

23rd May, 2017

The Queen's Medal for Music 2016

The violinist **Nicola Benedetti MBE** has been awarded **The Queen's Medal for Music 2016**.

The Medal was established in 2005 at the suggestion of former Master of The Queen's Music the late Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and is awarded annually to an outstanding individual or group of musicians who have had a major influence on the musical life of the nation.

The award was presented to Ms Benedetti by The Queen in an audience at Buckingham Palace on 23rd May 2017.

Ms Benedetti is the twelfth and youngest ever recipient of the award, following Oliver Knussen CBE who received The Queen's Medal for Music 2015 last year.

The nominating process for the award is overseen by a committee under the chairmanship of the Master of The Queen's Music, Judith Weir. The committee's recommendation is submitted to The Queen for approval. The committee members are Lord Berkeley of Knighton, Meurig Bowen, Susanna Eastburn, Professor Piers Hellawell, Gillian Moore, and Sir Curtis Price.

Commenting on the award, Judith Weir said:

"Nicola Benedetti is a world-famous violinist of whom musicians in the UK are extremely proud. Her mastery of the violin was built at an early age, since when, as a genuinely communicative and sympathetic artist, she has gained an exceptionally enthusiastic public following. Exceptional in the range of her musical activities, she is inspiring new generations of children to learn to play instruments and to enjoy music actively; and gives a significant part of her time and energy to teaching and advocating the importance of music in society and education."

On receiving the award, Ms Benedetti said:

"It is such an honour to receive the Queen's Medal for Music and to join such an esteemed list of recipients. I believe passionately that the arts and music should not be a luxury, and everyone should have access. I see first-hand the powerful impact increased creativity can have on people's lives, and witness in schools, after concerts and during workshops, the effect of experiences that stir our souls and remind us of feelings we forgot were there. I will continue to fight to ensure as many people get access to the arts at a time when music and the arts are being so woefully neglected on the national curriculum agenda."

Notes to Editors

The Queen's Medal for Music is presented annually to an outstanding individual or group of musicians who have had a major influence on the musical life of the nation.

Nominees for the award may be of any nationality but they must have had a major influence on the musical life of the UK.

The award was first made in 2005, when the recipient was conductor and composer the late Sir Charles Mackerras. Other recipients of the award include:

- 2006 Sir Bryn Terfel CBE
- 2007 Judith Weir CBE
- 2008 Kathryn Tickell OBE DL
- 2009 Sir Colin Davis CH CBE
- 2010 Dame Emma Kirkby DBE
- 2011 Nicholas Daniel
- 2012 National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain
- 2013 Sir Thomas Allen CBE
- 2014 Simon Halsey CBE
- 2015 Oliver Knussen CBE

The Queen is Patron of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music; Camerata Ireland; Help Musicians UK; the London Symphony Orchestra; the Royal Academy of Music; the Royal College of Music; the Royal Northern College of Music; the Royal Choral Society; the Royal College of Organists; the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society and Orchestra; the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir; the Royal Philharmonic Society; the Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain; and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra; and is Royal Patron of the Royal School of Church Music.

Biography: Nicola Benedetti MBE

Nicola Benedetti is one of the most sought after violinists of her generation. Her ability to captivate audiences with her innate musicianship and dynamic presence, coupled with her wide appeal as a high-profile advocate for classical music, has made her one of the most influential classical artists of today. With concerto performances at the heart of her career, Nicola is in much demand with major orchestras and conductors across the globe.

Nicola Benedetti is committed campaigner for music and arts education. In 2013 she founded the Benedetti Sessions, a workshop, rehearsal, masterclass and performance project designed to engage, challenge, inspire and nurture young musicians of all abilities. To date, the Sessions, with Nicola at the helm, has collaborated on projects with the Royal Albert Hall, The Cheltenham Festival, London Music Masters, Wigmore Hall, Glasgow Life/UNESCO, The Royal College of Music and a summer programme hosted by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Winner of Best Female Artist at both 2012 and 2013 Classical BRIT Awards, Nicola records exclusively for Decca (Universal Music). The enormous success of *Homecoming; A Scottish Fantasy*, made Nicola the first solo British violinist since the 1990s to enter the Top 20 of the Official UK Albums Chart. She is credited with broadening the appeal of classical music to young and new audiences through her extensive education work and appearances at events such as the Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony and iTunes Festival. Nicola was awarded the MBE in the 2013 New Year Honours, in recognition of her international music career and work with musical charities throughout the UK.

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