

## Benjamin Woodgates: Biography

Benjamin Woodgates is one of the UK's most exciting young composers. He has received commissions from cathedrals, theme parks and some of Europe's leading ensembles; and his award-winning body of mixed media work encompasses film, dance, theatre, art installation and virtual reality.

Hailing from the New Forest, UK, Benjamin's formative musical experience was becoming a chorister at Chichester Cathedral. Aged 13, he was awarded a full music scholarship to Winchester College, where he studied bassoon, piano and percussion; and became one of the youngest ever performers of James MacMillan's percussion concerto, *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*. In August 2004 he took up the organ and in September 2004 he was awarded an Organ Scholarship to read Music at Corpus Christi College, Oxford University. He graduated in 2008 with 1st class honours, achieving the 2nd highest mark in the university. Whilst studying at Oxford, Benjamin performed with all the university's principal instrumental ensembles and toured the world singing under the baton of Richard Hickox, Paul McCreesh, Laurence Cummings and James Burton. He sung on a number of CD releases with Schola Cantorum of Oxford, appearing as a bass soloist on Hyperion Record's 2008 CD, *Rautavaara: Choral Music*. While a student at Oxford, Benjamin also directed a number of choirs and ensembles, which he led on tours to Canada, Japan and the USA. These included Oxford University's Out of the Blue, runners-up in the 2006 International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella (of *Pitch Perfect* fame).

Benjamin continued his studies at the Royal College of Music, completing a Master's in Composition for Screen with distinction after studying with Vasco Hexel. He was subsequently selected as one of 12 composers worldwide to participate in the ASCAP Film Scoring Workshop with Richard Bellis in Los Angeles, where he received masterclasses from John Powell and Charles Bernstein and recorded with a 61-piece session orchestra at the Fox Newman Scoring Stage. He was subsequently awarded the ASCAP Foundation Michelle and Dean Kay Award for film-scoring talent. In 2014 he was voted the winner of the Oticons Faculty International Film Scoring Competition by a panel of judges the included Lalo Schifrin, Rachel Portman, Atticus Ross and Harry Gregson-Williams. Benjamin's has also been shortlisted for a number of other prizes including SoundTrack Cologne's European Talent Award (2013), The London Music Awards' Young Composer Award (2014) and a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit award (2015).

The first film score that Benjamin composed was selected for screening at SoundTrack Cologne 10 in 2013, and since then he has composed music for television, for advertising (including Honda's 2017 "Up" campaign) and for a number of short films including *The Longest Drive*, directed by Francis Annan and starring BAFTA-winning actor Darren Boyd (*Spy*, *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa*); *The Burning*, directed by Dominic Lees (*This Life* BBC Two; *Outlanders*) and *Puff Piece*, directed by Jonas Eriks and starring Happy Jankell. In 2015 Benjamin's score for PlayStation4 and PC game *Wander* was singled out for praise by the gaming press and earned him a place on the shortlist for the 2015 BAFTA Breakthrough Brit awards. He is currently a member of BAFTA Crew,

## Testimony

*"His compositions and arrangements are among some of the most creative and inspiring that I and my colleagues have heard"*

- Richard Bellis, ASCAP Director

*"lovely soundtrack, composed by Benjamin Woodgates"*

- GameSpot review of *Wander* (2015)

*"[the music] serves the game well, cementing it as one of the most peaceful releases that we've played in a long time"*

- Push Square review of *Wander* (2015)

*"The music is fantastic!"*

- The Gist review of *Wander* (2015)

*"Atmospheric and unique"*

- PSGamer review of *Wander* (2015)

*"too dark for my taste"*

- John France, MusicWeb International

BAFTA's professional talent network and masterclass programme.

Benjamin has also collaborated on a number of cross-disciplinary projects. In 2014 he composed music for artist Lexi Strauss' installation, *The Twelve Apostles as Babies*, which has been exhibited at the Royal College of Art and Worcester Cathedral. In 2013 he was commissioned to complete Percy Grainger's Piano Concerto from the composer's 1896 sketches. The completed work was premiered in October 2014 in Kings Place by soloist Penelope Thwaites and a chamber orchestra led by members of the Fitzwilliam Quartet. In 2017 he was commissioned to compose the music for *Le Grand Carillon*, the new musical attraction at Puy de Fou, one of Europe's largest theme parks.

Benjamin has also worked in the music department on a number of major productions. He has orchestrated projects including the BBC prime-time drama *Atlantis: Series 2* (2014), *Skyrim in Concert* at the London Palladium, Karel van Bellingen's award-winning film *The Leap* (2015), Irish feature *A Nightingale Falling* (2014). He has also created arrangements for shows including MASH-UP! (Leicester Square Theatre), TheatreMAD's *A West End Christmas* (The Actor's Church, Covent Garden), The Jersey Opera House Original Works Showcase and the anniversary celebrations of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* at Middle Temple Hall. In 2015 he served as the Choral Supervisor for *Kynren*, a £31m live action spectacular staged in County Durham, and has worked on productions including *An American in Paris* (Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris; The Palace Theatre, Broadway), Richard Ayres' *Peter Pan* (WNO, Cardiff; Oper Stuttgart) and *BalletBoyz' Young Men* (BBC Two). He is also in demand as a conductor, and has directed ensembles including the Hallé Youth Choir and the West End cast of *Phantom of the Opera*, as well as directing recording sessions in London and Los Angeles.

Benjamin's body of concert work includes two commissions for the WDR Radio Orchestra; a Christmas Suite and series of orchestra arrangements for The Philharmonia Orchestra; and a site-specific piece of the Choir of St Paul's Cathedral, commissioned in partnership with Choir & Organ Magazine. He has written extensively for voices and his choral music has been selected for the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, the Chelsea Arts Festival and JAM. His work is published by Oxford University Press and Stainer & Bell.

*"Benjamin is the best composer and musician I have ever dealt with.. all our musicians love working with him and I am proud to have him on the team"*

- Loki Davison, *Wander*  
Creative Director

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*"Benjamin Woodgates: youthful and sharp, very different"*

- Oleg Ledeniov,  
MusicWeb International

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*"big screen composer Benjamin Woodgates... lay[s] it on thick!"*

- adbreakanthems.com

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*"A quiet, thoughtful piece with plenty of space. Even when it gets more strenuous, there is still a steady spaciousness to the work."*

- Robert Hugill