

**STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 19:15 WEDNESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2015**

PRESS RELEASE: 9 December 2015

## British Composer Awards 2015 Winners Revealed

- *Five first-time winners honoured including 27-year-old Kate Whitley*
- *Sir Harrison Birtwistle most awarded composer in BCA history with seventh Award*
- *Michael Finnissy and Julian Anderson are double awardees*
- *“Fast rising star” Jessica Cottis delivers keynote speech at the BFI*

### A STAR-STUDED CEREMONY

Ten composers have tonight been honoured at the thirteenth annual British Composer Awards across 12 categories, including five first-time winners.

The event, hosted by BBC Radio 3 presenters Sara Mohr-Pietsch and Andrew McGregor, took place at the British Film Institute (BFI) in London, a new venue for the 2015 Awards, moving from London’s Goldsmiths’ Hall.

The audience were addressed by keynote speaker and rising star conductor, Jessica Cottis, who presented the winners with their awards alongside actress Juliet Stevenson. The ceremony included the UK premiere performance of *A Bird Is Singing* by Judith Bingham, performed by Trinity Laban Chamber Choir and conducted by Stephen Jackson.

The British Composer Awards are presented by the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA) and sponsored by *PRS for Music*. BBC Radio 3 will broadcast a programme dedicated to the ceremony on *Hear and Now* at 10pm on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December.

### FIVE FIRST-TIME WINNERS

The five first-time winners included 27-year-old composer, pianist and producer, Kate Whitley, this year’s youngest winner. She took home the award for Amateur or Young Performers for her piece *Alive*, which premiered at Peckham multi-storey car park, celebrating our experience of beauty in the world. Composed for children’s choir and orchestra, *Alive* is a setting of a Holly McNish poem.

Stuart Hancock won in the Community or Educational Project category for *Snapshot Songs*, a piece bringing together 60 singers, 15 drummers, the London Schools of Symphony Orchestra, soloists and spoken word artists from across London.

Judges were also impressed by Yann Seznec, who won the Sonic Art award for *Currents*, a piece connecting discarded computer fans to real-time weather data to explore how technology shapes our environment. The work highlights the economic and social model of constant consumption and disposal – a topical theme in light of the Paris Climate talks last week.

Other first time winners included Trish Clowes and Sinan Savaskan. Clowes won the Contemporary Jazz Composition category for *The Fox, The Parakeet & The Chestnut* – the culmination of her two years as BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, which premiered at the London Jazz Festival. Meanwhile, Savaskan's, *Many stares (through semi-nocturnal Zeiss-Blink) - Module 30*, inspired by the Abstract Expressionists, won him the Large Chamber award.

#### **RETURNING WINNERS: THE BCA'S MOST AWARDED COMPOSER & TWO DOUBLE AWARD WINNERS**

World-renowned British composer, Sir Harrison Birtwistle was recognised once more by the community of composers and musicians, winning his seventh award. His piece *Responses: Sweet disorder and the carefully careless*, composed for piano and orchestra, explores spatial blocks of music and won in the Orchestral category.

Michael Finnissy and Julian Anderson were both double winners. Finnissy was awarded in the Liturgical and Solo or Duo categories for *John the Baptist* and *Beat Generation Ballads* respectively. Anderson, who celebrates winning his fifth and sixth British Composer Awards this evening, won in the Small Chamber and Stage Works categories for *String Quartet No. 2* and *Thebans*.

Meanwhile, James Dillon, one of the UK's most celebrated composers, won his third British Composer Award for *Stabat Mater dolorosa* in the Choral category, and Rory Boyle took home his second award for *Muckle Flugga* in the Wind Band or Brass Band category – a piece inspired by the engineering of the lighthouse on the rocky Shetland Island of the same name.

**Stephen McNeff, BASCA Chairman**, said: *"I am delighted that this year's British Composer Awards includes such a broad range of winners - from relative newcomers to established names. We have succeeded in increasing the number of submissions by a third and this provided a much greater pool of talent from which to judge. It also bodes well for future growth and increasing inclusivity. Once again, thanks to our sponsors, PRS for Music and to our broadcast partners, BBC Radio 3 for their support and enthusiasm and for joining with us to celebrate the achievements of contemporary classical music in the UK."*

**Julia Haferkorn, BCA Artistic Director**, commented: *"Once again the Awards celebrate the riches and range of the talent we have in Britain – from gifted newcomers like Kate Whitley and Trish Clowes to world-renowned figures like Sir Harrison Birtwistle. New music is thriving and the winning works demonstrate the sumptuous creativity in existence today."*

**Ed McKeon, BCA Artistic Director**, also commented: *"These Awards reflect our contemporary moment, between uncertain traditions and undecided futures. They show that composers and musicians are finding the joy as well as darkness, lament and also celebration. They give us pause for thought, as well as cause for coming together."*

**Guy Fletcher OBE, Chairman at PRS for Music**, added: *"Congratulations to BASCA for bringing us another excellent British Composer Awards and for demonstrating that those who inhabit this wonderful corner of the music community are not only alive and well but continuing to deliver a fantastic range of high quality new works. PRS for Music is delighted and proud to sponsor this event which has become a most important fixture in the classical music calendar. Well done to all the winners and our special thanks to BBC Radio 3 for giving them the respect and the profile they undoubtedly deserve."*

**Alan Davey, Controller at BBC Radio 3**, said: *"Contemporary music is thriving in the UK. As a cultural organisation, BBC Radio 3 prides itself on using the licence fee as venture capital for the arts; supporting and developing new artists, commissioning new works and broadcasting important industry events such as tonight's British Composer Awards. Congratulations to all the winners. It's vital we all continue to support our composers and their works, they make such an invaluable contribution to the cultural life of Britain and beyond."*

## **2015 British Composer Award Winners**

### **Amateur or Young Performers**

*Alive* by Kate Whitley

### **Choral**

*Stabat Mater dolorosa* by James Dillon

### **Community or Educational Project**

*Snapshot Songs* by Stuart Hancock

### **Contemporary Jazz Composition**

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

### **Large Chamber**

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

### **Liturgical**

*John the Baptist* by Michael Finnissy

### **Orchestral**

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

### **Small Chamber**

*String Quartet No.2* by Julian Anderson

### **Solo or Duo**

*Beat Generation Ballads* by Michael Finnissy

### **Sonic Art**

*Currents* by Yann Seznec

### **Stage Works**

*Thebans* by Julian Anderson

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

*Muckle Flugga* by Rory Boyle

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### **Notes to editors:**

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

### **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.

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### **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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