

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 in the choir of St George's Cathedral under the direction of Dr Barry Smith in Cape Town, his home city. While qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in Cape Town, 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** (conducted by Laurence Cummings, directed by Christopher Cowell, and part of the London Handel Festival) was highly acclaimed. Other opera roles include his recent US opera debut in the title role in Handel's **Amadigi** at Central City Opera, (conducted by Matthew Halls), **Ottone Poppea** (conducted by Jonathan Cohen) with Glyndebourne on Tour, **Innocent 4** in the world premier of Birtwistle's *The Minotaur* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (directed by Stephen Langridge, conducted by Antonio Pappano), the title role in Handel's **Tamerlano** in the Göttingen Handel Festival, (conducted by Nicholas McGegan, directed by Johanna Garpe), **Ottone L'incoronazione di Poppea** in Drottningholms Slottsteater, Sweden (directed by Johanna Garpe, conducted by Mark Tatlow), the title role in Arne's **Artaxerxes** at the Royal Opera House (directed by Martin Duncan, conducted by Ian Page), **Medoro Orlando** with Independent Opera at Sadler's Wells (directed by Alessandro Talevi, conducted by Gary Cooper), **Arsace Partenope** at the Les Azuriales Festival, France, **The Voice of Apollo Death in Venice** with Opéra de Lyon (directed by Yoshi Oida, conducted by Martyn Brabbins), **Ruggiero Alcina** with Latvian National Opera, the title role in **Rinaldo** in Sigulda,

Latvia, **Alessandro Tolomeo** in the London Handel Festival (directed by James Conway, conducted by Laurence Cummings), **Arsamenes Xerxes** at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and **Spirit** in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* at the Spier open-air theatre, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Recent oratorio performances include Bach's *Weihnachts-Oratorium* in the Moscow Conservatory (with Vladimir Jurowsky), 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* (with Laurence Cummings), *Messiah* with the Philadelphia Orchestra (with Christopher Warren-Green), *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* (with Madeleine Lovell) and Vivaldi's *Gloria* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

He also enjoys giving recitals, and has recently performed at the Wigmore Hall (including works ranging from Dowland to Schubert and Mahler), in the London Handel Festival with Ensemble Chocolat, with Laurence Cummings and the Croatian Baroque Ensemble, and with Harry Bicket and players from The English Concert.

Engagements this season and beyond include **Eustazio Rinaldo** with Glyndebourne on Tour, *Messiah* with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, **Cupid** in Blow's *Venus and Adonis* with Les Arts Florissants, a return to the Wigmore Hall in a concert performance of Handel's **Amadigi** with Retrospect Ensemble, and a recording of *Apollo et Hyacinthus* with the Classical Opera Company. 

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