

# Duncan Honeybourne

## *Full Biography*

**810 words**

**Duncan Honeybourne** enjoys a colourful and diverse career as a pianist and in music education. Commended by *International Piano* magazine for his "glittering performances", he is best known for his interpretations of 20th and 21st century British piano music.

Following concerto debuts in 1998 at Symphony Hall, Birmingham and the National Concert Hall, Dublin, he made recital debuts in London, Dublin, Paris, and at international festivals in Belgium and Switzerland. His 2012 debut recital disc was described by *Gramophone* magazine as "not to be missed by all lovers of English music", whilst *BBC Music Magazine* reported: "There are gorgeous things here. Hard to imagine better performances."

Honeybourne has toured extensively in the UK, Ireland and Europe as solo and lecture recitalist, concerto soloist and chamber musician, appearing at many major venues and leading festivals. His solo performances have been frequently broadcast on BBC Radio and TV and more than 20 radio networks worldwide, including RTÉ (Ireland), Radio France Musique, Radio Suisse Romande, Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, Finnish, Portuguese and German Radio, SABC (South Africa), ABC (Australia) and Radio New Zealand. Duncan's engagements for regional music societies and arts centres across England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland have included hundreds of solo recitals as well as partnerships with renowned artists and ensembles. Many appearances on BBC Radio 3 have included the complete solo piano music of Ruth Gipps across a week of programmes for the composer's centenary, and several first broadcasts of contemporary piano works.

Premieres of over 70 solo works written for him have included John Joubert's Third Piano Sonata, John Casken's *Tempus Plangendi*, Cecilia McDowall's *Notes from Abroad*, three piano cycles by Sadie Harrison, Adam Gorb's *After the Darkness*, Peter Reynolds' last piano piece, *Penllyn*, for Late Music York, and the Andrew Downes Piano Concerto at Birmingham Town Hall. He has also revived many forgotten scores by composers of earlier generations, and was invited by the BBC to give the world premiere of two rediscovered piano preludes by English romantic composer Susan Spain-Dunk in a recital broadcast live on Radio 3 from St. David's Hall, Cardiff.

Honeybourne's discography (for EM Records, Prima Facie, Divine Art and Naxos/Grand Piano) includes contemporary works dedicated to him by celebrated composers as well as complete recorded cycles of the solo piano music of Moeran and Joubert (featuring the composer's early *Rhapsody Evocations* which Duncan revived from the manuscript),

plus premiere recordings of piano works by Bainton, Gurney, Armstrong Gibbs and Walford Davies. Duncan's solo discs have been awarded 5 stars in *Musical Opinion* and *International Piano*, and featured as *MusicWeb International* Recording of the Year, CD of the Week on FMR Radio in South Africa and Recommended CD on Austrian Radio. *Contemporary Piano Soundbites*, his album of new piano miniatures commissioned from established and emerging composers during the 2020 UK lockdown was described by Tom Service on BBC Radio 3's *New Music Show* as "a dazzling explosion of creativity."

Born in Dorset in 1977, Duncan gave his first London recital at 15 and his first BBC broadcast recital at 17. He was a prizewinner at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where he graduated with First Class Honours and later received the honorary award of HonRBC for professional distinction. His teachers included Rosemarie Wright, Philip Martin, John York and Dame Fanny Waterman, and he completed his studies in London for three years with Mikhail Kazakevich on a Goldenweiser Scholarship from the Sheepdrove Trust.

Active as a piano teacher for over 20 years, Duncan has taught, coached, adjudicated and given masterclasses at all levels, working with pianists of diverse ages and stages from beginner to postgraduate. Alongside his teaching posts he has been a Staff Pianist at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, the universities of Southampton and Chichester and in many schools and colleges. Currently a Piano Tutor at the University of Southampton and Sherborne School, he has also served as Acting Head of Keyboard at Sherborne School for Girls, and many of his former pupils are now professional musicians and teachers. Honeybourne has curated several series of piano and chamber concerts, and has written for *Classical Music* and *International Piano* magazines as well as the *Jewish Chronicle*, *The Times* and the *Birmingham Post*. His performing career has also encompassed solo piano improvisation, harpsichord and spinet recitals, and organ recitals at Brecon and Truro Cathedrals and Ypres Cathedral in Belgium. Duncan is a frequent lecturer on his experience of life on the autism spectrum and, in 2012, was commissioned by the Manchester Camerata/Royal Exchange Theatre to make a series of short films on autism. He is a Patron of *SoundWaves South West*, a music and music therapy trust.

New releases in 2022 include an album of 20th century British harpsichord music for Prima Facie, and a disc for Divine Art marking the centenary of the death of Yorkshire composer William Baines.