



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. He is Artistic Director in Residence of the London Mozart Players, and from 2010 – 2018 he was the Principal Conductor of the City of London Sinfonia. Recent guest conducting and play-directing highlights have included engagements with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Zurich Chamber Orchestra.

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).

In January 2021 Michael gave the debut performance of new ensemble Wigmore Soloists, a new Associate Ensemble funded by the Wigmore Hall. Led by Michael Collins and violinist Isabelle van Keulen, Wigmore Soloists will see leading instrumentalists coming together to perform a wide range of chamber music repertoire from duets to works for up to 10 musicians.

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 in July 2020 with BIS Records, is of Vaughan Williams' Symphony No. 5 and Finzi's Concerto for Clarinet and Strings with Philharmonia Orchestra, directed by Michael. The disc received multiple five star reviews in Gramophone and BBC Music Magazine ("This rather unusual coupling owes its existence to a world-class clarinetist") alongside rave reviews on BBC Radio 3 and an exclusive interview in Presto Magazine. Collins' previous disc, released May 2019, was of Concertante works by Strauss, with Collins as conductor and soloist with 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 Reinicke 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.

November 2019 Please do not use this biography if it is more than three months old.