

# JONATHAN DAVID LITTLE

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### CONTEMPORARY CONCERT & MEDIA MUSIC COMPOSER

The atmospheric and evocative music of composer/conductor/scholar JONATHAN DAVID LITTLE is often characterised by its mystical beauty, intensity, inventiveness, richness of material, and intricate craftsmanship. His compositions are typically labelled “resplendent ... luminous ... engaging” (Gramophone), and frequently marked out by their “otherworldly beauty and colour” – while also incorporating new and innovative textures and orchestration.

He was awarded Special Distinction in the ASCAP Rudolf Nissim Prize (USA) in 2017 for Best Original Orchestral Score, and his latest choral CD, *Woefully Arrayed*, was described by US *Fanfare* magazine as “a masterpiece ... radiant ... a superb disc” (Navona NV6113). In 2016 he won a BBC/Royal Philharmonic Society “ENCORE Choral” Award, and in 2018 his entire body of polychoral music was Runner-Up in the “Distinctive Work” category for the Australia Prize.

Jonathan studied music at the University of Melbourne – winning the Lady Turner Exhibition for overall excellence – then undertook a PhD studying the development of “exotic” orchestration in 19th- and 20th-century music, alongside studies in church music and liturgy (through the Australian College of Theology), and conducting studies with Gerald Gentry, former Staff Conductor, BBC. In 2011, the City of London's ancient Musicians' Company (first established in 1500) bestowed upon him one of their highest honours, the prestigious Collard Fellowship, awarded to “a professional musician of outstanding ability” for “undoubted excellence”. Jonathan's compositional style blends art music, folk/Celtic, and other sacred and secular musical influences, from as far back as the fourteenth century, and sometimes also include spatial effects.

In 2008, the first compilation album of his music was released to universal critical praise (a disc which contains a representative selection of music for a range of forces: choral, vocal, string, percussion, and a large-scale orchestral work, “Terpsichore - the ‘Whirler’ or Muse of Dance” - one of a series of epic orchestral tone pictures on the theme of the legendary Nine Muses. Cambridge University Press's “Tempo” described it as a “ground-breaking tour de force, incandescent”, while, in America, “Fanfare” magazine admired its “music of tremendous power [and] astonishing range of colors and moods”. American critic and recording historian Lynn René Bayley ranked the album amongst her Top 5 worldwide releases for the year (in *Fanfare*'s “Want List 2008”), applauding “a major new, original and quite brilliant classical voice”.

In the US, Jonathan has been the recipient of Critics' Choice Awards, and recordings have been supported by the Foundation for New Music (USA), the Kenneth Leighton Trust (UK), and in 2009 Jonathan became the first composer to receive a Professional Development Award from the UK music business's own charity, the Musicians' Benevolent Fund, specifically to assist towards issuing a second major disc in early 2012 on the Navona fine music label (NV5867) of PARMA Recordings, entitled “Polyhymnia” (The Muse of Sacred Poetry) - featuring three European orchestras. In 2012, the UK's Bliss Trust helped to support composition of the next work in the “Nine Muses” series - “Erato”.

In 2015, Jonathan was granted a major inaugural Australia Council “Individual International Arts Project Award”, to help fund the creation and recording of an album of multi-part, a cappella polychoral music (entitled “*Woefully Arrayed*” on Navona NV6113, 2017). US “*Fanfare*” reported: “*Woefully Arrayed* is a masterpiece ... radiant ... A superb disc ... shot through with spiritual light and which speaks on a very deep level to the listener”, while *Choir & Organ* (UK) argued that “Little writes very much in the manner of the renaissance masters, creating what a modern sensibility would identify as ‘immersive’ music of strongly mystical aspect”.

Jonathan has also pursued an academic and writing career. He was appointed Senior Lecturer at Buckinghamshire New University in 1999 on their innovative Music Industry Management course (the first such degree course in Europe), where he specialised in the workings of the British and international recording industry, and taught songwriting analysis. In 2001 he became Principal of the Academy of Contemporary Music in Guildford, England, Europe's largest specialist academy for students of contemporary music, and the first music education establishment to win the Queen's Award for Enterprise (Innovation category).

In 2005, Jonathan was made Consultant Editor to A&C Black's flagship volume of musical reference, the "Musicians' and Songwriters' Yearbook", and he has contributed articles on the future of music to the Hudson Institute's "American Outlook" magazine, and the British Academy's "Heart & Soul: Revealing the Craft of Songwriting" (published by Sanctuary to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Ivor Novello Awards). He has been listed in the UK Music Publishers' Association Register of Expert Musicologists, and is currently working on several books including his "Anatomy of Musical Composition". Two major academic studies of exotic orchestration were issued by EMP (New York) in 2010-2011: "The Influence of European Literary and Artistic Representations of the 'Orient' on Western Orchestral Compositions, ca. 1840-1920: From Oriental Inspiration to Exotic Orchestration", and its companion, "Literary Sources of Nineteenth-Century Musical Orientalism: The Hypnotic Spell of the Exotic on Music of the Romantic Period". (This "vast" and "erudite" two-volume, 950-page survey of Orientalism in music and literature - "a valuable contribution in understanding the development of the modern symphony orchestra" - won him the first of two Authors' Foundation / Royal Literary Fund Awards). His specialisms include orchestration, ethnomusicology, and the future of the music industry.

Having acted as Visiting Lecturer in Music Composition at the University of Surrey, and Curriculum Consultant to the British and Irish Modern Music Institute, Jonathan was subsequently appointed to the inaugural dual role of Professor of Music Composition and Music History, and Head of Research, at the University of Chichester, and, in 2019, youngest ever Professor Emeritus. Future composition projects include his ongoing musical depiction of the Nine Muses. Jonathan is a member of The Recording Academy / Grammy Pro in the USA. Selected music examples of works may be found on SoundCloud & YouTube (see Video page).

Performers of works in recent years include: the Czech, Kiev & Moravian Philharmonic Orchestras; North/South Chamber Orchestra (New York); Soloists of the Sofia National Opera (Bulgaria); Stanbery Singers & Vox Futura (USA); Tallis Chamber Choir, Chichester Singers & BBC Singers (UK).

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**INFLUENCES / STYLISTIC DEFINITIONS:**

"Mysticism" / "Ecstatic Minimalism" / "Archaic Futurism" / "Picturesque Archaism"

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