MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of the Royal Philharmonic Society
6.30pm Thursday 15 May 2025
Swedenborg Hall, 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2TH

Members present: Angela Dixon (Chair), Harriet Wybor (General Manager), James Murphy (Chief Executive), Jo Buckley (Trustee), Leon Bosch (Trustee), Roderick Williams (Trustee), Charlotte Smith, Dan Goren, Diana Douglas, Edward Blakeman, Fiona Cobb, Julian Debreuil, Kat Alder, Philip Reed, Ruth Cooper-Dickson, Sally Groves, Shannon-Latoyah Simon, Theo Bamber

Also attending: Cathy Hare (Programme Manager), Emily Porter (Administrator), Gabriel Adedeji, George Percy, Nina Kanter, Zagisha Kamil, members of Quartet Menine (Adam Collins, Zoë Tweed, Aaron Azunda Akugbo, Katie Lodge)

Apologies received (and proxy votes cast by): Rikesh Shah (Honorary Treasurer), Sarah Gee (Honorary Secretary), Victoria Robey (Trustee), Anthony Bolton, Hannah French, Janis Susskind, Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason, Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp, Leanne Langley, Louise Mitchell, Sam Jackson, Thorben Dittes

1 **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 22 May 2024**

There were no amendments to the Minutes, which were approved by a show of hands from those present and from proxy votes cast.

2 **Adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 August 2024**

The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts, signed by Angela Dixon and independent examiners TC Group, had been circulated to Members several weeks prior to the AGM.

Chief Executive James Murphy summarised key elements of the Annual Report:

- The RPS continued to rouse public curiosity and engagement in classical music with a range of talks and events, including a major new occasion The RPS Conversation for music-makers and music-lovers to share passions and concerns about the future of classical music to fuel and refresh their outlook.
- Composers supported by the RPS had premieres nationwide in locations including Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Cheltenham, Yorkshire, Presteigne and London. In total, the RPS gave composers £56,600 in hand this year for the commission of new music, as well as helping them with advice, contacts and bespoke developmental opportunities.
- Opportunities for performers included the ongoing RPS Women Conductors programme in partnership with Royal Northern Sinfonia: participants in this have included Charlotte Corderoy who this year made her debut conducting the RPO and Opera Holland Park, and Tess Jackson who conducted the NYO at the BBC Proms.
- £17,000 of grants were given to 23 music college students in urgent need of funds to buy instruments of their own. In total, £45,700 this year went directly to performers, as well as much bespoke guidance and mentoring.

- The RPS Awards – 'the biggest night in UK classical music' The Sunday Times – were presented for the first time ever out of London, at Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music to a capacity audience.
- Financially, the RPS broke even on unrestricted funds for fourth consecutive year: an achievement only possible thanks to the ongoing support of RPS Members and a range of trusts and companies who believe in the charity and its cause.
- The year overall saw a positive gain on investments, managed by Cazenove Capital, though as always these represent unrealised gains and – with significant current global and financial uncertainty – the charity remains dearly grateful to its Members and funders as we strive to achieve lasting stability without statutory funding.

James thanked Trustees and Council, and colleagues Harriet, Cathy, Emily and Alison – and former colleague Charlotte who was in attendance as a Member – for their role in all the Society's achievements over the year.

3 **Ordinary Resolution to approve the Board and Council's nomination for the Gold Medal**

A vote was passed by a show of hands from those present and from proxy votes cast to approve awarding the RPS Gold Medal to the pianist Víkingur Ólafsson. A presentation will be organised for later in the year, and the news remains confidential for now. Angela thanked all Members for respecting this.

4 **Any other business**

No further business was proposed.
James updated Members on recent activities and current plans, in particular:

- The Board and Council has resolved to present RPS Honorary Membership in the year ahead to trumpeter and educationalist John Wallace, composer Errollyn Wallen, and former RPS Chair and Wigmore Hall Director John Gilhooly. This news also remains confidential for now.
- The RPS Awards will return in 2026 to the Queen Elizabeth Hall at London's Southbank Centre on Thursday 12 March 2026. Tickets from £10 will go on sale (with priority booking for RPS Members) in October 2025.
- The charity has launched the new RPS Thea Musgrave Fund, with support from the composer and her husband Peter Mark. This newly offers significant grants to composers and performers in the UK and is hoped to be offered annually.
- After its successful pilot last year, The RPS Conversation will return on Tuesday 14 October 2025 at Rich Mix: details will be revealed in June.
- The charity's partnership with Royal Northern Sinfonia and The Glasshouse International Centre for Music on its transformative conductors course is set to continue for two further years in 2026-27. Its priority remains the support of women on the podium but when applications open in Summer, its lens will widen to incorporate others who have experience limited opportunity to conduct professionally. A generous donation from an individual will also enable the charity to run further conducting courses at intermediate level elsewhere in the UK in 2026.

On behalf of the Trustees, Angela thanked James and colleagues for their work year-round, and RPS Members for their continued support.

Harriet Wybor introduced Quartet Menine, recent recipients of the RPS Philip Jones Brass Prize – generously supported by Ursula Jones – who talked about the support they had received, and performed Karen Street *Horseshoe Bay*, Bartók *Mikrokosmos No. 140 and 150*, and Imogen Heap *Hide and Seek*.

Drinks were served, and RPS Members had the opportunity to talk to the musicians, to RPS management and Trustees, and to fellow RPS Members.