

Laurence Cummings

Conductor



“ His orchestra is superb. This is both musical discovery and pure joy; this is how Handel should be.”

Shirley Apthorp, Financial Times


Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as a conductor and a harpsichord player. He is currently Music Director of the Academy of Ancient Music, Musical Director of the London Handel Festival and Music Director of Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música in Porto. A noted authority on Handel, the Guardian has written of him “he now ranks as one of the composer's best advocates in the world. Self-effacing on the podium, faithful above all to the score, he matches Handel's energy and invention with unmistakable lyricism, generosity and dignity.”

Frequently praised for his stylish and compelling performances in the opera house, his career has taken him across Europe where he has conducted productions at houses including Opernhaus Zurich (*Belshazzar*, *King Arthur*), Theater an der Wien (*Saul*), Gothenburg Opera (*Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Alcina* and *Idomeneo*), Théâtre du Châtelet (*Saul*) and Opera de Lyon (*Messiah*). In the UK he has been a regular at English National Opera (*Radamisto*, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *Semele*, *Messiah*, *Orfeo* and *The Indian Queen*), Glyndebourne Festival Opera (*Saul*, *Giulio Cesare* and *The Fairy Queen*) and Garsington Opera (Vivaldi cycle: *L'Incoronazione di Dario*, *L'Olympiade* and *La Verita in Cimento*), as well as conducting at the Royal Opera House's Linbury Theatre (*Berenice* and *Alceste*), Opera North (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), Buxton International Festival (*Tamerlano* and Mozart's *Lucio Silla*) and for Opera GlassWorks (*The Rake's Progress*). The 2020/21 season saw his last edition of the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen, where he was Artistic Director for nine years.

Equally at home on the concert platform, he is regularly invited to conduct both period and modern instrument orchestras worldwide, including Academy of Ancient Music, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The English Concert, Handel and Haydn Society Boston, Croatian Baroque Orchestra, La Scintilla Zurich, Juilliard 415, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Musikcollegium Winterthur, St Paul Chamber Orchestra, Basel Chamber Orchestra, Wrocław Baroque Orchestra, Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Washington National Symphony Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony,

Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Jerusalem Symphony and in the UK with Royal Northern Sinfonia, Hallé Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Ulster Orchestra and Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

His recordings include discs with Emma Kirkby and Royal Academy of Music on BIS, Angelika Kirschlager and the Basel Chamber Orchestra for Sony BMG, Maurice Steger and The English Concert for Harmonia Mundi and Ruby Hughes and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment on Chandos, as well as a series of live opera and concert performances recorded at the Göttingen International Handel Festival and released on Accent. He has also released numerous solo harpsichord recital and chamber music recordings for Naxos.

He was an organ scholar at Christ Church Oxford where he graduated with first class honours. Until 2012 he was Head of Historical Performance at the Royal Academy of Music which led to both baroque and classical orchestras forming part of the established curriculum. He is now the William Crotch Professor of Historical Performance. 

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