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ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ORCHESTRAS HONOURS SCOTTISH COMPOSER JAMES MACMILLAN IN NIGHT OF AWARDS

Classical Music Industry also celebrates the work of three top managers with ABO/Rhinegold Awards for Orchestra Manager, Concert Hall Manager and Artist Manager of the Year

The Association of British Orchestras (ABO) has honoured one of Britain's greatest living composers, James MacMillan by presenting him with the prestigious ABO Award, which is given annually to the individual or institution considered by the Association's member orchestras to have made the most important contribution to the orchestral life of the UK.

James MacMillan, the pre-eminent Scottish composer of his generation has worked closely with many of the UK's orchestras and opera companies. A regular contributor of works to the BBC Proms since *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* shot him to international acclaim in 1990, MacMillan's works are regularly programmed by orchestras and conductors around the globe.

Presenting the award at the ABO Annual Conference in Liverpool on the evening of 18 January, Mark Pemberton, Director of the ABO said:

"The ABO Award is unique among the many prestigious awards and prizes in the music world because its recipient is nominated by the member orchestras themselves.

"This year the ABO decided it was time to make a statement about the importance of new music to the well-being of our sector, especially during these challenging times, and we are therefore delighted to honour one of this country's leading composers, someone who has worked with so many of our members, across the symphony orchestras, chamber orchestras, BBC and opera companies."

Receiving the award, James MacMillan said

"I am delighted to receive this award from the ABO, and honoured to join such a distinguished list of recipients. I am especially delighted to be one of the four composers who have received the Award, as I have such admiration for the other three: Sir Michael Tippett, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and Oliver Knussen."

Also honoured at the award ceremony were three recipients of a brand new set of awards, presented by the ABO in association with Rhinegold Publishing. These awards, for Orchestra Manager of the Year, Concert Hall Manager of the Year and Artist Manager of the Year were nominated by the members of the ABO and others within the classical music industry.

The winners are:

- Orchestra Manager of the Year: Sophie Lewis, General Manager, Sinfonia Cymru
- Concert Hall Manager of the Year: Paul Keene, Town Hall and Symphony Hall Birmingham
- Artist Manager of the Year: Stephen Lumsden, Chief Executive, Intermusica.

Mark Pemberton continued:

"The ABO is delighted to have worked with Rhinegold Publishing on the launch of ABO/Rhinegold Awards. At this time of public spending cuts and the squeeze on people's spending power, it is now more important than ever to celebrate and take inspiration from the very best in leadership and management in our sector. Whether in orchestras, concert halls or artist management, it's the problem solvers and innovators who will get their organisations through the hard times and place them in the best position to thrive in more benign conditions. All our winners this year have shown the highest levels of enterprise and initiative, and we are sure they will be an inspiration to their peers."

Rhinegold Publishing has been supporting the music business for 36 years and inaugurated the ABO/Rhinegold Awards to bring some much deserved recognition to some of the backstage figures who do so much to keep a vibrant show on the road.

Mark Owens, managing director of Rhinegold Publishing, said:

"In a celebrity-led business, it is important to recognise the incredible work put in by so many people behind the scenes. These backstage figures rarely get to take a bow for their efforts, and the ABO/Rhinegold Awards seek to put them in the spotlight and applaud their achievements"

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