

Press Release

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The Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards

www.rpsmusicawards.com

Winners announced for UK's most prestigious awards for live classical music

Vocal talent hit the high notes as the winners of this year's RPS Music Awards were announced at the Dorchester Hotel, London (8 May). Singers scooped all the performance categories open to them, including the Singer Award (John Mark Ainsley) BBC Radio 3 Listeners Award (Miah Persson) and the award for Young Artists (Kate Royal). It was also the night when young conducting talent took a bow (Vladimir Jurowski), and when a book showed that, when it comes to communicating the excitement of classical music, the printed word still packs a punch, even in the digital age.

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 14 categories, honour musicians, composers, writers, broadcasters and inspirational arts organisations for their work in 2006.

This year's ceremony at the Dorchester Hotel (Tuesday 8 May at 7pm) was hosted by BBC Radio 3's Sean Rafferty, with awards presented by soprano Dame Josephine Barstow. The keynote speech was given by Director of the National Theatre Nicholas Hytner.

This is the fifth year that BBC Radio 3 has been associated with the RPS Music Awards. The station will broadcast a special programme devoted to the awards on Wednesday 9 May at 7.00pm.

The Winners

Individual awards went to the "profoundly intelligent" Vladimir Jurowski (in the Conductor category), for the "intensity" of his work with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and as Music Director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and to clarinettist Michael Collins, for a series of outstanding performances, including Elliott Carter's Clarinet Concerto at the BBC/Barbican Elliott Carter weekend in January 2006. Collins, the first ever wind player to win the RPS Music Award for Instrumentalist, has been at the forefront of commissioning and premiering clarinet repertoire by some of today's most highly regarded composers.

In a particularly good night for singers (they scooped three of the individual performance awards), soprano Kate Royal triumphed in the Young Artists category, topping an outstanding shortlist which had included Gustavo Dudamel, recently appointed Music Director designate of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Previous winners of this award have included tenor Ian Bostridge, Edward Gardner, now Music Director of English National Opera and last year, the outstanding British tenor Andrew Kennedy.

Tenor John Mark Ainsley won the Singer category for performances as diverse as Monteverdi's Orfeo at English National Opera and Britten's Canticles at the Wigmore Hall, that "revealed an artist at the height of his powers." The award for Opera and Music Theatre went to Opera North for Phyllida Lloyd's "triumphant reinterpretation" of Benjamin Britten's seminal masterpiece Peter Grimes.

Gold Medal Members:

Claudio Abbado Janet Baker Daniel Barenboim Pierre Boulez Alfred Brendel
Elliott Carter Colin Davis Plácido Domingo Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau
Bernard Haitink Charles Mackerras Simon Rattle Joan Sutherland

Graham Sheffield Chairman
David Lowe Hon Secretary
Francis Bergin Hon Treasurer
Rosemary Johnson General Administrator

The young Swedish soprano Miah Persson, one of the “brightest stars” of the Mozart Anniversary year, scooped the people’s vote in the BBC Radio 3 Listeners Award for her “golden toned” singing in the Royal Opera House production of *The Marriage of Figaro* and a memorable BBC Radio 3 lunchtime concert at the Wigmore Hall. Roger Wright, Controller of BBC Radio 3 comments: “We are delighted with our partnership with the Royal Philharmonic Society. The RPS Music Awards continue to mark real artistic achievement demonstrating the breadth and diversity of classical music in the UK. The BBC Radio 3 award gives the station’s listeners an opportunity to celebrate the musical talent that has given them the greatest pleasure over the previous year. We congratulate Miah Persson, who receives this recognition in the fifth year of our association with the RPS.”

Composition awards went to Richard Causton (in the Chamber–Scale Composition category) for *Phoenix*, a work of ‘fastidious clarity and economy... and emotional directness’ commissioned by the London Sinfonietta, and to Jonathan Harvey (in the Large–Scale Composition category), for his “ambitious attempt to portray the Buddhist vision of a blissful afterlife” towards a pure land, premiered by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at last year’s Proms. The composer–led Spitalfields Festival took the RPS Music Award for Concert Series and Festivals for two contrasting programmes devised by composers Jonathan Dove (summer) and Diana Burrell (winter) – the second year in a row that the festival has featured amongst the RPS Music Award winners.

The ‘innovative’ Britten Sinfonia, with an extraordinarily varied schedule that embraces classical, opera, jazz and world music, triumphed in the Ensemble category, applauded for “its aspirations in presenting music countrywide in a stylish and accessible manner”. The Dante Quartet took the award for Chamber Music for its outstanding, meticulous musicality, willingness to embrace a wide repertoire, and for the enterprise and breadth of its Summer Music Festival in Cornwall.

Three awards that recognise achievements in broadening the reach of classical music produced striking winners. Patrick Carnegy’s book, *Wagner and the Art of the Theatre* won the Creative Communication award, applauded for its “lovingly detailed scholarship and utterly engaging telling of a story.” The Audience Development prize went to the East Neuk Festival in Fife that has brought “adventurous and high–quality music–making to an area of Britain poorly served in that respect,” with a stellar line up of musicians in churches and community venues across the region. The Education award was scooped by the Philharmonia Orchestra, St Martin’s College of Art & Design and SouthBank Centre’s PLAY.orchestra, (56 plastic cubes, 3 hotspots, and the chance to create your own orchestral sound and download the results via Bluetooth); “a model of partnership between professionals and non–professionals; stimulating creativity, promoting orchestral music and enhancing musical appreciation.”

In a special award, and in the year that Opera North took the award for Opera and Music Theatre, the society also honoured its first Artistic Director, David Lloyd–Jones, conferring on him Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society. Honorary Membership of the Society is made in recognition of outstanding services to music, and has only been awarded 117 times since the election of Carl Maria von Weber in 1826.

In a career spanning over 45 years, David Lloyd–Jones’ work has spanned conducting, artistic leadership and scholarship. At Opera North he conducted fifty different productions, laying a solid foundation for its future. He continues to champion many British composers of the twentieth century through recordings and performance. His scholarly work includes editions of Walton, Elgar and Bliss and the definitive edition of *Boris Godunov*, which, together with his translations of Russian operas, are performed worldwide.

Graham Sheffield, Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society comments: “The Royal Philharmonic Society is committed to a rich and vibrant future for live classical music. Each one of this year’s RPS Music Awards winners is helping to turn that future into a reality. In recent years the music profession has found bold, imaginative new ways to reach out to audience. It has proved that it is possible to provide greater access, promote understanding and increase diversity without in any way compromising the integrity of the music that is played, whether old or new. These awards recognize that success “

A full list of award winners and jury citations are included at the end of this release.

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Awards and Citations

The RPS Music Awards, in association with BBC Radio 3, are supported by: BBC Music Magazine; David W Bowerman CBE; Peter Bull; Classic FM; the Guardian; The Musicians Benevolent Fund; Peters Edition, Stainer & Bell and Josef Weinberger; the Rosenblatt Recital Series, the Victor Salvi Foundation and the Martin Smith Foundation.

Award	Winner	Citation
Audience Development in partnership with Classic fm	East Neuk Festival	East Neuk Festival has brought adventurous and high-quality music-making to an area of Britain poorly served in that respect. It is thoroughly rooted in its region; its audience has grown impressively each year; and there is a real sense of audience and festival going on a journey of musical discovery together.
BBC Radio 3 Listeners Award	Miah Persson	The BBC Radio 3 Listeners' Award goes to a young Swedish soprano who was one of the brightest stars of the Mozart anniversary year, with acclaimed performances at the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne, and the Proms. And she further displayed what an enchanting and versatile artist she is in a Radio 3 Wigmore Hall Lunchtime concert devoted to songs by Strauss, Sibelius, Schumann, and Grieg. Throughout the year, the pure, golden-toned voice of Miah Persson delighted listeners everywhere.
Chamber Music donated by David W Bowerman CBE	Dante Quartet	The award goes to a group willing to embrace a wide repertoire with utter commitment; to dedicate preparation time to their outstanding performances and to develop new audiences with care. All this together, with the enterprise and breadth of their Summer Music Festival in Cornwall, made 2006 a bold and busy year for the Dante Quartet.
Chamber-Scale Composition	Richard Causton Phoenix	Richard Causton's Phoenix is a piece that consolidates the qualities of this composer's recent music, its fastidious clarity and economy. But Phoenix also opens up a new expressive world, an emotional directness that Causton vividly conjures from a five-piece ensemble.
Concert Series and Festivals donated by the Victor Salvi Foundation	Spitalfields Festival (summer and winter)	All three shortlisted nominations merited an award. It was, however, the Spitalfields Festival which finally stood out as fulfilling the RPS criteria in a wonderfully inspired and inspiring way. Its proven commitment to engaging its culturally diverse communities through imaginative and wide-ranging programmes of the highest quality, exploring an ever-widening variety of venues in the East of London, makes Spitalfields an outstanding example of a festival for the 21 st century.

Conductor donated by the Martin Smith Foundation	Vladimir Jurowski	Vladimir Jurowski: A profoundly intelligent musician who has produced fresh and compelling interpretations across a wide range of repertoire. The intensity of his music-making, particularly with the LPO and at Glyndebourne has illuminated the experience of audiences and musicians alike.
Creative Communication sponsored by the Guardian	Patrick Carnegy: Wagner and the Art of Theatre (Yale University Press)	Out of a gratifyingly rich year of excellent books, television and radio programmes about music, two highly contrasting endeavours stood out for their rigour and communicative energy. But, for its lovingly detailed scholarship and utterly engaging telling of a story, the jury made the award to Patrick Carnegy: Wagner and the Art of Theatre.
Education sponsored by The Musicians Benevolent Fund	PLAY.Orchestra	PLAY.Orchestra was collaboration between Southbank Centre, Philharmonia Orchestra and Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design. This imaginative seven-week project, using interactive technologies on the Southbank Centre's Riverside Terrace, brought orchestral repertoire and new commissions to many thousands of all ages and backgrounds through an enjoyable and memorable communal experience. The innovative, cross-discipline collaboration was a model of partnership between professionals and non-professionals; stimulating creativity, promoting orchestral music and enhancing musical appreciation.
Ensemble	Britten Sinfonia	For its aspirations in presenting music countrywide in a stylish and accessible manner; for its exciting and constantly evolving projects from the fantastical Bach Meets Moondog and its first foray into opera in a premiere by Stuart MacRae to its refreshing exploration of Beethoven Piano Concertos with Imogen Cooper – highlights of an extraordinarily varied schedule that embraces classical, jazz and world music – the innovative Britten Sinfonia is the winner of the Ensemble Award.
Instrumentalist supported by the BBC Music Magazine	Michael Collins	For the integrity and quality of his musicianship and for the open-minded variety of his repertoire – which included his masterly performance of Elliott Carter's Clarinet Concerto – the award goes to Michael Collins.
Large-Scale Composition jointly supported by Peters Edition, Stainer & Bell and Josef Weinberger	Jonathan Harvey:...towards a pure land	Jonathan Harvey:...towards a pure land. The panel admired this ambitious attempt to portray the Buddhist vision of a blissful afterlife. The music makes delicate yet powerfully suggestive use of unusual sonorities, and the hidden string ensemble created a very beautiful metaphor for eternal harmony, which even the devout atheists among the panel members found moving.
Opera and Music Theatre	Opera North: Peter Grimes	A triumphant reinterpretation, in which a true company ensemble delivered a seminal masterpiece to a wide audience.

Singer donated by the Rosenblatt Recital Series	John Mark Ainsley	John Mark Ainsley combines beauty of voice with dramatic intensity and imaginative insight. Performances as diverse as Monteverdi's Orfeo and Britten's Canticles revealed an artist at the height of his powers.
Young Artists donated by Peter Bull	Kate Royal	No-one who heard Kate Royal's stunning performance as the Governess for Glyndebourne Touring Opera was left unaffected. Equally impressive on the concert platform, she has delighted audiences with her gift for communication, her range of vocal expression and sheer 'star quality'!
Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society	David Lloyd-Jones	

Notes:

About the Royal Philharmonic Society

For almost 200 years the Royal Philharmonic Society has been the champion of the finest music making in the UK. The RPS was founded in 1813 with the aim of creating a future for music by supporting new music and young artists and recognising musical excellence. These aims remain true today, together with a desire to raise debate and discussion about the key musical issues of the day.

The Society's activities focus on young musicians and the creation and support of new music. The RPS has commissioned and performed new works since its first concert in 1813 (including Beethoven's 9th Symphony). Today, the RPS continues to have an active commissioning policy. This includes a collaboration with BBC Radio 3 to commission repertoire for the BBC's New Generation Artists, two annual composition prizes for composers under 29 and the Elgar Bursary for more mature composers.

The RPS recognises excellence at all levels of the profession – from the award of the prestigious RPS Gold Medal to the world's most distinguished musicians (one of music's highest honours), through to awards of scholarships and bursaries to some of the UK's most talented young musicians and, of course, the annual RPS Music Awards.

As the only independent voice for music in the UK, the Royal Philharmonic Society provides platforms for distinguished and often provocative speakers through its prestigious annual lecture and at special events for RPS members throughout the year.

The RPS Gold Medal was initiated in 1870 to commemorate the Centenary of Beethoven's birth and bears the effigy of Beethoven. In the intervening years, it has been presented on fewer than 90 occasions. Current Gold Medal recipients include: Claudio Abbado, Janet Baker, Pierre Boulez, Alfred Brendel, Elliott Carter, Colin Davis, Placido Domingo, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Bernard Haitink, Charles Mackerras, Simon Rattle and Joan Sutherland.

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