

STEVIE WISHART

Composer / Director / Performer-Improviser

(violin / hurdy-gurdy / vocals)



BIOGRAPHY

Stevie Wishart was Educated at Cambridge, Oxford and the Guildhall School of Music and is active as a composer, performer and improviser. She explores medieval & contemporary extremes, using ancient technologies such as the hurdy gurdy, as well as electronic and computer music technologies of our own time.

She studied composition and electronic music at the University of York with Trevor Wishart and Richard Orten as well as coming into contact with improvised and aleatoric music through studying with John Cage and David Tudor in Edinburgh. By contrast she continued postgraduate performance studies in early music (baroque violin and voice) at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (Diploma in Advanced Performance) and with a Nuffield Foundation award and a Vicente Cañada Blanch Junior Research Fellowship at the University of Oxford for doctoral research into medieval musical iconography. More recently she received a major Wellcome Trust award to develop her compositions using musical gestures and sound to control how we use computers, and to work with the neuroscientist Ian Winter at the University of Cambridge University on audio processes based on the physiology of the ear.

"Driving rhythm, sonorities that are alternatively raucous and seductive, and a focus of music intent which you disregard at your peril"

She has composed for early music ensembles including her own group Sinfonye, and also for orchestral and vocal groups. As a composer she works purely acoustically with music notation, sometimes combined with improvisation, sometimes using computer music systems, and sometimes using all these elements.

Wishart has performed at London's Wigmore Hall, the Purcell Room, the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the ICA and the Sydney Opera House, and extensively throughout Europe, the USA, and Australia. Her concerts have been broadcast by BBC Radio 3, Radio France, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, ORF, German Radio Networks,

and Klara Radio Belgium VRT. Performances and composing commissions at major festivals include those for the Festival van Vlaanderen and Styriarte, and she played a major role in 'Take the Risk', a special early music weekend at London's Southbank, which included a performance of her composition "Transients" for voices and medieval and modern instruments.

"Stylistic fidelity ... Wishart - using medieval violin and hurdy-gurdy, plus her voice with a mix of electronics (sampling, delay, synthesized bass tracks) blended old and new seamlessly."

Invited for a number of composer residences and fellowships, she has presented her work at IRCAM in Paris; the Institute for Music and Acoustics in the ZKM (Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie) in Karlsruhe, Germany; the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, and Mills College in California.

She has also developed The Sound of Gesture, a two-year project developing an interface with specially commissioned sensors and software for solo violin and computer. The project was supported by the Flemish Government; gRIG (The Guild for Reality Integrators and Generators); Culture 2000 Framework of the European Commission; FoAM & Q-O2 from Belgium; ZKM, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie and the ADK, Akademie der Künste from Germany; Multimedijksi Center Kibla, Slovenia; Large Sciart Grant from the Wellcome Trust (2005); The Department of Physiology & Neuroscience, University and the ICA, UK. The Sound of Gesture was recorded at ZKM for released on cd/dvd during 2010.

The Sound of Gesture is also conceived as an installation piece, and has been commissioned for the exhibition Musik für Barbaren und Klassiker, Network Center for Contemporary Art, Aalst, Belgium. This follows on from a series of installations Wishart has produced on the visualisation of music with the artist Joan Grounds at the Arts Gallery of NSW, Sydney; with Machine for Making Sense at the Sydney Opera House; and at CACSA Contemporary Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

Also a composer for dance, Wishart has written for Margie Medlin, Compagnie Michèle Noiret and Wayne McGregor. She has also worked with other major creative artists such as designer Philippe Starck.

Recordings include medieval music for Glossa Music (Spain), Celestial Harmonies (USA), and Hyperion Records (UK). With Sinfonye, she is directing an on-going project to record the complete works of Hildegard of Bingen in a 5-6 cd cycle, which includes a multi-media performance and contemporary realisation of selected songs.

Contemporary music recordings include those with Fred Frith, the Art Zoyd Studio, and Ensemble Musiques Nouvelles.

As a composer she has worked for the Britten Sinfonia, the British Council, as music consultant to the Royal Shakespeare Company, and as the featured composer for Music Review (BBC Radio World Service). She has been on the panel of judges for the Festival of Early Music in Bruges, and for the York Early Music Festival, and has featured on a number of radio programmes for the BBC and as guest television commentator for BBC PROMS.

Stevie Wishart is based in Brussels and recently made her BBC Prom debut with a BBC commission for the BBC Singers ("... surely amongst the finest of this year's commissions ...") and a number of projects reflecting a passion for finding compositional inspiration in political and environmental issues.

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