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the UK's live classical music awards

Press Release

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Royal Philharmonic Society RPS Music Awards In association with BBC Radio 3

Shortlists announced for UK's only live classical music awards

This year, the RPS Music Awards recognise a particularly invigorating period for live classical music in the UK, with a wave of outstanding new conducting, performing and composing talent featuring strongly in the RPS Music Awards shortlists (announced this evening). In the conductor category, all four short listed artists - **Stéphane Denève**, **Edward Gardner**, **Vasily Petrenko** and **John Wilson** are in their thirties, with violinist **Alina Ibragimova** featuring on the Young Artists' shortlist aged just 23. Many of the players of the **National Youth Orchestra** hadn't even been born when the **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** was formed 21 years ago. Both are shortlisted for the Ensemble Award, alongside Manchester-based **Psappha**.

Distinguished artists, ensembles and festivals also make a good showing, with a heavy weight shortlist for the singer award – **Christine Brewer**, **Natalie Dessay** and **John Tomlinson** (a late replacement for Bryn Terfel as Wotan in the Royal Opera House's *Ring Cycle*). In a strong year for contemporary opera, the Opera and Music Theatre category includes two world premieres – **Jonathan Dove's** family opera **Pinocchio** for **Opera North** and **James MacMillan's The Sacrifice** for **Welsh National Opera** plus acclaimed productions of operas by **Philip Glass** and **Benjamin Britten**. Details of the shortlists for each award can be found below.

The annual RPS Music Awards 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, with a further award decided by the listeners of BBC Radio 3. 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. This year the awards celebrate the achievements of artists, ensembles and arts organisations for the calendar year 2007.

Graham Sheffield, Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society comments:

"There is a particularly youthful energy to this year's Royal Philharmonic Society shortlists, with the stars of a new generation of talent recognised alongside outstanding musicians who continue to set the pace after many years in the spotlight."

I am especially proud to present this list, which, due to the awards' independence, is a valuable reflection of what's really happening in the UK's live classical music scene: it demonstrates the country-wide appeal of classical music, it demonstrates our international appeal for the world's best musicians, but it also shows the wealth of talent that the UK itself is producing and developing. Composing talent, performing talent, talent for programming, talent for developing new audiences. If classical music were a competitive Olympic sport (which thank goodness it is not), the UK would surely top the medals table by a mile!"

The RPS Music Award winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on **Thursday 15 May** at the Dorchester Hotel, London, co-hosted BBC Radio 3's Sarah Mohr-Pietsch and Petroc Trelawny. Richard Holloway, the outspoken former Bishop of Edinburgh and since 2005, Chair of the Scottish Arts Council is the keynote speaker. A special programme devoted to the RPS Music Awards will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 at 7.00pm on **Friday 16 May**.

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The Shortlist

- The shortlist for the prestigious conductor award reflects the dynamic impact of a younger generation of conductors on the country's orchestral life. Three of the shortlisted nominees have created an immediate stir at the helm of venerable music institutions: **Stéphane Denève**, Music Director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, **Edward Gardner**, Music Director of English National Opera and **Vasily Petrenko**, Principal Conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. The fourth, **John Wilson**, has made a name for himself by championing once hugely popular, but now largely neglected English 'light' music and classic film scores. The Conductor Award is supported by an Anonymous donor.
- It's a good year for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in the singer category with French soprano **Natalie Dessay** shortlisted for her performance as Marie in Donizetti's 1840 comedy *La Fille du Regiment* and bass **John Tomlinson** recognised for his performance as Wotan in Keith Warner's staging of *The Ring Cycle* (in which he replaced Bryn Terfel at short notice). The list is completed by a second outstanding Wagner performance: American soprano **Christine Brewer** as Brunnhilde in *Gotterdammerung*, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms. Brewer is also recognised for her recital performances at the Wigmore Hall and Edinburgh Festival. The Singer Award is donated by the Rosenblatt Recital Series.
- The particularly strong shortlist for this year's Young Artists Award, donated by Peter Bull, features Venezuelan conductor **Gustavo Dudamel**, 23 year old violin sensation **Alina Ibragimova** and soprano, **Elizabeth Watts**.
- The instrumentalist award, supported by BBC Music Magazine, features the distinguished English pianist **Imogen Cooper**, Canadian violinist **James Ehnes** and former BBC Young Musician of the Year, French horn virtuoso **David Pyatt**.
- The shortlist for the Opera and Music Theatre Award recognizes a strong year for contemporary opera. English National Opera's production of Philip Glass's **Satyagraha**, and two world premieres: Jonathan Dove's family opera **The Adventures of Pinocchio** for Opera North and James MacMillan's **The Sacrifice** at Welsh National Opera all feature. Aldeburgh Festival's acclaimed production of Benjamin Britten's **Death in Venice** completes the shortlist. The Opera and Music Theatre Award is supported by the Britten Pears Foundation.
- The Ensemble Award shortlist features **the National Youth Orchestra** for nurturing future players and for wide-ranging concerts including performances at the Glastonbury Festival and Tate Modern; **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment**, which celebrated its 21st anniversary in

2007, and Manchester-based ensemble **Psappha**, with a rich year of contemporary music and premieres, complete the shortlist.

- The Concert Series and Festivals category is contested by the **Lichfield Festival**, the premiere multi-arts festival in the West Midlands, featuring an opening night performance by Philip Glass; the 9th and final **RNCM International Cello Festival**, which brought together many leading instrumentalists and ensembles to focus on British repertoire; **New Crowned Hope**, Peter Sellars' eye-opening season of contemporary music, dance and arts at the Barbican Centre and **Opera Holland Park**, whose inaugural season in its radically upgraded theatre featured an acclaimed performance of the rarely performed *L'amore dei tre Re*.
- The Chamber Music award shortlist features the young Anglo/Irish **Carducci Quartet**, **Maria Joao Pires & Friends Schubert Residency** at the Wigmore Hall and the 35th season of the **International Musicians' Seminar Prussia Cove**, under artistic director Steven Isserlis. The Chamber Music Award is supported by David W Bowerman.
- As the debate continues over the future of television arts programming, classical music broadcast programmes make a strong showing on the shortlist for the Creative Communication award, sponsored by The Guardian. The list features **Oh Thou Transcendent**, Tony Palmer's eloquent independent film about Ralph Vaughan Williams broadcast on Five, and **Classic Brittainia**, BBC 4's comprehensive study of classical music since World War 2. **Discovering Music**, BBC Radio 3's series that explores key works of repertoire and oboist **George Caird's** meticulous study DVD/CD/book dissecting Benjamin Britten's *Six Metamorphoses After Ovid. Op.49*, are also shortlisted.

Education and Audience Development

- The Audience Development award, in partnership with ClassicFM, features the first ever orchestral concert performed in the virtual world of **Second Life** by the **RLPO** and the **Birmingham Opera Company's Traviata** at the National Indoor Arena.
- **BBC Proms Brass Day**, featuring amateur and professional brass players from all over the country, **Southbank Centre's Beautiful Beginnings** which welcomed year two students from 50 Lambeth Primary schools and **WNO Max's** ambitious environmental trilogy in Welsh and English **Land, Sea, Sky** vies for the RPS Music Award for Education, sponsored by the Musicians Benevolent Fund.

Composers and composition

- The Large Scale composition award, donated by Anthony Bolton, is contested by **Thomas Adés' Tevot**, which was co-commissioned by the Barbican Centre, where it received its UK premiere by the Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by Simon Rattle, **Peter Wiegold's** Prom's commission **He is armour'd without** and (with its second shortlist nomination), **James MacMillan's The Sacrifice**.
- The Chamber Scale Composition Award pits the distinguished composers **Gerald Barry** and **Diana Burrell** against 30-year-old composer **Rebecca Saunders**. **BBC Radio 3 Listeners Award**

Listeners to BBC Radio 3 have, once again, had the chance to vote for an exceptional musician to receive the BBC Radio 3 Listeners Award as part of the RPS Music Awards, with voting online and via telephone open for a month from mid-February to mid-March. Choosing from a longlist selected by the producers of BBC Radio 3 nationwide, the listeners' choice will be revealed at the RPS Music Awards ceremony on 15 May.

A full list of shortlisted ensembles and artists is included at the end of this release.

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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 and the Royal Philharmonic Society/Classic Fm project, Hear Here!, the UK's first listening project dedicated to classical music, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

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.

Current RPS Gold Medal members include Claudio Abbado, Janet Baker, Pierre Boulez, Alfred Brendel, Elliott Carter, Colin Davis, Placido Domingo, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Bernard Haitink, Charles Mackerras, Simon Rattle, Joan Sutherland and most recently Daniel Barenboim and Henri Dutilleux.

**The RPS Music Awards in association with BBC Radio 3
Shortlists**

Award	Shortlist
Audience Development in partnership with Classic fm	Birmingham Opera Company's La Traviata – Verona to Birmingham RLPO – Second Life performance
BBC Radio 3 Listeners Award	Winner of listeners' vote to be announced 15 May
Chamber Music donated by David W Bowerman CBE	Carducci Quartet International Musicians Seminar Prussia Cove Maria Joao Pires & Friends Schubert Residency
Chamber-scale Composition	Gerald Barry: Lisbon Diana Burrell: Paragraph Rebecca Saunders: Stirrings Still
Concert Series and Festivals	Lichfield Festival RNCM International Cello Festival New Crowned Hope (Barbican) Opera Holland Park
Conductor	Stéphane Denève Edward Gardner Vasily Petrenko John Wilson
Creative Communication sponsored by the Guardian	George Caird: Britten: Six Metamorphoses After Ovid. Op.49. Anatomy of a Masterpiece Classic Britannia. Sixty Years of British Classical Music (BBC Television) Discovering Music (BBC Radio 3) Tony Palmer: 'Oh Thou Transcendent' - The Life of Ralph Vaughan Williams (Isolde Productions)
Education sponsored by The Musicians Benevolent Fund	BBC Proms Brass Day Beautiful Beginnings (South Bank) Land Sea Sky Trilogy (WNO Max)
Ensemble supported by an anonymous donor	National Youth Orchestra Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment Psappha
Instrumentalist supported by the BBC Music Magazine	Imogen Cooper piano James Ehnes violin David Pyatt horn
Large-scale Composition donated by Anthony Bolton	Thomas Adès: Tevót James MacMillan: The Sacrifice Peter Wiegold: He is amour'd without
Opera and Music Theatre supported by the Britten Pears Foundation	Aldeburgh Festival: Death in Venice English National Opera: Satyagraha Opera North: The Adventures of Pinocchio James Macmillan: The Sacrifice (Welsh National Opera)
Singer donated by the Rosenblatt Recital Series	Christine Brewer Natalie Dessay John Tomlinson
Young Artists donated by Peter Bull	Gustavo Dudamel conductor Alina Ibragimova violin Elizabeth Watts soprano