

Duncan Honeybourne

Full Biography

900 words

"The heroic Duncan Honeybourne" (*Musical Opinion*) enjoys a colourful and diverse career as a pianist and in music education. Reviews have commended his "glittering performances" and "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", whilst *American Record Guide* commented: "Honeybourne's playing is always polished and refined."

His debut in 1998 as concerto soloist at Symphony Hall, Birmingham and the National Concert Hall, Dublin, was broadcast on radio and television, and he gave recital debuts in London, Dublin, Paris, and at international festivals in Belgium and Switzerland. Duncan's debut CD 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 3 and TV (UK), RTÉ (Ireland), Radio France Musique, Radio Suisse Romande, Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, Finnish 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 many partnerships with renowned artists and ensembles.

Branded a "doughty champion of English piano music" by the *Birmingham Post*, Duncan has pioneered British composers in concerts, recordings and broadcasts worldwide. Radio appearances have included programmes of piano music by E.J. Moeran and Archy Rosenthal on ABC Classic FM in Australia, where Duncan featured in the *Sunday Recital* series, and a feature on Bax for RTÉ Lyric FM in Ireland. In 2015, Duncan's premiere recordings of the piano works of composer, poet and priest Greville Cooke were broadcast complete in a series of weekly programmes on Radio New Zealand Concert and, in 2019, a 30-minute programme of his recordings of British piano music was broadcast from Vienna on ORF Austrian Radio's national cultural network. Premieres of over 70 solo works have included John Joubert's Third Piano Sonata and Richard Pantcheff's Piano Sonata, John Casken's *Tempus Plangendi*, three piano cycles by Sadie Harrison, Luke Whitlock's *Flowing Waters* (an Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government commission), Peter Reynolds' last piano piece, *Penllyn*, for Late Music York, and the Andrew Downes Piano Concerto at Birmingham Town Hall.

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 and the complete violin/piano music of Parry, plus premiere recordings of forgotten piano works by Walford Davies and Ivor Gurney. Duncan's solo discs have been awarded 5 stars in *Musical Opinion* and *International Piano*, and featured as *Music Web International* Recording of the Year, CD of the Week on FMR Radio in South Africa and Recommended CD on Austrian Radio.

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 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. 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.

In the autumn of 2019 Duncan played the Brahms D minor Piano Concerto at Southampton's Turner Sims Concert Hall with the Southampton Youth Orchestra, and gave solo recitals at the Yorkshire English Music Festival, in St Endellion Church, Cornwall, and at London's 1901 Arts Club. Projects in 2020/21 include a 2-disc set of British piano music for EM Records, and the premiere of a new piano work written for him by Cecilia McDowall.