



CITY OF LONDON SINFONIA WIN ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY IMPACT AWARD FOR ITS TRAILBLAZING SOUND YOUNG MINDS PROGRAMME

18 November 2020: City of London Sinfonia (CLS) is delighted to announce that it has won the 2020 Royal Philharmonic Society Impact Award for its Sound Young Minds programme, as revealed earlier this evening at a special online ceremony. The RPS Impact Award, supported by the ABRSM, is for an outstanding initiative or organisation which set out to engage and have a lasting positive impact on the lives of people who may not otherwise experience classical music.

Sound Young Minds is a bespoke programme originated by City of London Sinfonia in partnership with Bethlem and Maudsley Hospital School and funded by Youth Music, that builds confidence and self-esteem in young people living with severe mental health and psychiatric conditions through music-making and sharing.

Now in its fourth year, it is the only programme of its kind in the UK and is one of the central pillars of CLS' singular identity informing every aspect of its work from world-renowned concert stages to care homes, the digital sphere to schools. Over the past three decades, CLS has engaged people in music-making in healthcare settings across care homes, hospices, children's hospitals, and more recently survivors of brain injury and trauma. As one of the most long-standing strands of its wide ranging participation programme, Sound Young Minds robustly articulates CLS' vision that classical music is transformative and the joy and discovery of it must be wide open to everyone across all areas of society.

Children's charities and health professionals have repeatedly warned that young people have been disproportionately impacted by the mental and emotional health challenges brought about by the isolation and instability of the Covid-19 pandemic, with Public Health England reporting that more than a third of young people said they were more worried (38%), more sad (37%) or more stressed (34%) than before lockdown*. For young people living with pre-existing mental health and psychiatric conditions, the current challenges are even more acute.

The Bethlem and Maudsley Hospital School is a local authority special school based across two sites in Camberwell and Beckenham, attended by young people aged 4 to 18 from across London and the South East, all of whom are living with severe mental health and psychiatric conditions.

Since 2017, composer and sound artist Gawain Hewitt and City of London Sinfonia musicians have been sharing their passion for live classical music with groups of young people – both day patients and residents at the Hospital School – through bespoke sessions anchored around participation, improvisation, composition and performance. Sessions take a piece of CLS repertoire as an inspiration point to stimulate in-the-moment, collective music-making. By establishing everyone as creative equals, Sound Young Minds promotes a comfortable and informal environment where inspiration can flourish, and uplifting moments can be shared in otherwise challenging times.

Delivered as a termly programme, each annual cycle reaches more than 200 young people across the academic year and closes with the sharing of a collection of brand new compositions created by young people together with CLS musicians. All sessions are recorded so these creations can enjoy an onward

life in the form of sound sculptures, pop-up interactive installations that tour to CLS concerts and special events, such as the Tate Lates in 2019, offering an important bridge between CLS' participation and performance work. From January to April 2021, the public will be able to explore all three sound sculptures in a free dedicated exhibition at [Bethlem Gallery](#).

Sound Young Minds has been reimaged this year in response to the pandemic, with some unexpectedly positive developments prompted by the need to explore the digital potential of the programme. Together, Gawain Hewitt and CLS viola Matt Maguire have developed an in-person + digital hybrid framework for future sessions that combines the use of accessible, online music tools with live improvisation on classical instruments. Beginning later this month, Sound Young Minds will be delivered in the Hospital School and, for the first time, on the wards and Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit at Bethlem Hospital thanks to the introduction of this new digital element, as the programme also expands its footprint with roll-outs at Lavender Walk Adolescent Mental Health Unit (at Chelsea Community Hospital School) and at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge.

As the programme enters its fourth year, CLS has embarked on a major piece of post-doctoral research with the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience at King's College London to establish what clinical outcomes can be measured across the Sound Young Minds programme. First findings will be shared in March 2021.

James Murphy, Chief Executive, Royal Philharmonic Society, said: *"Congratulations to City of London Sinfonia on this outstanding initiative, proving what a positive, vital role classical musicians can play in our communities. Our panel, comprising experts from across the music profession, hopes it may become a blueprint for others to emulate and benefit from nationwide."*

Fiona Lambert, Director of Participation at City of London Sinfonia, said: *"We are thrilled that Sound Young Minds has been recognised by the Royal Philharmonic Society. We've learned so much over the last three years, working alongside school staff and project partners, developing a way of working that has brought joy, new connections and creativity to the young people involved. It has transformed how we as an orchestra connect with people and make music together, impacting not just our participation programme but also our public performances. As we enter our fourth year, Sound Young Minds is expanding its reach to Lavender Walk Adolescent Mental Health Unit and clinics at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge where we look forward to sharing the pleasure of music-making with even more young people."*

John Ivens, Head Teacher at Bethlem and Maudsley Hospital School, said: *"For young people at such a challenging time in their lives, working with City of London Sinfonia brought the joy of shared creation. Joy rising above being a patient at a psychiatric hospital to bring pleasure to others who will never know..."*

Gawain Hewitt, Composer and Sound Artist, said: *"2020 has forced an evolution in our Sound Young Minds programme through the introduction of new digital techniques and online tools. This new, hybrid approach, taking the best of what we did before with the best of what we learnt during lockdown, will allow us to reach more young people than ever before, as we can now deliver the programme in a raft of new environments, including on the hospital wards and in intensive care units."*

Matt Maguire, City of London Sinfonia viola, said: *"Sound Young Minds creates a really important bridge between our participation work and public performances. We bring a taster of our public concerts into the sessions by incorporating pieces of current repertoire into the collective music-making, always maintaining the highest artistic standards we strive for on stage. The participants achieve amazing musical highs and hugely contribute to the joyous music making we all share in. Personally, I often leave feeling extremely musically fulfilled. The enthusiasm and energy gained from these sessions significantly impacts how we programme and present our public concerts."*

Alongside the Impact Award, CLS is proud to have been shortlisted for the RPS Ensemble Award, for the outstanding quality and scope of the performances and work in any context of a group of musicians, no fewer than three, in the UK. The Orchestra is also one of the recipients of this year's Royal Philharmonic Society Audience Fund, in association with the Rachel Baker Memorial Charity, an initiative established in 2019 to give classical music organisations the means to devise fresh ways to attract, engage and retain new audiences. In the context of the pandemic, this work is more important than ever and CLS will be launching an initiative that puts audience members right at the centre of its creative process, directly involving them in planning meetings, interactively in concerts, and evolving new feedback models over a period of two years.

Winners were announced in the **2020 RPS Awards digital broadcast at 7.00pm on Wednesday 18 November** on the [RPS website](#), where it remains available to view on demand. Presented by BBC Radio 3's Georgia Mann, it featured performances by Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Natalya Romaniw and Lawrence Power, specially filmed at the Wigmore Hall. Longstanding RPS Awards partner **BBC Radio 3** will present a musical celebration of the RPS Awards winners at **7.30pm on Monday 23 November**.

City of London Sinfonia's **Haydn in London** concert from its [Restore and Revive season](#), filmed on the eve of the latest nationwide lockdown, is now available to watch online on the Orchestra's [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#) channels.

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* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-england-launches-new-every-mind-matters-campaign>

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ABOUT CITY OF LONDON SINFONIA

City of London Sinfonia (CLS) is the orchestral home to over 40 outstanding professional musicians who come together in the shared belief that music has the power to transform the lives of people across all areas of society. They bring a distinctive, seriously informal style to everything they do, breaking down the barriers between their musicians and audiences – whether performing on a world-famous music stage or sharing musical, creative experiences with residents in care homes and hospital schools. Led by Creative Director and Leader Alexandra Wood, CLS conceives and delivers innovative artistic programmes with associate partners and artists, including project leaders with specialist skills, musicians in classical, jazz, folk and contemporary music, and artists in film, dance or visual art. The imaginative concepts and themes – often relating to science, nature, history or philosophy – influence and inform their wellbeing and education projects just as much as their concert series, bringing the adventure, intrigue and enjoyment of these programmes to all their audiences.

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ABOUT THE ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

For over 200 years, the Royal Philharmonic Society has been at the heart of music, creating opportunities for musicians to excel, championing the vital role that music plays in all our lives. It all began in 1813 when a group of musicians set out to establish a series of orchestral concerts in London. The Society's regular performances attracted world-class artists including Mendelssohn and Wagner, and it commissioned exhilarating new music for an eager public to hear: most famously, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In its

founding gesture, the Society created a lasting culture. Other orchestras found their footing and their music resounds across Britain today.

200 years later, the Society continues to celebrate and empower musicians who – like its founders – strive to enrich society with all that they do. Through grants, commissions, coaching and performance opportunities, the RPS helps exciting young [performers](#) and [composers](#) find their voice. Through the renowned annual [RPS Awards](#), presented in association with BBC Radio 3, the Society celebrates the quality, impact and ingenuity of the finest artists and creative forces at work today. Through its [Membership](#), the RPS aims to cultivate national pride and curiosity in classical music, and rouse audiences to recognise the vital and valued role they play in the country's thriving musical heritage. Through all its endeavours, the RPS is dedicated to proving classical music's rightful and powerful place in society.

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