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# From Skateboards to Science Fiction: 2015 British Composer Awards Shortlist Unveiled

*2015 Shortlist Offers Rich Overview of Contemporary Music*

*Nearly Half Those Shortlisted are First-Time Nominees*

From photography to poetry and skateboarding to fine art, this year's British Composer Awards Shortlist highlights the dynamic relationship between contemporary music and the wider creative arts, while offering a futuristic glimpse into the evolving art of music-making and a sense of where tomorrow's composers will look for inspiration.

The British Composer Awards are presented by the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA) and sponsored by *PRS for Music*. The shortlist, announced today, features 33 composers across 12 categories, including Contemporary Jazz Composition, Choral, Sonic Art, Liturgical and Community or Educational Project, with 40 per cent of those shortlisted being first-time nominees.

Highlighting the diversity and innovation that defines today's musical landscape, the 36 shortlisted works span a choral piece composed to the rhythm of skateboarders; collaborations across the creative arts; a science fiction opera; music inspired by poetry, painting and photography, as well as by history's greatest composers and mythology; and work marking the First World War Centenary.

**Stephen McNeff, Chairman of BASCA**, said: *"This year's British Composer Awards sees us reaping the benefits of our new digital application process and a wonderful thirty-three percent rise in submissions. This means that the range and depth of submissions is enriched and we are reaching out across our profession to present a shortlist that reflects a wider, truer and more diverse picture of contemporary classical and jazz than ever before."*

Collaborative works with other creative arts include Chris Roe's *In Search of Strategy*, created in collaboration with CCSO Artist in Residence and watercolourist, Lesley Fotherby, which also took inspiration from Sun Tzu's ancient manual on strategy, *The Art of War*; Dai Fujikura's *Papaver*, a piece commissioned to commemorate the First World War Centenary, created in collaboration with poet Harry Ross; and Samuel Bordoli's *GRIND*, created in collaboration with skateboarders across the UK. Numerous shortlisted composers have also cited their inspiration as having come from other art forms, including Gavin Higgins, shortlisted for *The Ruins of Detroit* which was inspired by the photographs of the once affluent city of Detroit in ruins, taken by Yves Marchand and Roman Meffre, and Kate Whitley whose piece, *Alive* is based on a poem by Holly McNish of the same name.

This year Julia Haferkorn and Ed McKeon from Third Ear return as Artistic Directors of the 2015 Awards.

**Julia Haferkorn** said: *"Once again, the quality and diversity of entries for the Awards reflects the breadth of musical imagination found in the UK's new music scenes. And the commitment and consideration of the panels – 60 composers, musicians and producers, 80% of whom were new – shows the generosity of spirit and confidence within the sector."*

**Ed McKeon** commented: *"With a huge increase in submissions and in the number of composers shortlisted for the first time, the Awards are channelling the energy of a community buzzing with invention."*

Composers nominated range from those in their twenties, to those in their seventies and eighties. The youngest composers nominated are Samuel Bordoli and Kate Whitley while internationally-acclaimed Sir Harrison Birtwistle, who has previously won a British Composer Award six times, and been nominated a further six, is this year's oldest composer shortlisted.

The category with the most first-time nominees is Large Chamber, with Sinan Savaskan nominated for *Many stares (through semi-nocturnal Zeiss-Blink) - Module 30*, a piece inspired by Dadaism and Surrealism; Matthew Kaner for *Mosaic*, commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society; and Liza Lim for *Winding Bodies, 3 Knots*, an interpretation of an old Nordic sailor tale. Other first-time nominees include Glyndebourne's former Young Composer in Residence, Luke Styles, for his science fiction opera, *Tycho's Dream*; Yann Seznec for *Currents*, which uses the sounds of computer fans to paint a portrait of the modern world's attitude to consumption and disposal; Jazz composer Mike Williams; and sonic artist, Andrea Patrick Byrne, who is also an internationally-recognised fashion illustrator and artist, and whose nominated work explores the allure of fame and its possible consequences.

**Guy Fletcher, Chairman of PRS for Music**, added: *"It is an honour to be supporting the British Composer Awards this year. The shortlist indicates the level of talented individuals we have in the UK's contemporary music scene and continues to reflect the immense creativity that flourishes in the field, PRS for Music is extremely proud to be a part of it."*

Celebrating the music of contemporary British composers and composers living in the United Kingdom, the British Composer Awards is now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year. This year 420 works, which received a UK premiere performance in the year leading up to 31 March 2015, were submitted by over 270 composers. Each category was judged by an independent panel, with 60 judges taking part overall.

BBC Radio 3 will broadcast a programme dedicated to the ceremony on *Hear and Now* at 10pm on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December.

**Alan Davey, Controller BBC Radio 3**, commented: *"The UK's contemporary music scene is thrilling. This shortlist shows what a remarkable year it has been. As the most significant commissioner of new music, BBC Radio 3 is dedicated to bringing our millions of listeners the very latest high quality contemporary composition. We wish the shortlisted composers the very best of luck and look forward to broadcasting the awards on Radio 3's Hear and Now in December."*

Other nominees include Belfast's first Music Laureate, Brian Irvine; City of Birmingham Resident Composer, Judith Weir; Founder of the Nonclassical record label, Gabriel Prokofiev; and Professor of Composition at Worcester College, University of Oxford, Robert Saxton.

The winners in each category will be announced at the British Film Institute (BFI) on Wednesday 9th December 2015.

## The British Composer Awards

**Venue:** The British Film Institute (BFI), South Block, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XT

**Award date:** 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**Information:** [www.britishcomposerawards.com](http://www.britishcomposerawards.com)

## 2015 British Composer Awards Shortlist

### Amateur or Young Performers

*Alive* by Kate Whitley

*In Search of Strategy* by Chris Roe

*Visioni Simultanee* by Richard Bullen

### Choral

*Papaver* by Dai Fujikura

*Stabat Mater dolorosa* by James Dillon

*St Luke Passion* by James MacMillan

### Community or Educational Project

*GRIND* by Samuel Bordoli

*Snapshot Songs* by Stuart Hancock

*Tycho's Dream* by Luke Styles

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### **Contemporary Jazz Composition**

*As I Was Saying...* by Django Bates

*'SAMA' Project* by Mike Williams

*The Fox, The Parakeet & The Chestnut* by Trish Clowes

### **Large Chamber**

*Many stares (through semi-nocturnal Zeiss-Blink) - Module 30* by Sinan Savaskan

*Mosaic* by Matthew Kaner

*Winding Bodies, 3 Knots* by Liza Lim

### **Liturgical**

*John the Baptist* by Michael Finnissy

*Little Mass* by James MacMillan

*Salve Regina* by Kerry Andrew

### **Orchestral**

*Apollinaire's Bird* by John Casken

*Études-Tableaux* by Ryan Wigglesworth

*Responses: Sweet disorder and the carelessly careless* by Harrison Birtwistle

### **Small Chamber**

*Piano Quintet* by Richard Causton

*String Quartet No.2* by Julian Anderson

*The Ruins of Detroit* by Gavin Higgins

### **Solo or Duo**

*Beat Generation Ballads* by Michael Finnissy

*Day Break Shadows Flee* by Judith Weir

*Glitschig* by Sohrab Uduman

### **Sonic Art**

*Currents* by Yann Seznec

*Phantom Voices* by Christopher Fox

*Twinkle* by Andrea Patrick Byrne

### **Stage Works**

*Bayadère - The Ninth Life* by Gabriel Prokofiev

*Thebans* by Julian Anderson

*Things We Throw Away* by Brian Irvine

### **Wind Band or Brass Band**

*A Child Like You* by Andy Scott

*Muckle Flugga* by Rory Boyle

*Sonata for Brass Band on a Prelude of Orlando Gibbons* by Robert Saxton

**- END -**

### **Notes to editors:**

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High-res images, and biographies of the nominees are available upon request

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### **About the British Composer Awards**

Owned by BASCA, the *British Composer Awards* celebrate the music of contemporary British composers and composers living in the United Kingdom. Qualifying works must have been completed within five years prior to 31 March 2015 and received a UK premiere performance – either live or broadcast – in the year leading up to 31 March 2015. Each category is judged by a different jury, appointed by BASCA, mainly comprising of composers working in collaboration with performers, conductors, promoters and festival directors.

[www.britishcomposerawards.com](http://www.britishcomposerawards.com)

### **About BASCA**

BASCA, the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors, is the professional association for music writers in the UK. It is the single voice for British music creators. BASCA works to foster a sense of community amongst songwriters, lyricists and composers, and to campaign on their behalf in the domestic, European and international political arenas. As the only association in the country made up entirely of music writers, the organisation has an unparalleled insight into the issues affecting music creators in the UK today. BASCA works closely with their members, keeping them informed in a constantly changing environment via its publications, website, seminars and professional networking events. BASCA also presents the Ivor Novello Awards, British Composer Awards and Gold Badge Awards.

Membership of BASCA is open to working songwriters and composers who are members of a royalty collection society, such as *PRS for Music*, BMI or ASCAP.

BASCA Fellows: John Adams, David Arnold, Malcolm Arnold, John Barry, Don Black, Pierre Boulez, John Dankworth, David Ferguson, George Fenton, Elton John, Barry Gibb, Maurice Gibb, Robin Gibb, Annie Lennox, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Paul McCartney, Peter Maxwell Davies and Tim Rice.

[www.basca.org.uk](http://www.basca.org.uk)

### **About Our Sponsor - PRS for Music**

*PRS for Music* represents the rights of over 111,000 songwriters, composers and music publishers in the UK. As a membership organisation it ensures creators are paid whenever their music is played, performed or reproduced, championing the importance of copyright to protect and support the UK music industry. The UK has a proud tradition of creating wonderful music that is enjoyed the world over and *PRS for Music* has been supporting the creators of that music since 1914.

*PRS for Music* provides business and community groups with easy access to over 10m songs through its music licences. In an industry worth over £3.8bn *PRS for Music* is uniquely placed to be a voice for music and music creators. Collecting £664.3m in 2014, *PRS for Music* is one of the world's most efficient combined rights organisations. With over 100 representation agreements in place globally, *PRS for Music's* network represents over two million music creators.

[www.prsformusic.com](http://www.prsformusic.com)

### **About BBC Radio 3**

Radio 3 broadcasts high-quality, distinctive classical music and cultural programming, alongside regular arts and ideas programmes, jazz and world music. The station features more live classical music programming than any other and is the home of the BBC Proms - broadcasting every Prom live and more than 600 complete concerts a year - alongside daily speech programming, 90 full-length operas, over 25 drama commissions and over 20 new BBC music commissions a year. Radio 3 is the most significant commissioner of new musical works in the country and is committed to supporting new talent, from composers to writers and new young performers, through schemes such as New Generation Artists and New Generation Thinkers. [www.bbc.co.uk/radio3](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3)

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