



EMBARGOED until 21:00 Tuesday 4 DECEMBER

British Composer Awards 2018 Winners Revealed

- *Winning composers take inspiration from AI, science fiction and history, and make music accessible to disabled performers*
 - *Sir Harrison Birtwistle is most awarded composer in BCA history*
- *Sally Beamish and Trevor Wishart honoured with awards for Inspiration and Innovation*
 - *New composers shine as 70 per cent are first-time winners*

London. 4 December 2018. A jazz composition inspired by science fiction, a brass band piece exploring artificial intelligence, a sonic art installation in a forgotten burial ground, and two works using digital technologies to enable disabled musicians to take part in live performance are among the winners of the British Composer Awards 2018, announced at a ceremony at the British Museum in London tonight.



L-R: Cassie Kinoshi, Jazz Composition for Large Ensemble winner, whose work is inspired by African-American science fiction; blurring the boundary between public art and music, Dominic Murcott won in the Solo or Duo category; Sir Harrison Birtwistle won his record-breaking fifth British Composer Award; Simon Dobson won his third British Composer Award for a brass band work exploring AI.

The UK's fourteen foremost composers were revealed at the glittering ceremony, hosted by BBC Radio 3 presenters Andrew McGregor and Sara Mohr-Pietsch. In addition to the twelve category winners, two composers were presented with Gift of BASCA Awards in recognition of their contribution to new music.

Celebrating the art of composition and showcasing the creative talent of contemporary composers and sound artists, the British Composer Awards are presented by BASCA and sponsored by PRS for Music. The event is in association with BBC Radio 3 providing exclusive broadcast coverage. The winning works represent the best contemporary composition that premiered in the UK in the year leading up to 31 March 2018.

Crispin Hunt, Chair at BASCA, said: *"The passion, creativity and dedication to music demonstrated by this year's winners is deeply inspiring and humbling. A record year for submissions, the new music landscape in Britain proves itself time and again to be more vibrant, dynamic and vivacious than ever, engaging with a diverse range of ideas and audiences. This is a hugely exciting time to be a creator or appreciator of new music."*

Nigel Elderton, PRS Chairman, said: *"Congratulations from all of us at PRS for Music to the well-deserved winners from this year's British Composer Awards, and thank you for the fantastic music you create which continues to enrich our lives."*

THE WINNERS

Oliver Searle won in the Amateur or Young Performer category for *Microscopic Dances*, which uses digital technologies to provide the opportunity for disabled and non-disabled young musicians to play together in an integrated ensemble. The judges said: “*There is nothing microscopic about the ambition and impact of this courageous work*”. In addition, **Liam Taylor-West** won his first British Composer Award in the Community or Educational Project category for *The Umbrella*, a composition for disabled and non-disabled young musicians, using a unique combination of electronic and acoustic instruments.

Sir Harrison Birtwistle won his record-breaking eighth British Composer Award in the Orchestral category for *Deep Time*, which examines concepts of time. Meanwhile, **Rebecca Saunders** won her fourth British Composer Award in the Small Chamber category for *Unbreathed*, which uses sonic manipulation of string techniques and musical form, with poetic inscriptions on the score.

Simon Dobson won his third British Composer Award in the Wind Band or Brass Band category for *The Turing Test*, which explores Alan Turing’s theories around Artificial Intelligence. And **Judith Weir** won her second British Composer Award in the Choral category for *In The Land Of Uz*, a dramatization of the biblical Book of Job.

With a new jazz category introduced in 2018, two jazz composers were honoured this year: first-time winner, **Cassie Kinoshi** won in the Jazz Composition for Large Ensemble category for *Afronaut*, a piece inspired by African-American author Samuel R. Delaney’s science-fiction; and **Simon Lasky** won in the Jazz Composition for Small Ensemble category for *Close to Ecstasy*, which combines improvisation and detailed scoring to inspire a sense of rapture in the listener.

Blurring the boundary between art and music, *The Harmonic Canon* by first-time winner **Dominic Murcott** – part-musical instrument, part public work of art – won in the Solo or Duo category. The work was specially composed for a computer-designed half-ton double bell, created by bell maker Marcus Vergette.

Bringing history to life through music, first-time winner, **Emily Peasgood** won with *Halfway to Heaven* in the Sonic Art category, an interactive sound installation created to celebrate the rediscovery of a lost and forgotten Baptist Burial Ground in Folkestone. The work “brings local history to life”, the judges said. Meanwhile, first-time winner, **Oliver Coates** won a British Composer Award in the Stage Work category with *Shorelines*, a full-length music-theatre composition for strings and pre-recorded sound inspired by the North Sea Flood of 1953. **James Weeks** was inspired by the Early Modern period in his winning Chamber Ensemble work *Libro di Fiammelle e Ombre*, exploring the idea that in order to look forward we must first look back.

GIFT OF BASCA AWARDS

The British Composer Awards also presented two composers with Gift of BASCA Awards in recognition of their contributions to new music throughout their careers to date:



L-R: Gift of BASCA recipients: Sally Beamish; Trevor Wishart

Sally Beamish was presented with the **British Composer Award for Inspiration** (presented in association with the Music Publishers Association) in recognition of her long and distinguished career as a composer, violist and pianist. The multi-award-winning composer has composed a huge volume of music throughout her career, including for orchestra, chamber, film, theatre, ballet, and compositions for amateurs. Sally Beamish is currently composer-in-residence at the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, and co-directs the St. Magnus Composers' Course in Orkney, where her wisdom and experience as a mentor has supported dozens of composers.

Trevor Wishart was presented with a **British Composer Award for Innovation** in recognition of his commitment to innovation throughout his musical career. With a particular focus on translating the human voice and natural sounds into music through the use of technology, Wishart is a pioneer of sonic art and the winner of numerous international award. Having written extensively on the topic of sonic art and computer music he has created a number of original software tools for musical composition and is a founder member of the Composer's Desktop Project.

British Composer Awards 2018 Winners:

Amateur or Young Performers

Microscopic Dances by Oliver Searle

Chamber Ensemble

Libro di fiammelle e ombre by James Weeks

Choral

In the Land of Uz by Judith Weir

Community or Educational Project

The Umbrella by Liam Taylor-West

Jazz Composition for Large Ensemble

Afronaut by Cassie Kinoshi

Jazz Composition for Small Ensemble

Close to Ecstasy by Simon Lasky

Orchestral

Deep Time by Harrison Birtwistle

Small Chamber

Unbreathed by Rebecca Saunders

Solo or Duo

The Harmonic Canon by Dominic Murcott

Sonic Art

Halfway to Heaven by Emily Peasgood

Stage Works

Shorelines by Oliver Coates

Wind Band or Brass Band

The Turing Test by Simon Dobson

British Composer Award for Innovation

Trevor Wishart

British Composer Award for Inspiration *in association with the Music Publishers Association*

Sally Beamish

BBC Radio 3 will broadcast a programme dedicated to the British Composer Awards at 9.20pm on Sunday 9th December.

For more information on this year's British Composer Awards visit www.britishcomposerawards.com or follow @ComposerAwards.

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Notes to editors:

For further information please contact: Edwina Boyd-Gibbins or Anna Zanetti, Midas PR
E: edwina.boyd-gibbins@midaspr.co.uk / Publicitydesk5@midaspr.co.uk Tel: 0207 361 7860

Interviews, high-res images and biographies of the winners are available upon request.

About BASCA

The British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA) exists to celebrate, support and protect the professional interests of all writers of music. We are the voice for music writers; the independent professional association representing music writers in all genres, from songwriting, through to media, contemporary classical and jazz and can trace our history back over 70 years.

Whilst we are well known for putting on the British Composer Awards, the Gold Badge Awards and The Ivors every year, there is far more to us than these events. BASCA campaigns in the UK, Europe and throughout the world in order to protect the professional interests of our members. We count on the best songwriting and composing talent in order to do this important work and are entirely self-funding, relying on the continuing support of our members, who include The 1975, David Arnold, Gary Barlow, Harrison Birtwistle, Kate Bush, Coldplay, Howard Goodall, Calvin Harris, Imogen Heap, Elton John, Annie Lennox, Paul McCartney, John Powell, Dizzee Rascal and many more.

About PRS for Music

PRS for Music represents the rights of songwriters, composers and music publishers in the UK and around the world. As a membership organisation it works to ensure that creators are paid whenever their musical compositions and songs are streamed, downloaded, broadcast, performed and played in public. With over 100 representation agreements in place globally, *PRS for Music's* network represents over two million music creators worldwide. In 2017, 6.6 trillion performances of music were reported to *PRS for Music* with £717m collected on behalf of its members, making it one of the world's leading music collective management organisations.

PRS for Music's public performance licensing is now carried out on *PRS for Music's* behalf by PPL PRS Ltd, the new joint venture between PPL and *PRS for Music*.

About BBC Radio 3

Since it launched in 1946, the Third Programme/ BBC Radio 3 has been a bold pioneer in the cultural world. It is one of the world's foremost presenters, creators, commissioners and curators across classical, folk, world, jazz and contemporary music as well as drama, philosophy and ideas. The station is also the most significant commissioner of new and contemporary music in the UK, with 35 new works commissioned annually and broadcasts over 600 concerts a year, including live broadcasts from the greatest classical music festival in the world (BBC Proms). Radio 3's In Concert programme alone reaches the equivalent of 250 packed concert halls a week, and the BBC Performing Groups give around 400 concerts a year in over 60 UK locations. The station has always nurtured extraordinary artistic talents, provided a platform for important scientific and political debates/announcements, and broadcast ground-breaking experimental drama – always while delivering its core aim of connecting audiences with pioneering music and culture.

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