



## PRESS RELEASE

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# Announcing the 2022 Orchestra Musician of the Year

Orchestral musicians are extraordinary. They dedicate years to perfecting their craft. They perform centuries of repertoire with fluency and verve. Their schedules can be as intensive as Olympic athletes. Beyond invigorating concerts, they devote themselves to so much invaluable work inspiring and bringing together their local communities.

Since 2012, the **Royal Philharmonic Society** and **Association of British Orchestras** have united to present an award in recognition of the extraordinary orchestral musicians working in Britain today. Annually, orchestras may nominate one of their musicians for an expert panel to consider. Following this process, we are pleased to announce that the 2022 recipient of the RPS ABO Orchestra Musician Award is:

### **Chris Stock, Principal Percussionist of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales**

The Award was presented to Chris onstage at the orchestra's concert at St David's Hall, Cardiff on Thursday 17 November, by RPS Chief Executive James Murphy. At the presentation, James said:

'Chris has been a star player and stalwart presence in the BBC National Orchestra of Wales for some decades. He's a cherished section leader and he's devoted to community and to education, lending his time and skills and enthusiasm to inspire others. And not just here in Wales. In 2015, the orchestra toured to South America and, as part of this, met and engaged hundreds of Patagonian children in musical workshops. Seeing how enlivened they were by just a suitcase of percussionist instruments brought from Wales, Chris and his fellow players set themselves a bold ambition: to do everything they could to find and collect unused instruments back home and get them into the hands of South American children. The **Patagonia Instrument Project** was born, and to date has sent over £60,000 worth of musical instruments to the region. In Spring 2021, news came of a forest fire causing huge destruction to the town of El Hoyo, in the North Western Chubut region of Patagonia. Chris got straight on the case, mobilising support here and across South America, and in just three weeks had found ways to replace all the children's instruments lost to the fire. This whole endeavour is such a powerful illustration of the great things that can happen when the UK exports its cultural treasures – like this orchestra – worldwide, and above all, what a remarkable force for good orchestral musicians are in our lives.'

You can read more about Chris and the charity which he and his fellow musicians have created on the Patagonia Instrument Project website: [www.patagonia-instrument-project.org.uk](http://www.patagonia-instrument-project.org.uk)



Also specially commended by this year's judging panel was **Sonia Sielaff, Sub-Principal Clarinet of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**, put forward by her colleagues for her courageous and inspirational efforts of the last year. Following a life-saving liver transplant in 2018, Sonia's planned return to orchestral life was abruptly halted by the pandemic. Even as streamed concerts ensued, Sonia could not participate out of a responsibility to shield herself, but she nonetheless applied herself wholeheartedly to a range of other specially-made digital offerings for the orchestra's audience. Her tenacity and grace through all this, and her eventual 'homecoming' recording Sibelius's symphonies with the orchestra last Summer was hugely admired by her peers, and the orchestra's followers.

The RPS ABO Orchestra Musician Award was originally called the Salomon Prize in recognition of violinist **Johann Peter Salomon** (1745 – 1815) who did so much to enrich the impact of classical music in Britain, not least encouraging Haydn to come to Britain, and co-founding the RPS. We continue to present the award in dedication to him but, in this its tenth anniversary, have renamed it the RPS ABO Orchestra Musician Award to make its purpose more immediately apparent and draw greater interest to this profession so deserving of such recognition.

Annually all orchestras who are members of the ABO are invited to nominate a player for the award. [Click here](#) for details of all previous recipients since the award was introduced in 2012.

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Photos relating to this story, including from the presentation to Chris Stock, can be found in the RPS Dropbox [here](#).

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