

Simon Desbruslais

Biography

‘Simon Desbruslais’s performance leaves nothing to be desired: it is musically compelling and technically very impressive.’

Musicweb International (2011)

‘Supreme confidence and flair’

Composer James MacMillan (2012)

‘The audience — and all three composers concerned — marveling at the skill, commitment and sheer tenacity of the steel-lipped Simon Desbruslais’

Birmingham Post (2012)

‘Great style and assurance’

Journal of the International Trumpet Guild (2012)

‘Dazzling virtuosity and musicianship’

Gramophone (2015)



Simon Desbruslais is a British trumpet soloist, whose performances have been critically acclaimed as ‘steel-lipped’, ‘musically compelling’ and possessing ‘supreme confidence and flair’. Equally active in baroque and contemporary music, Simon has recorded extensively for Signum Classics including *Psalm: Contemporary British Trumpet Concertos*, an album of trumpet works written for him by John McCabe, Robert Saxton and Deborah Pritchard, and most recently *The Art of Dancing* which includes new double concertos for trumpet, piano and string orchestra by Toby Young, Geoffrey Gordon and Nimrod Borenstein. Radio and Television broadcasts form an integral output to Simon’s work and over the last decade he has performed live on BBC 1 Television, BBC Radio 3 & 4 and German Radio SWR2 to millions of viewers and listeners worldwide.

A crucial element of Simon’s career involves working with composers to create and champion new works involving the trumpet. This has ranged from chamber works, such as trumpet and piano, to full-scale concertos and more unusual combinations such as trumpet with choir, or with string quartet. Simon has a particular commitment to British music – composers who have written with his sound and technique in mind include, among others, Edwin Roxburgh, John McCabe, John Traill, Deborah Pritchard, Lola Perrin, Luke Bedford, Toby Young, Tomas Yardley and Tom Armstrong.

Since his breakthrough season in 2012/13, Simon has given concerto performances in China and Brazil, appeared as soloist with Royal Northern Sinfonia, English Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Orchestra of the Swan, Charivari Agréable, Brook Street Band, Ensemble Diderot and London Concertante, and as a guest chamber musician with the Ligeti Quartet, Austral Harmony, Little Venice Ensemble and Ensemble Perpetuo. He has given solo performances at the Ryedale, Wymondham, Bangor New Music, North York Moors, Deal, and Rheine Vokal festivals, on the beach of Vik in Iceland, and appeared as a concerto soloist on the natural trumpet at the Wigmore Hall. He has also developed lasting overseas collaborations with the Iceland Academy of the Arts, Tianjin Normal University in China and the Janáček Academy of Music in Brno. Simon is fortunate to maintain active duo partnerships with pianist Clare Hammond and organist Stephen Farr, among many other fine musicians.

Simon was educated at King’s College London and the Royal College of Music, winning numerous prizes and scholarships. He was then a private student of Eric Aubier in the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Rueil-Malmaison. Keen to expand on the relationship between performance and musicology, Simon holds a doctorate from Christ Church, Oxford, on the music theory of Paul Hindemith, which was published in book form by Boydell & Brewer in February 2018. He is Lecturer in Music at the University of Hull, where he is also Director of Performance, having previously taught at the universities of Bristol, Nottingham, King’s College London and Surrey. His research into historical trumpets led to a recording on artefacts held by the Oxford Bate Collection, which included the first recordings of music on the nineteenth-century, long ‘Bach’ trumpet, among other historical curiosities. Simon acknowledges the generous support of Arts Council England, Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust, Britten Pears Foundation and Help Musicians UK.

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