

British born Paul Esswood is one of the world's leading countertenors. He has worked in opera houses throughout Europe and America and was the first countertenor ever to sing at La Scala, Milan. He took part in the historic Harnoncourt-Ponelle Monteverdi Cycle at Zurich Opera, which has also been recorded and filmed for television worldwide. He has appeared at the Salzburg Festival, performing Handel's *Jephtha* and *Saul* and Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. He has sung Oberon in the Cologne Opera production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and title roles in the Karlsruhe Handel Festival production of Handel's *Admeto* and the English Bach Festival production of Handel's *Riccardo Primo* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Several roles have been written for him, including the title role in Philip Glass's *Akhmaten* (Stuttgart) and Death in Penderecki's *Paradise Lost* (Chicago, La Scala Milan and Stuttgart). Most recently, he sang the role of Seff in *Schlafes Bruder* by Herbert Willi in the world première in Zurich, followed by the first Austrian production in Innsbruck.

As a concert and recital singer, Paul Esswood works in the world's most important musical centres: London, Edinburgh, Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, Vienna, Amsterdam, Stockholm, New York, Washington, Los Angeles and in key festivals such as Salzburg, Graz, Aix-en-Provence, Three Choirs and London Promenade Concerts. His repertoire is extensive. From the major works by Bach, Handel, Purcell, Monteverdi, Mozart, Haydn, Schubert and Schumann to contemporary composers, including Schnittke's *Faust Cantata* (world première in Vienna) and *2nd Symphony St Florian* (world première in London), and Penderecki's *Magnificat* and *Paradise Lost*.

Paul Esswood has made over 150 recordings, including the Monteverdi Operas and Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio*, *Magnificat*, *B Minor Mass* and the Teldec complete Cantata project under Harnoncourt/Leonhardt. His 4th recording of Handel's *Messiah* was with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Utah, under David Willcocks and under Roger Norrington he made a video recording of Purcell's 1692 *Ode Hail, Bright Cecilia*. He has also recorded the title role of Philip Glass's *Akhmaten* for CBS. His solo recordings include Purcell songs, Schumann *Dichterliebe* and *Liederkreis Op.39*, *Songs to my Lady* (English Lute songs) and Britten's *Abraham and Isaac* and *Folksongs*.

As a teacher, he is Professor of baroque vocal interpretation at the Royal Academy of Music and gives regular masterclasses throughout the world. He is an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music and was awarded the German Handel prize in 1992.

He regularly performs with the male vocal ensemble Pro Cantione Antiqua, of which he is a founder member, and the ensemble The Musicke Companye, which recently recorded a new CD entitled *O Bone Jesu*. He frequently works with his harpsichordist Helen Rogers, and the world-renowned lutenist Jürgen Hübscher.

Paul Esswood, utilising his considerable experience in the baroque vocal field, has now begun a career as a conductor. For the Chichester Festival, England, he conducted Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, *King Arthur* and *Dido and Aeneas*, Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *B Minor Mass*. In Cracow, Poland, he conducted the Capella Cracoviensis in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* and Handel's *Israel in Egypt*. For Bydgoszcz, also in Poland, he has conducted *Messiah* and various programmes of Bach, Handel and Vivaldi; both Vocal and Instrumental. He also conducted the Opera *Pompeo Magno* by Cavalli, a world premiere in modern times, for the Varazdin Baroque Evenings Festival, Croatia. This project received the Ivan Lukacic prize.