Royal Academy of Music, London Sinfonietta)	Omaggio – A Celebration of Luciano Berio was an inspired collaboration between the Royal Academy of Music, London Sinfonietta and South Bank Centre in consultation with the dying Luciano Berio. It presented a comprehensive survey of every aspect of his work juxtaposed with music that he loved, music of the new generation and talks and films. The jury was impressed by the thrilling performances, the balance of the programming and the intriguing combination of the retrospective and prospective – a true homage.
Conductor	Antonio Pappano	Antonio Pappano has enhanced the dignity of the Royal Opera House and its standing in the world, re-invigorating the Company by his warm and inspiring leadership and commitment as music director. 2004 was particularly notable for his superb performances of operas by Shostakovich, Gounod, Britten, Massenet, Verdi, and Wagner.

<p>Creative Communication sponsored by the Guardian</p>	<p>Britten's Children directed by John Bridcut (Mentorn for BBC)</p>	<p>This serious and beautiful film explored one aspect of a composer's life in great depth. Avoiding the temptation of sensationalism, Britten's Children directed by John Bridcut (Mentorn for BBC) was imaginatively researched and both touching and revelatory.</p>
<p>Education supported by Paul Orchard-Lisle CBE, Chairman of the Council of Marlborough College</p>	<p>Operaction Hackney: On London Fields (Hackney Music Development Trust)</p>	<p>Hackney Music Development Trust's On London Fields was a community opera for and the climax of an eighteen month programme of teaching literacy and language through the arts. It involved socially and culturally diverse communities in Hackney, and people of all ages, in creating the story and music of the opera. The programme included museum exhibitions and theatre visits and culminated in three vivid, professionally produced and sold-out performances at the Hackney Empire.</p>
<p>Ensemble</p>	<p>Hallé</p>	<p>The revival of the Hallé under Mark Elder is one of the great success stories of British classical music. This example of orchestral regeneration has redefined the orchestra's future and stature in the north-west and across the UK. Under Elder's inspirational and communicative leadership, with strong management and committed musicians and staff, this is - in the words of one critic - "an organisation invigorated with purpose".</p>
<p>Instrumentalist supported by the BBC Music Magazine</p>	<p>Pierre-Laurent Aimard</p>	<p>For his adventurous commitment to twentieth century and contemporary music, the breadth of his repertoire from Mozart to the present day and for his brilliant, poetic and subtly-shaded playing, the award goes to Pierre-Laurent Aimard.</p>
<p>Large-scale Composition sponsored by Chester Music, in memory of Witold Lutoslawski</p>	<p>Thomas Adès: The Tempest</p>	<p>The inspiration, breadth and beauty of this work created an alluring and dazzling partner to Shakespeare's play. In The Tempest Thomas Adès has imaginatively recast his language, writing music that is strikingly original yet draws on precedent, and is widely appealing without compromising integrity. A hugely significant and accomplished opera.</p>
<p>Opera and Music Theatre donated by John Crisp</p>	<p>Opera North: Eight Little Greats</p>	<p>Opera North's Eight Little Greats was an inspiring event and a great company achievement. This brave and imaginative programme of rarely staged works invited audiences in venues around the country, and on Radio 3, to share a truly original operatic experience.</p>
<p>Young Artists supported by Peter Bull</p>	<p>Edward Gardner</p>	<p>In 2004, only four years after graduating, this young British musician took up the appointment of Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera, making his impressive debut in that position with Puccini's La Bohème. Edward Gardner had already proved his mettle as Assistant Conductor to Mark Elder at the Hallé, where his obvious rapport with the orchestra, and the clarity and intelligence of his performances, have marked him out for a career of international significance.</p>

**Royal Philharmonic
Society Gold Medal**

Sir Charles Mackerras

Sir Charles Mackerras is one of the great musicians of our age who as a conductor and scholar has illuminated a vast range of familiar and less well-known repertoire and who has maintained the highest musical standards throughout his varied and distinguished career.

For his research into the performance practice of the 18th and 19th centuries and his interpretations of Handel, Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms.

For his championship of British Music and in particular the music of Sir Arthur Sullivan.

For his authoritative performances of Czech music in particular his single-handed pioneering of the operas of Janáček.