

# CHRISTOPHER AUSTIN

## Conductor, Orchestrator, Composer

Christopher Austin is not only one of the UK's foremost conductors of contemporary repertoire, but also a Tony award-winning orchestrator, hugely in demand in the film world and beyond. His orchestrations for many leading film and ballet composers demonstrate huge mastery of orchestral colour and effect – often dazzlingly so – as well as great sensitivity.

Christopher was educated at Bristol University (studying composition with Raymond Warren and Adrian Beaumont) and went on to complete postgraduate studies with Robert Saxton and Simon Bainbridge at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. While at Bristol he co-founded the Brunel Ensemble with the composer Will Todd. Austin remained Artistic Director of the ensemble throughout its existence, giving 40 premieres of new work, many of which were Brunel commissions. As a conductor he has retained this strong commitment to contemporary music, and has given more than 120 world and regional premieres, including works by Hans Abrahamsen, John Adams, Malcolm Arnold, Diana Burrell, Tansy Davies, Nicola LeFanu, Elisabeth Lutyens, John McCabe, Colin Matthews, Peter Maxwell Davies, Olivier Messiaen, Per Nørgård, Steve Reich, Poul Ruders, Joby Talbot, Raymond Warren and Malcolm Williamson – to name but a few.

As an orchestrator Christopher's work includes his Tony and Drama Desk award-winning scores for ***An American in Paris*** which began life in 2014 at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris before debuting on Broadway (2015) and the West End (2017). The show toured the US for 20 months subsequent to its Broadway run and opens in Japan in the Spring of 2019.

In 2006 Christopher Austin and Joby Talbot created ***Aluminium*** – an album of orchestral covers of songs by The White Stripes. Three of Austin's arrangements subsequently featured in Wayne McGregor's ballet, *Chroma*, for The Royal Ballet – marking the beginning of his association with dance productions at Covent Garden. In 2011, Austin created the orchestrations for Joby Talbot's critically acclaimed ***Alice's Adventures in Wonderland***. Since its premiere ***Alice*** has performed in Toronto (North American premiere and two revivals), Los Angeles, Washington (Kennedy Center), New York (Lincoln Center) by the National Ballet of Canada, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Munich. The Australian premiere took place in Melbourne in September 2017 and was the first of 41 performances there and in Sydney. ***Alice*** returned to Covent Garden for the fourth time in September 2017 and returns to Copenhagen this Christmas. Future productions will be seen at the Mariinsky Theatre, as well as revivals in Japan, Sweden, Australia and Germany.

More recently, he made additional orchestrations for Mark Anthony Turnage's score for ***Strapless*** (2017) and Frank Moon's music for Arthur Pita's first main stage commission at Covent Garden, ***The Wind*** (2017). His orchestration of the Act 2 *pas de deux* from ***An American in Paris*** featured in this year's Royal Opera/Royal Ballet Spring Gala.

Other dance orchestration projects include two scores for the Rambert Dance Company: Javier de Frutos's *Elysian Fields* (2011) – for which he arranged and orchestrated extracts from Alex North's music from *A Streetcar Named Desire* – and Kim Brandstrup's *Life is A Dream* (2018), for which Austin adapted music by Witold Lutosławski.

Away from the stage, Austin has made chamber orchestrations of Zemlinsky's *Six Orchestral Songs Op. 13* (2014) and contributed three arrangements to the guitarist Miloš Karadaglić's Beatles album *Blackbird* (2016).

Christopher Austin's work in film music includes Joby Talbot's music for *The Lodger*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *Son of Rambow* and Ivor Novello award-winning scores by Jeremy Sams (for *Enduring Love*) and Dan Jones (for *Max*). His orchestration of Joby Talbot's new score for Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Vampyr* will premiere in Los Angeles in October 2018.

As a conductor, Christopher has worked with the BBC Orchestras, the London Sinfonietta, the Philharmonia and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, the Hallé, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lille, Opera de Rouen, Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Odense Symphony, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, Danish National Chamber Orchestra, Esbjerg Ensemble, Århus Sinfonietta, Orkiestra Muzyki Nowej (Katowice) and Present Music (Milwaukee). He has recorded for Non Classical, Da Capo, Signum, Dutton, NMC and XL Recordings

In 2010 Christopher was appointed Music Consultant for the British Film Institute's *Rescue the Hitchcock Nine* project. The role gave him responsibility for commissioning new scores for all the silent movies directed by Alfred Hitchcock. The most successful of these is Daniel Patrick Cohen's score for Hitchcock's debut film, *The Pleasure Garden*, and besides conducting the first performances at Wilton's Music Hall in 2012 as part of the Cultural Olympiad, Austin has led performances in Brazil (Rio Film Festival), Kazakhstan (Almaty), Romania (Transylvania International Film Festival) and in November this year at the Classics Film Festival in Bogotá.

Christopher Austin is a professor of composition, orchestration and conducting at the Royal Academy of Music. In 2009 his work there, in collaboration with music critic Paul Morley, was the subject of a two-part BBC documentary called *How to Be a Composer*. He has also guest lectured at the University of Louisville (where he was a judge for the 2009 Grawemeyer Award), the Karol Szymanowski Music Academy in Katowice and the Danish Royal Academy of Music.

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