

# Christopher Ainslie

## Countertenor



“...he holds the audience spellbound both by the expressiveness of his tone and the musicality of his interpretation, A talent to watch....”  
*Opera Magazine*

**Christopher Ainslie** started his singing career as a chorister at St George's Cathedral in Cape Town, his home city. While qualifying as a Chartered Accountant, Christopher studied singing part time with Sarita Stern at the University of Cape Town College of Music, and viola with Jürgen Schwietering and Hermina de Groot. After moving to London in 2005, he completed his postgraduate studies at the Royal College of Music with distinction, and is now performing at leading venues around the world. He has sung in master classes with Michael Chance, Peter Harvey, Ashley Stafford and Sarah Walker and now studies privately with Mark Tucker, Paul Farrington and Audrey Hyland.

Christopher was the first counter-tenor to win the Richard Tauber Prize at the Wigmore Hall (2008) and won the Michael Oliver Prize in the 2007 Handel Singing Competition. He was a 2010 Classical Opera Company Associate Artist, and is grateful for the significant support of Independent Opera in the formative years of his career. In September 2011 he was the winner of the Gianni Bergamo Classic Music Award for Countertenors.

Christopher is rapidly establishing himself as a leading interpreter of repertoire within and outside the traditional confines of the countertenor voice-type. His performance in the title role of Handel's **Poro** under Laurence Cummings at the London Handel Festival was highly acclaimed. Other opera roles include his US opera debut in the title role in Handel's **Amadigi** at Central City Opera with Matthew Halls, **Ottone Poppea** for Glyndebourne on Tour, with Opera North, and in Drottningholms Slottsteater, Sweden, **Antonio** *The Merchant of Venice* for Bregenzer Festspiele, **Innocent 4** in the world premiere of Birtwistle's *The Minotaur* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (directed by Stephen Langridge, conducted by Antonio Pappano), the title role in **Tamerlano** in the Göttingen Handel Festival (conducted by Nicholas McGegan), the title role in Arne's **Artaxerxes** at the Royal Opera House, **Medoro** *Orlando* with Independent Opera at Sadler's Wells, **Arsace** *Partenope* at the Les Azuriales Festival, France, **Oberon** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and **Voice of Apollo** *Death in Venice* for Opera North (the latter also with Opéra de Lyon), the title role in Cavalli's **Eliogabolo** with Gotham Chamber Orchestra, the title role in **Rinaldo** in Sigulda, Latvia, **Alessandro Tolomeo** in the London Handel Festival, **Arsamenes** *Xerxes* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and **Unulfo Rodelinda**, **Messenger Thebans**, and **Helicon** in the UK premiere of Glanert's *Caligula*, all for English National Opera. He has created roles in several world premieres.

Oratorio performances include Bach's *Weihnachtsoratorium* in the Moscow Conservatory (with Vladimir Jurowski), Purcell's *Ode to St Cecilia* and Handel's *Te Deum* in D (Innsbruck, Utrecht and Antwerp Festivals) with B'Rock, the title role in Handel's **Solomon**, *Messiah* with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Bournemouth and St Louis Symphony Orchestras, *Belshazzar* in the Dresden Frauenkirche, *Saul* in St John's, Smith Square, London, *Judas Maccabeus* in Vilnius; Blow's *Venus & Adonis* (with Gary Cooper and B'Rock) in Brugge and Ghent, Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* in Worcester Cathedral and with the London Handel Players in St George's, Hanover Square, Bach's *Johannes-Passion* and Vivaldi's *Gloria* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

He also enjoys giving recitals, and has performed at the Wigmore Hall (including works ranging from Dowland to Schubert and Mahler), as well as in concert with Classical Opera, in the London Handel Festival with Ensemble Chocolat, with Laurence Cummings and the Croatian Baroque Ensemble, with Harry Bicket and players from The English Concert, and with Les Arts Florissants in performances of music by Handel and Scarlatti.

Recent engagements include **Orfeo** *Orfeo ed Euridice* for Opéra de Lyon and for Opéra National de Lorraine, **Ottone** *Agrippina* for the Göttingen Handel Festival, **David** *Saul* for Glyndebourne, **Unulfo** *Rodelinda* for the Teatro Real in Madrid with Ivor Bolton, **Athamas** *Semele* at Garsington with Jonathan Cohen, the title role *Joseph And His Brethren* at the London Handel Festival, Bach's *B Minor Mass* with at the Oregon Bach Festival, where he also sang Bach's *Magnificat* and the world premiere of James MacMillan's *A European Requiem*; Handel's *Messiah* with the Ulster Orchestra, and notable performances with the Choir and Orchestra of Radio France and the Hallé Orchestra.

Last season, he sang **Giulio Cesare** for English Touring Opera, **Oberon** at English National Opera, **Ottone** for the Grange Festival, and appeared with Les Musiciens du Louvre and Mark Minkowski, and with Philharmonie Zuidnederland.

In the 2018/19 season, Christopher returns to Opéra de Lyon to sing **Unulfo Rodelinda**, the Grange Festival, and sings **title role** *Orfeo ed Euridice* at Opéra de Massy with Les Musiciens du Louvre. Future engagements include debuts at Semperoper Dresden and National Opera of Chile.



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