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CATEGORY WINNERS REVEALED FOR THE GRAMOPHONE CLASSICAL MUSIC AWARDS 2020

Thomas Adès, Les Arts Florissants, Boston SO, Elim Chan, CBSO, Joyce DiDonato, Vilde Frang, Benjamin Grosvenor, Igor Levit, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla and Sandrine Piau are among the artists and ensembles recognised by awards

One of these recordings will go on to win the prestigious Recording of the Year Award, to be announced on October 6 alongside other special awards

#GramoAwards
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Gramophone today [Tuesday September 22] announced the winners of the 10 categories of its annual classical music awards, widely regarded as the 'Oscars of classical music'. Each of these winning recordings is now in the running for the ultimate prize, Recording of the Year, which will be announced at the awards ceremony on October 6 at an online gala streamed live on gramophone.co.uk and medici.tv.

The special digital event will be hosted by *Gramophone's* James Jolly and the mezzo Kate Lindsey – filmed largely around the beautiful grounds at Glyndebourne – with newly recorded original performances by present and past Award winners, including Benjamin Grosvenor, Stile Antico, Bach Collegium Musicum, Bertrand Chamayou and Carolyn Sampson, as well as announcements of other special Awards such as Artist of the Year (sponsored by Raymond Weil), Lifetime Achievement and Orchestra of the Year (presented with Apple Music, and the only public vote), as well as a one-off Beethoven 250 Award for 2020, the composer's anniversary year.

James Jolly, *Gramophone's* Editor-in-Chief, said: 'What a line-up of fantastic recordings – a wonderful reminder of the power and variety of classical music. 2020's crop is truly vintage and the range of music and music-making is inspiring. A number of artists are returning to the Awards but it's good to see some fine artists recognised for the first time, including two terrific women conductors. I hope you'll join Kate Lindsey and me on October 6 to celebrate this wonderful feast of music, and when we'll also be revealing our artist awards.'

THE WINNERS



Two stunning performances by an all-star line-up take the **Chamber** category. Masterminded by Nicolas Altstaedt for his Lockenhaus Chamber Music Festival, the cellist is joined by Vilde Frang, Barnabás Kelemen, Lawrence Power and Alexander Lonquich. Their Alpha Classics recording of Béla Bartók's Piano Quintet and Sándor Veress's String Trio was deemed 'unmissable' by *Gramophone* on its release this year.



In their second *Gramophone* Award (having previously snagged the same award in 2017) Bach Collegium Japan win this year's **Choral** category under Masaaki Suzuki with their recording of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* on the BIS label. This is their second recording of the work and, after 20 years of performing the music of Bach, they have reached new levels of insight and expression resulting in an album that, as *Gramophone* put it, 'takes us on a journey which will continually enthrall, move and surprise'.



Gramophone's 2012 Young Artist of the Year, Benjamin Grosvenor (still in his twenties!), returns to the Awards this year with his recording of two Chopin piano concertos winning the **Concerto** category (sponsored by Classic FM). Joined by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra under Elim Chan on the Decca label, *Gramophone* hailed the 'bold decisions' taken by the musicians that makes you rethink these works and appreciate them all over again.



Thomas Adès is no stranger to the Awards and, in his fourth win across 22 years, he takes this year's **Contemporary** category (sponsored by PPL) conducting his own Piano Concerto and *Totentanz*. With soloists Kirill Gerstein, Mark Stone, Christianne Stotijn, Adès conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra. *Gramophone* said, 'for proof that Adès does what he does with mind-boggling brilliance, look no further'.



The **Early Music** category has been won this year by Les Arts Florissants and Paul Agnew with their recording of Gesualdo's *Madrigali, Libri primo & secondo* on Harmonia Mundi. The group continue to record at their renowned Award-winning heights, this being their ninth win since their first in 1982.



Having entered onto the recording scene just six years ago, pianist Igor Levit continues to astound, winning this year's **Instrumental** award (and marking the tenth year running that this award has gone to a pianist). His recording of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas for Sony Classical completes the cycle he stated at the age of just 26, showcasing his 'beguiling' attention to detail and technical panache, as *Gramophone's* review put it.



The **Opera** category (sponsored by E Gutzwiller et Cie, Private Bankers) goes to Handel's *Agrippina* on the Erato label, featuring a star-studded cast with the likes of Joyce DiDonato, Elsa Benoit, Luca Pisaroni, Franco Fagioli, Jakub Józef Orliński, Andrea Mastroni, Carlo Vistoli, Biagio Pizzuti and Marie-Nicole Lemieux with Il Pomo d'Oro and Maxim Emelyanychev. 'This now becomes a first choice for Handel's Venetian masterpiece', *Gramophone's* review declared.



This year's **Orchestral** award goes to the widely-acclaimed recording of Weinberg's Symphonies Nos 2 & 21 by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Gidon Kremer and Kremerata Baltica led by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, released by DG. This album, alongside their UK premiere of Symphony No 21 last year, has completely transformed Weinberg's reputation in the UK – a feat perhaps only achievable with newly-appointed dynamo, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, who may have created what *Gramophone* has dubbed 'one of the most important symphonic releases of the year'.



In her first ever *Gramophone* win, Sandrine Piau receives the **Recital** prize this year for her album 'Si j'ai aimé' on Alpha Classics. With Le Concert de la Loge and Julien Chauvin, the musicians explore relatively unfamiliar French repertory with which they are very much at

home, Piau giving her silvery tone and ‘immaculate sense of line’ throughout a ‘most engaging’ release.



Nicky Spence clinches the **Solo Vocal** category (sponsored by Glyndebourne) this year with his recording of Janáček’s *The diary of one who disappeared*, with Julius Drake very much an equal partner on piano. On the Hyperion label, this solo outing showcases the Scottish tenor with songs by a composer ‘for whom his gifts – both vocally and temperamentally – seem to be ideally suited.’

The Gramophone Awards will be available to watch for free on *Gramophone’s* website and Facebook & YouTube pages and on medici.tv, reaching audiences in more than 180 countries. Last year, more than 100,000 people tuned in from across the globe and with this being conceived and broadcast as a digital event, numbers are expected to exceed that. The broadcast will then be available for catch-up until January 2021, with highlights available on applemusic.com/gramoawards.

The *Gramophone* Classical Music Awards are presented in association with Apple Music, Medici TV and Help Musicians UK, our charity partner.

In a special Awards winners Podcast today, Gramophone's Editor, Martin Cullingford, and Gramophone's Reviews Editor, Tim Parry, talk to James Jolly about the ten winning albums.

Gramophone’s Awards issue, published on October 7, will contain full information on the Awards and all of this year’s winners.

Listen to the winning albums and a winner's playlist on *Gramophone's* curator page [on Apple Music](#).

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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