

ANTONY PITTS

BIOGRAPHY (October 2023)

Antony Pitts was born in 1969 and is an international composer, conductor, sound designer, lecturer, developer, broadcaster, recording producer, and keyboard player, and recipient of the Radio Academy BT Award, the Cannes Classical Award, and the Prix Italia. One of several composers in his family, he sang as a treble in the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace, and wrote his first pieces down at the age of 8. At New College, Oxford he was an Academic Scholar and later an Honorary Senior Scholar; he gained the joint highest mark in Moderations and First-Class Honours in Music. His career since has combined academic, industry, and professional experience at world-class levels: a decade-long association with the Royal Academy of Music culminating in an internationally-recognized research project as Senior Lecturer; a rich and varied output as a BBC Senior Producer marked by ground-breaking practice and an exceptional catalogue of awards and nominations; and a creative record as a composer, scholar, and performer with an acclaimed series of recordings of “milestones of early Western music” on Naxos, and commissions for leading ensembles and festivals in the UK, Europe, and the Middle East, including the Cheltenham Music Festival, The Clerks, Dal’Ouna, Edington Festival of Music within the Liturgy, Festival of the Voice, King’s College London, the Netherlands’ Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap, London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, the Choir of New College Oxford, Oxford Camerata, Oxford Festival of Contemporary Music, Rundfunkchor Berlin, The Swingle Singers, and the Choir of Westminster Cathedral. While still at New College he founded TONUS PEREGRINUS and in 2004 won a Cannes Classical Award for his interpretation of Arvo Pärt’s *Passio* with the ensemble. He joined BBC Radio 3 in 1992, and in 1995 received the Radio Academy BT Award for a pioneering webcast; he has been nominated no fewer than eight times for the premier international radio award, the Prix Italia, winning in 2004 with *A Pebble in the Pond*. He devised new courses in Composition and Creative Technology for the Royal Academy of Music, and is a Patron of the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music and an honorary Fellow of the Faculty of Church Music. As a singer, Antony made his Glastonbury debut in 2014, and in 2016 he became the first new Artistic Director of Australia’s premier vocal ensemble, The Song Company, programming and leading seven adventurous seasons until the end of 2022. Antony recently founded TONUS AUSTRALIS, recording a debut studio album of Indigenous Christmas carols. In 2023 he was appointed as the first William Byrd Fellow, and Excelsia Ambassador, at Excelsia College in Sydney, where his three research areas are composition, performance practice from original notation, and figured tone (an extension of figured bass).

Antony’s music has been premiered at Wigmore Hall and Westminster Cathedral in London, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and the Philharmonie Kammermusiksaal in Berlin, as well as at more unusual venues and occasions such as Crossness Engines Pumping Station and the memorial events for former Soviet agent Alexander Litvinenko; his scores are published by Tequalmusic and Faber Music – notably *XL*, the companion 40-part motet to Tallis’s *Spem in alium* – and recordings of his music, including several complete albums, are available on Challenge Records, Delphian, Hyperion, Harmonia Mundi, Naxos, Novum, Signum, and Unknown Public, and he has a considerable output of radiophonic works and acoustic art commissioned by and broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and across the EBU. He was commissioned by Klaus Heymann to create *The Naxos Book of Carols*, also published by Faber Music and circulated to millions of homes in the UK; his double-choir mass setting *Missa Unitatis* for the Dutch Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap was the first to be commissioned by the foundation for almost 500 years and was premiered complete and recorded in 2016 in The Netherlands under the direction of Stephen Layton and released on Challenge Records; his cantata for string quartet and traditional Arab ensemble – *Who is my neighbour?* – was the focus of an Aldeburgh residency at Snape, at Aldeburgh Young Musicians’ Festiveal (?) as well as at workshops at the Al Kamandjâti music centre in Ramallah, and he conducted its premiere at the opening night of the Spitalfields Summer Festival in 2011; his oratorio-musical *Jerusalem-Yerushalayim* received a standing ovation both at its first performance in Northern Ireland and at its U.S. premiere in May 2012, and a studio recording under his direction was remixed with narration by David Suchet and released in a remastered Jubilee Edition in 2022. Recent commissions include pieces for the Choir of New College, Oxford, a 50-part motet *XLX – Mente cordis sui* for Sydney Philharmonia Choirs premiered at Sydney Opera House in 2019, and an ensemble *Antiphony* for Syria. Antony is working with Adrian Self on a music theatre piece called *The Process* inspired by Kafka, starlings, and social media, and completing his monumental *Requiem for the Time of the End*.
