



STACEY RICHARD WATTON BMUS (HONS) LGSM

BIOGRAPHY

"A versatile and accomplished artist" was how Classical Music Magazine described Stacey many years ago and the Scottish press heralded him as "A Wizard" of the Double Bass. Neither may have realised at the time that more versatility and wand waving were to follow. Stacey is founder, Principal Bass and Conductor of the Esprit Ensemble and First Take Musicians. He is also Principal Bass with the National Symphony Orchestra, Alina Orchestra, Chamber Domaine, and the New London Orchestra. Historically he held seats as Principal Bass with the London Chamber Orchestra, the London Mozart Players, the Orchestra of the Swan, Primavera Chamber Orchestra, the English Soloist's Ensemble, Johann Strauss Gala Orchestra and for Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber for many years. Stacey has also appeared as a guest principal with larger groups such as the Royal Concertgebouw, the Royal, London and BBC Philharmonics, the Hallé, the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Opera North, English National Opera and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

Stacey made his concerto début on the Bass at the age of thirteen and on the Piano at seventeen. He won the Eugene Cruft Prize for the Double Bass at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he studied as a scholar and later taught. Stacey appeared live on Russian television and radio after becoming a special prize winner at the first International Koussevitzky Double Bass competition in Moscow in 1995.

Having had a tremendously busy career as a concerto soloist, chamber musician and orchestra principal performing on recordings, live television and radio broadcasts, not to mention having a busy commercial career recording the soundtracks to numerous Hollywood films and Pop tracks. Stacey diversified his career further creating his own music festival in London in 2002 playing Double Bass, piano, and conducting. His extensive repertoire and skills impressed others in the West End and went on to be offered associate conductor positions for Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's Phantom sequel "Love Never Dies" subsequently 'Les Misérables' for Sir Cameron Mackintosh and then the Lion King for Disney.

After passing with Distinction in Conducting at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Stacey studied conducting briefly in Finland with Jorma Panula and Atso Amila. Head of Conducting at the Sibelius Academy at the time, Atso was keen to offer Stacey a place at the prestigious conservatoire, but the idea was declined due to other professional commitments. Jorma Panula, legendary conducting guru, who mentored the likes of Esa Pekka Salonen, Sakari Oramo, Mikko Franck, Jukka-Pekka Saraste said: "Yes!! You describe the music!" after he saw Stacey conduct Dvorak's 9th Symphony, with the Kuopio Symphony Orchestra in Finland. He even held the doors and called him Maestro!

Atso, a highly regarded composer, conductor in his own right said "Stacey has so much more to offer than just clear beating like most other conductors offer these days and he looks like he loves being on the podium. Even more interestingly his approach is humble, honest and non stuffy. He has a very positive charisma combined with a humble way of working with others and the music? - the essence of it."

Stacey has been fortunate to conduct many of his esteemed colleagues in several notable orchestras in the United Kingdom and abroad. Including the National Symphony Orchestra, London Mozart Players, MKCO, Orchestra of the Swan and at the Malcolm Arnold festival.

Stacey's career as a soloist has seen him perform numerous concertos in prestigious venues throughout the world and is one of the few bassists in England to make regular concerto appearances. He was deeply honoured to perform Bottesini's B Minor Concerto with the Bavarian Radio Chamber Orchestra at the Vredenburg International Chamber Music Festival in Utrecht, Holland. He impressed audience and colleagues alike at the ease at which he performed the technically challenging Dragonetti's Grande Allegro with the wonderfully spirited London Chamber Orchestra at St John's Smith Square, London.

Stacey has also enjoyed sharing the recital stage with eminent 'cellists Steven Isserlis, Torleif Thedeen, Jakob Koranyi and Daniel Mueller-Schott. Performances with the "Mighty" Belcea Quartet and Ian Bostridge at the Gulbenkian International Music Festival Lisbon and Perth International Music Festival were also a highlight of his playing career. Other International artists such as Nigel Kennedy have commented that Stacey is a "remarkable talent". For over ten years he was reunited with his chamber music family at Julian Rachlin and Friends International Festival in Dubrovnik, Croatia and at Janine Jansen's International Chamber Music Festival in Utrecht, Holland. He was always very proud to be included in a family which also included one of the most famous 'cellists of all, Mischa Maisky and the ground-breaking revolutionary Clarinettist Martin Frost. Oh and not forgetting Sir Roger Moore 007. See his Elephant on YouTube and all will be revealed.

Stacey is Principal Conductor and the Managing and Artistic Director of "The Esprit Ensemble" and his session orchestra, "First Take Music", who have recorded numerous video games at the world-famous Abbey Road Studios in London.

Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Teresa Berganza, Pincas Zuckerman, Itzhak Perlman, Maxim Vengerov, Montserrat Caballé, Luciano Pavarotti, Dame Kiri te Kanawa, Andras Schiff, Radu Lupu, Renée Fleming, Willard White, Wynton Marsalis, Kung Wa Chung, Sarah Chang, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Giulini, Sir Georg Solti, Lutoslawski, Rostropovich, Sir Colin Davis, Sir Charles Mackerras, Mariss Jansons, Janine Jansen, Julian Rachlin, Joshua Bell, Mischa Maisky, Ian Bostridge, Mark Ainsley, Anthony Marwood, Richard Lester, Gustavo Núñez, Henk Rubingh, Torleif Thedeen, Radovan Vlatkovic, Mihaela Ursuleasa, Milan Turkovic, Martin Frost, Nigel Kennedy, Nick Dodd, Sir Roger Moore, John Malkovich, Aleksey Igudsman, Sir Michael Parkinson, Sir Paul McCartney, Sir George Martin, George Michael, Stevie Wonder, Gregory Porter, Roxette, New Blud, Boy George, West Life, Emma Bunton (Baby Spice), Travis, Mushroom, Peter Gabriel, Taylor Swift, White Stripes, Cold Play, Michael Ball, Enya, Diana Rigg, Jim Davidson, Griff Rhys Jones, Simon Callow, Rory Bremner, Selina Scott, Vanessa May, Simon Callow, Peter Gabriel, Kylie Minogue and Dame Edna Everage to name but a few...