

Press Release

For release: Final draft

Hallé double-bass player Beatrice Schirmer receives prestigious new music award.

The Salomon Prize is the UK's first ever award for orchestral musicians

Hallé double-bass player Beatrice Schirmer has been chosen as the inaugural recipient of the Salomon Prize, a prestigious new prize celebrating the outstanding contribution of orchestral players to the UK's musical life.

The UK boasts many of the world's finest orchestras, many of which have trophy cabinets bursting with awards in testimony to their brilliance on the concert platform and in the recording studio. Yet, the contribution of individual musicians within an orchestra often goes unnoticed. Until now

The Salomon Prize* has been created by the Royal Philharmonic Society and Association of British Orchestras to celebrate the 'unsung heroes' of orchestral life; the orchestral players that make our orchestras great. The award is named after Johann Peter Saloman, violinist and founding member of the Philharmonic Society in 1813

The inaugural recipient of the Salomon Prize, Hallé double-bass player **Beatrice Schirmer**, was chosen from nominations received from orchestras across the UK. Beatrice Schirmer, who has been with the Hallé for 19 years, was presented with her award onstage at the Hallé's concert at Bridgewater Hall, Manchester - and live on BBC Radio 3 - on Tuesday 9 November. She receives a cheque for £1000 and will keep for one year the Salomon Prize Trophy – a soft-ground etching of Salomon made by William Daniell in 1810.

Beatrice was nominated by her fellow musicians and the Hallé's management, not just for her very considerable skills as a member of the orchestra's Double Bass section, but for the extraordinary range of other activities which she has embraced and enriched in almost two decades with the orchestra. The Salomon Prize citation from the RPS and ABO comments:

'Double bassist Beatrice Schirmer has been at the heart of the life of the Hallé for nearly twenty years. She has always given her time freely to support the individual players as well as the orchestral community. As a union representative she ensures clear communication between the players and administration as well as making sure she is always across any current issues which affect the orchestra. Beatrice is a founder member of the new music ensemble ALEAtronic and has an indefatigable passion and dedication for the Hallé's education work. This was highlighted in last season's community project in Clowne, Derbyshire for which she produced a full musical score as well as helping with technical and sound production. Beatrice Schirmer is an asset to her colleagues, to the Hallé and the profession. It is with great pleasure that the first Salomon Prize is awarded to her.'

www.royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk/awards/

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Named after renowned violinist Johann Peter Salomon, one of the founding members of the Philharmonic Society in 1813, the annual £1000 Salomon Prize, sponsored by Selina and David Marks, will be awarded each year to a musician who has shown commitment and dedication above and beyond the expected service asked by their orchestra over a single concert season. They will have been "an inspiration to their fellow colleagues and engendered a greater spirit of teamwork within the orchestra".

Notes:

Johann Peter Salomon was born in Bonn and was the second son of Philipp Salomon, an oboist at the court in Bonn. His birth home was at Bonngasse 515, coincidentally the later birth home of Beethoven. At the age of thirteen, he became a violinist in the court orchestra and six years later became the concert master of the orchestra of Prince Heinrich of Prussia. He moved to London in the early 1780s, where he worked as a composer and played violin both as a celebrated soloist and in a string quartet. He made his first public appearance at Covent Garden on 23 March 1781 and became a central figure in London Orchestral life for over 30 years.

Salomon brought Joseph Haydn to London in 1791-92 and 1794-95, and together with Haydn led the first performances of many of the works that Haydn composed while in England. Haydn wrote his symphonies numbers 93 to 104 for these trips, which are sometimes known as the Salomon symphonies (they are more widely known as the London symphonies). Salomon is also said to have had a hand in providing Haydn with the original model for the text of *The Creation*.

He was one of the founder members of the Philharmonic Society and led the orchestra at its first concert on 8 March 1813. Salomon died in London in 1815, of injuries suffered when he was thrown from his horse. He is buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey.

The Salomon Prize is named in honour of this versatile and influential musician.

The Royal Philharmonic Society [RPS] is a charity dedicated to creating a future for music through the encouragement of **creativity**, the promotion of **understanding** and the recognition of **excellence**. To mark the achievements of distinguished practitioners across the industry the Society presents the annual RPS Music Awards, the UK's leading awards for live music; the Leslie Boosey Award, for those who have made an outstanding contribution to further contemporary music in the UK, often in a 'back stage' capacity – from programmers to publishers; Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society, for services to music and which has been awarded to composers, conductors, performers, patrons, commentators programmers and educationalists; and the society's highest honour, the RPS Gold Medal. Current recipients of the RPS Gold Medal are: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Janet Baker, Bernard Haitink, Alfred Brendel, Colin Davis, Elliott Carter, Pierre Boulez, Simon Rattle, Plácido Domingo, Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Henri Dutilleux and Thomas Quasthoff.

The Society's artistic activities focus on composers and young musicians and through a programme of audience development, awards and lectures it seeks to raise the public consciousness of the finest music making today and to create a forum for debate about the direction of classical music.

The RPS celebrates its bicentenary in 2013. It was formed on 24 January 1813 with the aim 'to promote the performance, in the most perfect manner possible of the best and most approved instrumental music', which it did principally by giving regular public orchestral concerts in London, including through two world wars.

The Association of British Orchestras (ABO) was founded in 1947 as the Orchestral Employers' Association, primarily to negotiate with the Musicians' Union and other bodies on behalf of its membership, which consisted almost entirely at that time of those orchestras receiving annual funding from the newly established Arts Council of Great Britain. In 1982 the Association took on limited company status, becoming the Association of British Orchestras. It continues to negotiate the ABO/MU Freelance Orchestral Agreement with the MU and represent its membership in discussions and negotiations with a number of other national organisations.

The past decade has seen a substantial development in the organisation in terms of its size (an increase from 35 in 1989 to over 150 organisations today) and its role, which has expanded to include a diverse range of activities designed to support the development of the UK's orchestral life. The ABO now has an extensive programme of Events from Specialist Manager Meetings and training to Seminars and the Annual Conference.

In past years, the Association of British Orchestras has developed a role as co-ordinator of various national projects, including two major sponsorship programmes involving the participation of a large number of member orchestras. As a champion of the education and community work of the UK's orchestras, one of the ABO's key objectives has been the support and development of this core area of work. A series of nationally co-ordinated education projects over the past years resulted in a well established Orchestras in Education programme, which existed to promote the education work of member orchestras and to develop the relationship between schools, teachers and orchestral players.

The Association of British Orchestras has also mounted a number of research initiatives, with a series of important industry reports being produced, such as a comprehensive statistical survey of the UK's orchestral profession, *Knowing the Score*, and the highly influential report on noise damage to musicians, *A Sound Ear*.

Beatrice Schirmer – Biography

Beatrice was born in Hannover, Germany. After studying for two years at the Hochschule fur Musik and Theater in her home town she came to the UK in 1987 to continue her studies at the Royal Northern College of Music with Duncan McTier, graduating with Double Bass, Composition BMus Hons in 1991.

Whilst at RNCM Bea participated in masterclasses with Franticek Posta and David Geringas and during and after her studies worked as a freelance player both in the UK and Europe.

Bea joined the Hallé in 1992 as a full time member. She is the Hallé's Musicians' Union Steward, representing the Hallé on the MU's North of England committee, at the Orchestra Section AGM and on the Regional Orchestras' Committee as chair. Her career performance highlights include a concert at The Crucible with Trevor Pinnock and the Lindsays in 2001, performing all the Brandenburg Concertos.

Bea is an active member of the Hallé Education and Outreach team and has been involved in a variety of projects in a number of different settings over many years. Most notably in 2007 she was involved in a joint Hallé/Opera North opera composition project called 'The Eighth Door'. Working with students in the Salford area and her ALEAtronic and Hallé colleagues, Bea composed an additional scene to Bartok's opera, 'Duke Bluebeard's Castle', which was subsequently performed at the Lowry Theatre.

In 2006, in the Nottingham area, Bea led a film music project involving the Hallé, Nottingham City Music Service and local sound recording studio, Confetti, helping high school students create their own soundtracks of some locally produced, short animated films. The project was supported by The Paul Hamlyn Foundation as part of a pilot scheme to a major new music education initiative called Musical Futures.

In recent years she has been central to a song-writing project in partnership with the Rochdale Youth Offending Team. Working alongside Terry Caffrey (Poet and Writer in Residence at The Bridgewater Hall) and other Hallé colleagues, Bea has helped many very challenging young people to get a taste of working alongside professional musicians. Some of these young people have since gone on to extend this new interest by forming their own pop groups.

However, probably Bea's greatest achievement to date is the work that she has just completed on a major initiative involving the whole community in the ex-mining village of Clowne in Derbyshire. For this scheme the village was engaged in producing a film with local filmmakers, Creative Forum, about life in Clowne through different periods in time – from the Stone Age to the future. Bea led a team comprising practitioners and members of the community to compose a soundtrack to be played live alongside the film.

This year-long project, entitled "Heritage - Back to the Future", culminated at the end of June 2011 with two performances to celebrate the opening of the new Heritage High School in the village. This involved the screening of the film and the soundtrack being performed live by the Hallé and an ensemble of local musicians - from young children to pensioners.

Bea runs her own composition/production company "CoreSounds Productions". She writes a blog at www.coresounds.blogspot.com where examples of her music can be accessed. Composition projects range from classical to current genres and from theatre to film.

Bea is a founder member of, and creative force behind ALEAtronic, the Hallé's progressive new music ensemble. ALEAtronic recorded and released an album, "First Take" in 2001 and in 2010/2011 participated in the aforementioned highly successful community film and music project in Clowne, Derbyshire as well as in "the Eighth Door" and Bea's other film projects.

Alongside her Hallé duties Bea was a member of Hallé Rock and a finalist in a UK song-writing competition in 2004, with her song "Lost Love" being recognised in the Jazz category. She has a long standing relationship with Arden Theatre, Manchester, for which she has composed numerous pieces accidental music, soundscapes and the musical "City Of Gold".

Away from the bass, she creates fused glass art and jewellery.

Bea runs for Team Hallé and in 2005 she undertook a fundraising challenge on behalf of The Charles Hallé Foundation in support of education and outreach work; she cycled over six hundred miles through the challenging countryside of North Vietnam raising significant funds for the Foundation.