

RPS Music Awards

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the UK's live classical music awards

Press Release

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Shortlists announced for RPS Music Awards

Shortlists have been announced for this year's RPS Music Awards, the UK's most prestigious accolade for live classical music.

Presented in association with BBC Radio 3, this year's shortlists, for outstanding achievement in 2009, celebrate an astonishingly diverse range of music and music makers from across the UK. They reveal an exciting new generation of artists and ensembles who are firmly establishing themselves alongside distinguished performers; all demonstrate vision and boldness.

The shortlists celebrate **opera in Cornwall**, **pianos in Huddersfield**, **nationwide singing** and outstanding celebrations of the year's big anniversaries: Purcell, Handel, Haydn and Martinu.

English National Opera, the **London Sinfonietta**, **Southbank Centre**, conductor **Oliver Knussen** and pianist **Stephen Hough** are amongst the big names to make the cut. Young artists include violinist **Alina Ibragimova**, 22 year old flautist **Adam Walker**, singers **Iestyn Davies** and **Lucy Crowe**, conductor **Kirill Karabits** and ensembles the **London Contemporary Orchestra** and **Aurora Orchestra** in only their second and fourth seasons respectively. **Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival** tops the list with three nominations, with the **Philharmonia Orchestra**, **Wigmore Hall**, **BBC Symphony Orchestra**, and the **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra** with its conductor **Andris Nelsons** each shortlisted twice.

Graham Sheffield, Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society comments:

"These shortlists have been debated and chosen by independent juries of incisive minds and strong opinions, and reflect the nominations of musicians and music lovers nationwide. What they reveal is the breadth of talent and invention in classical music in the UK on an unprecedented scale, and it is particularly refreshing to see so many young artists making a splash in 2009."

The RPS Music Awards are noted for their ability to look behind the headlines and identify the work that is really making a difference. It is this that gives them their integrity, and makes them so highly valued. I congratulate all of our shortlisted nominees and look forward to announcing the winners on Tuesday 11 May."

Roger Wright, Controller of BBC Radio 3 comments:

"It is exciting to see such an array of talent in these nominations. The list shows the vibrancy of the UK classical music scene. BBC Radio 3 is proud to be associated with these awards, not least because they reflect the new and established musical talent which the station supports and broadcasts throughout the year."

Winners will be announced at the RPS Music Awards ceremony at the Dorchester Hotel on Tuesday 11 May, hosted by BBC Radio 3's **Sean Rafferty** and **Sara Mohr-Pietsch**. The keynote speaker will be artist **Grayson Perry**, and the awards will be presented by **Sir John Tomlinson**, himself a triple RPS Music Awards winner. A special RPS Music Awards programme will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 at 7pm on Wednesday 12 May.

The Shortlists

In a hotly contested Young Artists category, 22 year old flautist **Adam Walker** (recently appointed Principal Flute of the LSO) does battle with two singers: soprano **Lucy Crowe** and counter tenor **Iestyn Davies**, who appeared together in the Royal Opera House's production of *Dido and Aeneas*.

The Instrumentalist category features pianist **Stephen Hough** alongside two violinists: 24 year old **Alina Ibragimova** who wowed Manchester with performances of solo Bach, and **Leonidas Kavakos**, versatile artist in focus in November/December at the South Bank Centre.

The conductor category includes two conductors who have made an instant impact on UK orchestral life – 34 year old **Kirill Karabits**, Principal Conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and **Andris Nelsons**, Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, alongside one of the UK's most respected conductors and composers, **Oliver Knussen**.

Knussen enjoys a close association with the **London Sinfonietta**, **Birmingham Contemporary Music Group** and **BBC Symphony Orchestra**, who are all nominated for the RPS Music Award for Ensemble, alongside the **Aurora Orchestra**, one of a new breed of young ensembles cutting an elegant swathe through London's orchestral scene.

London Contemporary Orchestra (average age just 26), another of London's vigorous new orchestral voices, is shortlisted for the RPS Music Award for Audience Development, alongside the **Philharmonia Orchestra's re-rite** project, Stravinsky's Rite of Spring in an interactive installation over four floors of a Thames warehouse, and the **BBC Proms**.

re-rite is also shortlisted in the Creative Communication category, alongside Phil Grabsky's film, **In Search of Beethoven**, which featured the thoughts of a stellar line-up of musical luminaries, and **Daniel Snowman's** book, *The Gilded Stage: a Social History of Opera*.

BBC Symphony Orchestra picks up a second nomination in the Opera and Music Theatre category for its concert staging of Martinu's *Juliette*. A strong shortlist also includes **Birmingham Opera Company's** promenade production of Verdi's *Othello*, with Ronald Samm in the title role (the first black singer to sing Othello in the UK). **English National Opera's** critically acclaimed production of *Peter Grimes* completes the list.

The shortlist for the RPS Music Award for Chamber Music and Song brings together the **Schubert Ensemble's** foray into Fauré at Kings Place, the **Takacs Quartet's** take on Beethoven at the South Bank and the **Wigmore Hall's** Haydn Bicentenary Season celebration.

The Concert Series and Festivals shortlist pays tribute to bold programming and big ideas. It features the **CBSO's** all-encompassing focus on Stravinsky, *Igorfest*, the **Southbank Centre's** *Sounds Venezuela*, the **Wigmore Hall's** five day focus on the work of the versatile young German composer and clarinettist **Jörg Widmann** and the multiple premieres and weirdly wonderful offerings of **Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival**.

Huddersfield also makes the grade in the shortlist for the RPS Music Award for Education, for its performance of **Kristoffer Zeggars'** *Piano Phasing* featuring 50 local pianists, alongside *On the Rim of the World*, a new choral theatre work jointly commissioned from Orlando Gough and librettist Jehane Markham by eight UK opera companies; the National Singing programme **Sing Up** and **English Touring Opera** and **Hall for Cornwall's** community opera, *One Day, Two Dawns*.

The strength and depth of new work is highlighted again this year in extraordinarily strong shortlists for both the large scale and chamber composition awards. **Diana Burrell, Colin Matthews, Kaija Saariaho** and **Michael Zev Gordon** are in contention for the RPS Music Award for Large scale composition, with **Huw Watkins, Kevin Volans** and Canadian composer **Pierre–Alexandre Tremblay** making up the shortlist for Chamber Scale Composition.

Details of the RPS Music Award for Singer will be announced on 11 May.

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**.

RPS Music Awards on BBC Radio 3

Following the announcement of the shortlists for the RPS Music Awards Shortlists in Radio 3's In Tune, the work of shortlisted artists is featured across the schedule. In May, the station celebrates their outstanding music-making in Performance on 3, culminating with this year's awards ceremony broadcast on Wednesday 12 May at 7pm.

www.bbc.co.uk/radio3

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