

# Duncan Honeybourne

## *Full Biography*

**762 words**

"The heroic **Duncan Honeybourne**" (*Musical Opinion*) enjoys a distinguished and varied career as a pianist and in music education. His playing has been commended for its "suave confidence" (*International Piano*), "terrific intensity and touches of panache" (*International Record Review*), "intellectual and physical stamina" (*Musical Opinion*) and "delicate chemistry of touch and arm weight" (*Gramophone*). *Fanfare* magazine (USA) remarked: "Honeybourne's performance is simply beautiful, even in its most powerful and haunting moments."

His debut in 1998 as concerto soloist at Symphony Hall, Birmingham and the National Concert Hall, Dublin, was broadcast on radio and television. Recital debuts included London, Dublin, Paris and the Miry Concertzaal in Ghent, Belgium, during the international *Gentsche Festspiele*, plus a debut recital in Switzerland sponsored by the *Mendelssohn Gesellschaft Schweiz*. Duncan's 2-CD debut solo album was described by *Gramophone* magazine as "a set 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."

Duncan 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 radio networks worldwide including BBC Radio 3 (UK), RTÉ (Ireland), Radio France Musique, Radio Suisse Romande (Switzerland), YLE Radio 1 (Finland), SABC (South Africa), ABC Classic FM (Australia) and Radio New Zealand Concert. 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 many partnerships with renowned artists and ensembles.

His extensive discography for EM Records, Divine Art, Prima Facie and Forbury Records includes the complete solo piano music of E.J. Moeran and Andrew Downes, a 3-CD survey of the complete violin/piano music of Parry and piano works by Stanford, Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Holst and Howells, plus premiere recordings of piano music by Walford Davies, Ivor Gurney and several neglected and contemporary composers. Duncan's solo discs have been selected as *MusicWeb International* Recording of the Year and *CD of the Week* on FMR Radio in South Africa.

Several celebrated composers have dedicated new works to Duncan, including John Joubert, Sadie Harrison, the late Peter Reynolds and Andrew Downes, whose Piano Concerto he premiered at Birmingham Town Hall in 2009. Of Honeybourne's performance of Joubert's Third Sonata, *Musical Opinion* wrote: "The sonata's disparate

elements coalesced logically into a powerful entity as the work's dedicatee unfolded each phrase and paragraph at white heat. This cogently argued and emotionally charged performance was the highlight of the concert."

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 HonBC 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 awarded by 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. As an artistic director he has curated several series of piano and chamber concerts, and he has written for *Classical Music* and *International Piano* magazines as well as the *Jewish Chronicle*, *The Times* and the *Birmingham Post*. 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.

In 2018 Duncan Honeybourne presents a new solo programme, *Shadows: Echoes of the Great War*, for the centenary of the 1918 armistice, and plays the complete clavichord works of Howells on a clavichord at Bolton Castle, Yorkshire, during the *Festival of English Music's* Autumn Festival. He will also record, for the Prima Facie label, John Joubert's complete piano music, with which he is closely associated.