

## Christopher Churcher

Christopher Churcher (b.2004) is one of Britain's most prolific and exciting young composers. Described as 'a remarkable talent' by David Hill, his varied body of works has become increasingly recognised across the United Kingdom for its open, expressive musical language, and striking aesthetics. Taking inspiration from the dextrous compositional voices of contemporary composers such as John Adams, Julia Wolfe, Nico Muhly and Caroline Shaw, Christopher is forging his own path in contemporary classical music. One rooted in organic structures, delicate timbres and a communicative harmonic language.

Born in Birmingham, Christopher's formative musical years were spent exploring the rich musical landscape of his home city. He took piano lessons from the age of seven, before successfully auditioning for St. Philip's Cathedral Choir at the age of ten. This musical upbringing as a chorister profoundly shaped him as a composer and thinker, imparting an enduring love for choral music. Fascinated by the compositional process from an early age, Christopher began to write his first pieces at the age of eleven, at which time he took up the bassoon, studying with Margaret Cookhorn. Following a substantial grounding in choral music, Christopher subsequently took an interest in orchestral performance, playing the bassoon in the CBSO Youth Orchestra.

Although chiefly self-taught, Christopher was offered a place as a first study composer at the Junior department of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (2016-2019). Here, he took an interest in accompaniment, and accompanied the Senior Choir for several years. Writing music for the chamber choir, and being able to interact with professional composers for the first time, his experiences as a composer at the Conservatoire led him to successfully apply for the Sound and Music Summer School twice, in 2018 and 2020, where he received an immersive grounding in writing for the voice and film. In October 2022, he began his studies as an undergraduate, reading music at Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford.

Christopher has rapidly established an impressive portfolio, working with some of Europe's leading choirs, orchestras and chamber ensembles, including VOCES8, The Bach Choir, the Consone Quartet and the Southbank Sinfonia. His work has been performed across the country at venues ranging from Cadogan Hall, London to Hereford Cathedral.

Christopher's body of works has been decorated with over half a dozen national awards. Composed in 2020, *Very Early Spring* marked his first significant success. A striking work for soprano and piano, the piece was announced as the winner of the 2021 Benslow Young Composers' Competition by Judith Weir – Master of the Queen's music. *Very Early Spring* was quickly followed by one of Christopher's first choral works – a setting of Emily Dickinson's 'Before the ice is in the pools' – which was selected by John Rutter CBE as the winner of the Sir David Willcocks Carol Competition 2021. The work was subsequently premiered by The Bach Choir at Cadogan Hall, and has already started to enter the choral repertory, noted for its atmospheric portrayal of winter. In January 2022, Christopher was selected for the Ludlow

English Song Weekend Young Composers' Platform. His resultant song cycle, *Three Songs from Mytilene*, was premiered at the Ludlow English Song Weekend in March 2022.

More recently, Christopher was named the under-18 winner of the National Centre for Early Music Young Composer's Award on 19 May 2022. His winning composition, *Arborescent*, was subsequently premiered by the Consone Quartet at All Saints' Church Boughton Aluph, Kent, on 24 June 2022 as part of Stour Music's 60th anniversary. This concert was broadcast on the BBC Radio 3 Early Music Show on the 13th November 2022. Christopher was also announced as one of the six composers for the VOCES8 JAM Masterclass Series 2022. His composition *Echo* written with mentoring from VOCES8 and Professor Paul Mealar was premiered and recorded at St. Bride's Church, London on the 12th October 2022. He went on to win the £500 president's commission from JAM on the Marsh.

In 2023, Christopher's attention has turned to orchestral composition, as he won the Southbank Sinfonia's Musica Viva Competition. His new orchestral work, *BREAKWATER*, will be premiered by the Southbank Sinfonia at the opening of the Levinsky Hall, Plymouth on 4 February 2023. In addition, as the recipient of the JAM President's Commission, his new commission for the University of Delaware Schola Cantorum will be premiered in Hythe in July 2023.

Christopher's website is [www.christopherchurcher.com](http://www.christopherchurcher.com).