



Michael Collins

Clarinet / Conductor

"Brilliant playing in every sense." Classic FM

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Michael Collins is one of the most complete musicians of his generation. With a continuing, distinguished career as a soloist, he has in recent years also become highly regarded as a conductor. Recent guest conducting and play-directing highlights have included engagements with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Zurich Chamber Orchestra. From 2010 – 2018 he was the Principal Conductor of the City of London Sinfonia.

Recent highlights include a return to the Philharmonia Orchestra as conductor; performances worldwide with orchestras including Minnesota Orchestra, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, the Rheinische Philharmonie, Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra and Kuopio Symphony Orchestra, and tours in South Africa, Australia (with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra), Japan and Mexico (with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional). This year Michael will make his conducting debut with the English Chamber Orchestra and perform with the London Mozart Players. In July 2018 he performed at the BBC Young Musician 40th Anniversary BBC Prom. He also recently hosted a series of 'Michael Collins and Friends' concerts at LSO St Luke's, recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 3, featuring the Heath Quartet, Leonard Elschenbroich, Lawrence Power and Michael McHale.

Michael Collins has been committed to expanding the repertoire of the clarinet for many years. He has given premières of works such as John Adams' Gnarly Buttons, Elliott Carter's Clarinet Concerto - for which he won a Gramophone award for his recording on Deutsche Grammophon - and Brett Dean's Ariel's Music and Turnage's Riffs and Refrains, which was commissioned by the Hallé Orchestra. Collins has gone on to perform Turnage's work with the Residentie Orkest, Royal Flanders and Helsinki Philharmonics, as well as the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Collins has received the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist of the Year Award in 2007 in recognition of his pivotal role in premiering repertoire by some of today's most highly regarded composers.

In great demand as a chamber musician, Collins performs regularly with the Borodin, Heath and Belcea quartets, András Schiff, Martha Argerich, Stephen Hough, Mikhail Pletnev, Lars Vogt, Joshua Bell and Steven Isserlis. His ensemble, London Winds, celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 2018 and the group maintains a busy diary with high calibre engagements such as the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh Festival, Edinburgh Festival, City of London Festival, Cheltenham International Festival and Bath Mozartfest. During the 2019-20 season he will be an Artist in Residence at the Wigmore Hall which will include concerts with Stephen Hough, the Vienna Piano Trio, Leonard Elschenbroich, Michael McHale and the Borodin Quartet.

Michael Collins records for Chandos, and in his prolific recording career he has covered an extraordinarily wide range of solo repertoire, which also includes releases on Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, EMI and Sony. He is one of the world's most recorded clarinetists, having made no fewer than twenty discs for Chandos alone. His most recent disc, released May 2019, is of Concertante works by Richard Strauss, with Collins as conductor and soloist, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Tasmin Little, Julie Price and Michael McHale. Other recent releases include a disc of Crusell Clarinet Concertos with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra, which was Gramophone Magazine's 'Recording of the Month' in June 2018 and was nominated for BBC Music Magazine Award; a disc of British Clarinet Concertos with the BBC Symphony Orchestra which features Collins as soloist and conductor, and two discs with pianist Michael McHale: the first of Brahms and Reiner Clarinet Sonatas and the second of Reger Clarinet Sonatas. In 2017 he was awarded a Grammy for his disc 'Shakespeare Songs' with Ian Bostridge and Antonio Pappano ('Best Classical Solo Vocal Album').

In the Queen's Birthday Honours of 2015, Michael Collins was awarded an MBE for his services to music. He plays on Yamaha clarinets.

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