

# Christian Mason

## CHRISTIAN MASON

### Composer

Christian Mason (b.1984) defines composition as “searching in sound for fleeting solidifications of intangible experiences”; his music, which combines an emotional aspiration to radiance with a sensitivity to natural resonance, has been commissioned, performed and broadcast internationally.

A 2015 winner of an Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung Composer Prize, he is enjoying a prolific career with an array of commissions from prestigious institutions. Upcoming projects include commissions from the Royal Opera House ('The Place Between' on a libretto by Chris Goode for 2020/2021), München Kammerorchester ('Aimless Wonder' for June 2017), and the Philharmonia ('Man Made' for soprano and ensemble, for the 'Music of Today' series in 2018). In addition, Christian Mason has been commissioned by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra for a piece as part of a Bruckner Symphony project conducted by Christoph Eschenbach (for May 2019) as well as a series of three distinctive pieces for ensembles as diversified as the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (May 2019), Ensemble Recherche (Freiburg) and Ensemble Itinéraire (Paris), the latter two in the Autumn 2018.

Recent years also saw the premieres of: 'In the Midst of the Sonorous Islands' composed for the participative CONNECT project, which was performed around Europe by the London Sinfonietta, Ensemble Modern, Ensemble Remix and Ensemble Asko-Schönberg during Autumn 2016; 'Lahara', a new work for percussion sextet, commemorated the opening of the new Asian Arts Theatre in Gwangju, Korea, in November 2016, as part of a project curated by Unsuk Chin; 'Open to Infinity: a Grain of Sand' (a co-commission from the Lucerne Festival and the BBC PROMS for Pierre Boulez's 90th birthday subsequently shortlisted for the 2016 RPS Awards); 'Layers for Love' (recorded by Klangforum Wien and repeated by the Tokyo Sinfonietta) and 'Sympathetic Resonance' (recorded by the Orchestre National de France for the Radio France programme, *Alla Breve*). During 2014 Mason focused on vocal music developing 'Somewhere Between Us...' for amplified vocal quartet and Paetzold contrabass recorder at LOD Muziektheater, Ghent, with Silbersee and Tom Beets; 'Reunion', one part of the opera *Triptych* produced by Opera Erratica, and 'Unseen Seasons', his first choral score, premiered by the Tokyo Philharmonic Chorus. In 2013 'Isolarion: Rituals of Resonance' was performed as part of his Lucerne Festival Academy residency under the guidance of Pierre Boulez and 'The Years of Light' was commissioned by the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music (Artistic Director: Pierre-Laurent Aimard).

Solo and chamber works include 'In a world of invisible waves: a butterfly' for solo piano, performed by Momo Kodama at the European Music Weeks Festival (Passau, Germany), 'A Tuvan Songbook' commissioned and performed by the Ligeti Quartet, and 'Remembered Resonance' for piano with Japanese wind chimes, premiered by Joseph Houston. Earlier chamber music includes 'Learning Self-Modulation', commissioned for Carolin Widmann by the Auditorium du Louvre, Paris, Wigmore Hall, London and the CDMC, Madrid, which received the 2012 British Composer Award in the solo/duo category; and 'Incadescence', commissioned by Aldeburgh Festival for Jean-Guihen Queyras in 2011.

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Over the years, Christian's music has been performed by prestigious musicians and ensembles such as Midori, Jean-Guihen Queyras, Carolin Widmann, Mieko Kanno, Gergely Mardaras, Elgar Howarth, Francois-Xavier Roth, Baldur Bronnimann, James MacMillan, Pavel Kotla, Stilian Kirov, Maxime Tortelier, Ligeti Quartet, Elysian Quartet, London Sinfonietta, Britten Sinfonia, London Symphony Orchestra, Bamberger Philharmoniker and BBC Philharmonic. His music has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, France Musique, Swiss SRF 2 Kultur and RTS Espaces 2; and released on CD by the London Sinfonietta Label ('In Time Entwined, In Space Enlaced'), LSO Live ('From Bursting Suns Escaping') and Col Legno (Unseen Light, portrait CD).

Other collaborations, with artists, choreographers and theatre directors, include works such as 'Songs for the Last Slam Door Train' with Barbara Keal, the Transforme project at Royaumont and music for Peter Gill's productions of his own 'Another Door Closed' (Bath) and 'As Good as it Gets' (London), David Hare's 'The Breath of Life' (Sheffield) and Robert Holman's 'Making Noise Quietly' (London).

Christian is a visiting teacher of composition at the University of Cambridge and is Composition Support Tutor for the LSO Panufnik Young Composers Project. He was 'Composer in Residence' at Eton College (2014-15) and has worked as Composition Assistant to Sir Harrison Birtwistle. He completed a Ph.D at King's College London with George Benjamin in 2012, following which he was awarded the 2012 Mendelssohn Scholarship to study privately with Frank Denyer. He previously read music at the University of York and has studied composition with Sinan Savaskan, Nicola LeFanu, Thomas Simaku and Julian Anderson. He has also participated in summer courses such as the Stockhausen Courses, Dartington, Royaumont Voix Nouvelles, Acanthes, Festival d'Aix en Provence and Darmstadt, as well as being a resident composer at Takefu International Festival, Japan in 2008.

He is a founding Artistic Director of the Octandre Ensemble, which promotes contemporary music with regular performances across the UK. In 2012 the ensemble received a grant from 'Diaphonique' to host the first Anglo-French Composers' Forum at LSO St Luke's, London. He plays the Theremin.

Christian Mason's works are published by **Breitkopf & Härtel**.

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