

Julian Wagstaff (composer) - biography

www.julianwagstaff.com

Julian lives in his native Edinburgh where he is active as a composer, arranger and guitarist. He worked as a translator, television researcher and computer programmer before turning to music as a profession in the late 1990s. His interest in language, political history and the sciences continues to be reflected in much of his music and in his theatre libretti. He studied Composition at Edinburgh University with Professor Nigel Osborne, receiving his PhD in 2008.

The composer first came to public attention in 2001 with the musical *John Paul Jones*, based on the life of the Scots-born sailor and hero of the American Revolution. The musical was revived in 2010 in association with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Julian's specific interest in German history is reflected in *Treptow* for string orchestra (2005), his most-performed work. This piece, which won the 2005 Emre Araci Prize, was inspired by the Soviet War Memorial in Treptow Park in east Berlin. His Piano Quintet was released on Circular Records in November 2007 on an album entitled *Frontiers and Bridges*, performed by the Edinburgh Quartet and produced by Calum Malcolm.

In August 2007, Julian Wagstaff presented his hour-long chamber opera *The Turing Test* on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, to sell-out audiences and excellent reviews. The opera was cited by the novelist Alexander McCall Smith as his cultural highlight of the year in the *Daily Telegraph's* Review of the Year.

In 2011, Julian was commissioned by the Royal Society of Chemistry to compose a new piano trio to celebrate International Year of Chemistry. The work, entitled *A Persistent Illusion*, was premiered by Hebrides Ensemble in the same year, and has gone on to enjoy numerous performances in Scotland and beyond.

Julian enjoys close connections with many of Scotland's leading musicians, and his works are widely performed. He is recently served as Composer in Residence at the School of Chemistry, University of Edinburgh. His chamber opera *Breathe Freely* was commissioned during his tenure there, and was premiered in 2013 in a production supported by Scottish Opera and conducted by Derek Clark. A recording of the opera is released on the Linn Records label in October 2015.

He is published by Europa Edition.

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