

RPS ABO SALOMON PRIZE AWARDED TO JAMIE HUTCHINSON AND BETH HIGHAM-EDWARDS

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The prize recognises musicians who have made remarkable contributions to their orchestras and audiences



Jamie Hutchinson (left) receives her Salomon Prize from ABO chief executive Mark Pemberton (right)

The **Royal Philharmonic Society** (RPS) and **Association of British Orchestras** (ABO) have awarded the Salomon Prize jointly to Jamie Hutchinson, sub-principal violin with the **Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra** and Beth Higham-Edwards, percussionist with the **London Chamber Orchestra**.

The **Salomon Prize** is named after one of the founders of the RPS, violinist Johann Peter Salomon. RPS and ABO present the prize annually to a musician who has made a remarkable contribution to the orchestra and its audience, with all ABO member orchestras invited to nominate a player for the Prize.

ABO chief executive Mark Pemberton awarded Hutchinson her prize certificate on Friday (10 December) in a concert given by **Oxford Philharmonic** at Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre. Plans are currently being made for Beth to receive her certificate in the New Year.

The Salomon Prize is presented in recognition of Hutchinson's leadership of the orchestra's educational initiatives during the pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, she began the #OPatHome series, a six-week series for primary school children in which members of the Orchestra introduce their instruments, tell stories and give performances.

Following the series' success, Hutchinson led a winter series of family-friendly videos released on the Orchestra's YouTube Channel, providing valuable music activities for children at a time when musicians were unable to continue their educational outreach work.

Marios Papadopoulos, music director of the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra, said: 'For many years Jamie has been at the heart of the outreach work of the Oxford Philharmonic... During the pandemic, Jamie refused to be disheartened by the fact that this work was no longer possible in person. She turned her energy and imagination to launching programmes to entertain and educate schoolchildren, as well as provide some much-needed work for our musicians.' He added: 'Jamie, in collaboration with our fantastic outreach team, has helped the Orchestra reach more children than ever before.'

Percussionist Beth Higham-Edwards has been awarded the Salomon Prize for her work on **London Chamber Orchestra**'s principal education project, Music Junction, which partners with 10 schools in Greater London and Berkshire. Higham-Edwards took the lead for the project before the pandemic and remained devoted to maintaining and even expanding the initiative despite the difficult circumstances created by Covid-19.

The awarding panel, comprising leading figures working in classical music, said: 'Beth's brilliance through this has been to make all young people – regardless of their musical ability, or even whether they own an instrument – feel musically fuelled..., not just fortifying them through the lockdown, but setting them on musical journeys for life.'

Viola player Amy Thomas was also commended for her work creating content across the **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra**'s digital platforms and social media to continue to engage audiences and help the orchestra retain a sense of purpose throughout the pandemic.