

GRAMOPHONE CLASSICAL MUSIC AWARDS 2021:

11 CATEGORY WINNERS ANNOUNCED



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Alina Ibragimova, Susan Bickley, Ludovic Tézier, Takács Quartet, The Tallis Scholars, Paavo Järvi, Sean Shibe, Piotr Anderszewski and Fatma Said among those receiving accolades this year

‘Recording of the Year’ to be revealed on October 5 alongside other special awards in streamed ceremony

September 22, 2021, London: Today, *Gramophone* reveals the 11 winning recordings in each of the named categories ahead of this year’s Awards ceremony on **October 5**.

The releases will now be in contention for the crowning accolade, ‘Recording of the Year’, announced on the evening of the ceremony, which will be available to stream on **Gramophone’s** website, YouTube and Facebook channels, by **Classic FM** and by **medici.tv** (and on their Facebook channel) from 7pm BST.

The digital gala will be hosted by *Gramophone’s* Editor-in-Chief **James Jolly** and Classical Chart-topping pianist **Isata Kanneh-Mason**, from the VOCES8 Centre in London.

Newly-recorded performance footage will feature winners including Egyptian soprano Fatma Said, violinist Alina Ibragimova, guitarist Sean Shibe and Isata Kanneh-Mason.

The 2020 Awards, streamed from Glyndebourne, were watched by 330,000 households worldwide. For a second year, the Awards are presented in association with **Apple Music**, **E Gutzwiller et Cie**, **Banquiers** and, as charity partner, **Help Musicians**.

James Jolly, *Gramophone’s* Editor-in-Chief, says: ‘Even though live music has been absent from so many of our lives over the past 18 months, recorded music has continued to provide us with solace, escape and joy, and the 2021 Gramophone Classical Music Awards celebrate the amazing quality and richness of 11 albums that have caught our attention. Do join us on October 5, when Isata Kanneh-Mason and I will be not only presenting these 11 awards, but will also be revealing the special

awards, including our new Artist of the Year, Young Artist, the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, our 2021 Orchestra of the Year, our new Label of the Year and our inaugural Spatial Music Award.'

Artist of the Year is sponsored by **Raymond Weil**, Young Artist by **Classic FM** and the Orchestra of the Year and Spatial Audio Awards are presented in association with **Apple Music**.

THE WINNERS



***Beach & Elgar: Piano Quintets
Takács Quartet; Garrick Ohlsson (Hyperion)***

The Takács Quartet and pianist Garrick Ohlsson, this year's winners of the **Chamber** category, present two complementary piano quintets by Amy Beach and Edward Elgar. Written during a fruitful period at Brinkwells in 1918, Elgar's Piano Quintet inhabits the same emotional landscape as its contemporary, the Cello Concerto. Beach's commanding offering, written on the other side of the Atlantic in 1907, marked the ambitious dawn of a new century. In its review, *Gramophone* described the artists' approach to the genre as 'one of an epic nature, almost orchestral in its bold sound and texture', with 'vivid colours and vital energy'.



Dussek: Messe solennelle

Soloists; AAM & Choir / Richard Egarr (AAM Records)

One of outgoing Music Director Richard Egarr's final recording projects with the Academy of Ancient Music takes the **Choral** Award this year, following their live performance of Jan Ladislav Dussek's two-century-old *Messe Solemnelle* at the Barbican in 2019. 'A fascinating work and an important project, impressively recorded, exquisitely presented and enthusiastically recommended. Dussek himself could scarcely have hoped for a performance as fine as this one,' wrote David Thresher in his *Gramophone* review.



Shostakovich: Violin Concertos

Alina Ibragimova (violin); State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia, 'Evgeny Svetlanov' / Vladimir Jurowski (Hyperion)

In the first commercial recording of the First Concerto's original version, this release of Shostakovich's two violin concertos takes the top spot in the **Concerto** category. Joined by Vladimir Jurowski and the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia, 'Evgeny Svetlanov', violinist Alina Ibragimova's performance was described as 'the kind of playing that looks you unblinkingly in the eye and tells it like it is' by *Gramophone* upon its release. Recorded in Moscow, the recording appears to bristle as much with personal histories as with musical heritage.



Pickard: The Gardener of Aleppo & other chamber works

Susan Bickley, Nash Ensemble / Martyn Brabbins (BIS)

One of two winning recordings featuring the inimitable mezzo-soprano Susan Bickley, this year's **Contemporary** Award (sponsored by **PPL & PRS for Music**) goes to this 'generously full, marvellously rewarding' recording of John Pickard's *The Gardener of Aleppo* on BIS. Under the direction of Martyn Brabbins, *Gramophone* commended the Nash Ensemble's 'flawless performances' and Bickley's 'devastatingly powerful presence' in *Daughters of Zion*, composed in 2016 with words by Bristol University's Head of Theology & Religious Studies Gavin d'Costa.



**Josquin: Masses – D'ung aultre amer; Faysant regretz; Hercules Dux Ferrarie
The Tallis Scholars / Peter Phillips (Gimell)**

Marking the end of a 34-year journey, The Tallis Scholars and Peter Phillips receive this year's **Early Music** Award for their ninth and final volume of Josquin Masses. Beginning in 1987, when their album of the *Pange lingua* and *La sol fa re mi* Masses was voted *Gramophone's* 'Recording of the Year', the singers and Music Director are awarded their fifth Gramophone Early Music Award. As David Fallows, who has followed the series from the beginning, comments, it is the 'perfect conclusion to a long and challenging journey.'



**JS Bach: Lute Suites
Sean Shibe (Delphian)**

After winning the first Concept Album award in 2019 for 'softLOUD', guitarist Sean Shibe scoops his second *Gramophone* Award, and second for Delphian, in this year's **Instrumental** category (in partnership with **Nordoff Robbins**) for his album of music for the lute by Bach, released in May 2020. Hailed by *Gramophone* as 'the best-ever recording of Bach' for the instrument, Shibe displays 'characterful melodic instincts, with flourishes of rolling arpeggiations, exquisite harmonic placements and all kinds of textural delights... his Bach playing reveals the most interesting voice on the guitar for a generation'.



Britten: Peter Grimes

Stuart Skelton, Erin Wall, Roderick Williams, Susan Bickley, Catherine Wyn-Rogers, Robert Murray, James Gilchrist, Marcus Farnsworth, Bergen Philharmonic Chorus & Orchestra, Edward Gardner (Chandos)

The **Opera** category goes to Britten's *Peter Grimes*, featuring long-time collaborators Edward Gardner and Stuart Skelton, who each hold a deep understanding of the work. Recorded in late 2019 in Bergen and released on the Chandos label in 2020, *Gramophone's* review hailed the 'well-chosen' choice of soloists, a line-up that includes the Canadian-American soprano Erin Wall who died at the tragically young age of 44 last year.



Franz Schmidt: The Complete Symphonies

Frankfurt RSO / Paavo Järvi (DG)

This year's **Orchestral** award goes to Paavo Järvi conducting the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra in a distinctive, rare recording of Franz Schmidt's Symphonies Nos 1-4, released last year on Deutsche Grammophon. *Gramophone's* Hugo Shirley suggested that 'it makes as strong a case for both Schmidt and his symphonies as one could imagine. Essential for the composer's fans, highly recommended for newcomers.'



***JS Bach The Well-Tempered Clavier Book 2 – excerpts
Piotr Anderszewski (Warner Classics)***

The inaugural winner of the newly-named **Piano** category is Piotr Anderszewski, who presents this Warner Classics release featuring his own selection of preludes and fugues from JS Bach's more introspective Book 2 of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Peter Quanttrill, reviewing for *Gramophone*, commended Anderszewski's 'scrupulously detailed voicing', noting that 'the luminous clarity of the studio engineering all add up to an artefact of enchantment and instruction, more than the sum of its considerable parts.'



***Verdi Opera Arias
Ludovic Tézier;
Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Frédéric Chaslin (Sony Classical)***

Another renamed category for 2021, the winner of the **Voice & Ensemble** Award (previously Recital, and this year sponsored by **medici.tv**) goes this year to the French baritone Ludovic Tézier, accompanied by the Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna under the direction of Frédéric Chaslin. Tézier's extensive stage experience brings Verdi's 'fully realised' characters to life on a 'mature' recording, hailed by *Gramophone* as 'the finest Verdi recital – from any voice type – to have appeared for several years, if not a decade'.



'El Nour'
Fatma Said;
Malcolm Martineau et al, Vision Quartet (Warner Classics)

Soprano Fatma Said receives her first *Gramophone* Award in the renamed **Song** category this year with her debut recording 'El Nour' on Warner Classics. Her choice of repertoire is unique and innovative, programming French and Spanish art songs alongside music by Egyptian and Lebanese composers, exploring similarities and differences between Western and Middle Eastern traditions. Accompanied by Malcolm Martineau for the French works, with ney, qanun, guitar and jazz bass adding some Mediterranean warmth, 'El Nour' was declared a 'wonderful album and a very worthy winner' by *Gramophone*.

Ends

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Notes to Editors

About Gramophone Awards

The annual **Gramophone Classical Music Awards**, the world's most influential classical recorded-music prizes, were launched in 1977 by *Gramophone* magazine (founded in 1923 by Sir Compton Mackenzie). The Awards celebrated their 40th anniversary in 2017. Available internationally, *Gramophone* publishes a bespoke edition of the magazine for North America. *Gramophone's* full, searchable archive of magazines from 1923 to the latest issue is available digitally for iPad and other tablet devices, smartphone or computer.

www.gramophone.co.uk

About medici.tv

medici.tv is the global leader in classical music video streaming. Heralded by *The New York Times* as 'the closest thing to a classical Netflix,' medici.tv has brought live classical music to passionate fans worldwide. For over 10 years, it has captured the performances of leading classical artists, ensembles, and orchestras in great concert halls, festivals, and competitions the world over. As the largest online platform for classical music, it offers over 150 live performances throughout the year and the world's largest video-on-demand catalogue of more than 2600 videos. medici.tv is available on all your screens—TV (via AirPlay or Chromecast), computer, tablet, and smartphone.

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VOCES8 Centre & VOCES8 Foundation

The VOCES8 Foundation is proud to support Gramophone for its second online Awards ceremony. Inspiration and transformation are watch words for the Foundation as it delivers world class performances, and excellence through its innovative, inclusive education and community projects to ensure 'Music Education For All'. Nestled in the heart of the City of London in its home the VOCES8 Centre, the Foundation's diverse music offerings and collaborations are led by renowned ensembles VOCES8, Apollo5 and its dedicated education team. Encompassing the VOCES8 Method publications and programmes such as the VOCES8 Scholars, Young Leader and Foundation projects in the UK, USA, Germany, France and Japan, the Foundation has an annual Summer School and festival at Milton Abbey and its digital delivery includes the Foundation's own Digital Academy and LIVE From London Festivals. The Foundation's entrepreneurial and community spirit is fostered by the Co-Founders of VOCES8, brothers Paul and Barnaby Smith, whose belief in social responsibility fuels all they do.

<https://voces8.foundation/>

VOCES8 and the VOCES8 Foundation were the first in the classical music world to respond digitally at a worldwide level to the Covid crisis, and LIVE from London was born. Created as a specific response to the pandemic, and as a new format to enable audiences to experience 'live' music at home and to connect beyond their homes, LIVE from London's four festivals have been viewed in over 75 countries around the world. LFL's original, imaginative, community-inspired approach has featured events and collaborations not possible on a concert platform in the traditional sense, and its unique economic model has supported fellow artists and arts organisations at a time of crisis.

<https://voces8.foundation/livefromlondon>