Freya Waley-Cohen

Composer

Freya Waley-Cohen is a British-American composer living in London. Her music is full of shifting kaleidoscopic colours and patterns anchored around melodic lines that twist and wind. It is characterised by contrasts between earthy rhythmic play with bold colours, fragility, luminous spaces, and a sense of the otherworldly. Many of her recent works play with myths, magic and the occult as lenses through which to look at the contemporary world.

Waley-Cohen’s music has been commissioned by institutions and ensembles including the LA Philharmonic, BBC Proms, Wigmore Hall, Philharmonia Orchestra, The Britten Sinfonia, King’s Singers, The Hermes Experiment, the Aldeburgh, Presteigne, Santa Fe, and Cheltenham festivals, and released on Signum, Nimbus, Nonclassical, Delphian and NMC records.

Waley-Cohen’s previous concert works include *Naiad* (2019)*,* commissioned for the BBC Proms and premiered by the Knussen Chamber Orchestra under Ryan Wigglesworth; *Lend us your Voice* (2019)*,*commissioned and premiered by the King’s Singers; *Dust* (2019)*,* co-commissioned by the Aldeburgh Festival, Sainte Mere festival, and the Phillips Collection and premiered by the Albion Quartet; *Happiness* (2018)*,*an orchestral song cycle commissioned by the Melos Sinfonia and premiered with Lauren Fagan; and *Ink* (2018), commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society for the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Recent highlights include the premiere of Waley-Cohen’s opera *WITCH*, which was commissioned to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Royal Academy of Music. It was performed from 23 to 26 March 2022, directed by Polly Graham and conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth. Further highlights include a performance of *Changeling* (2019) by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Ed Gardner, and a performance of *Snap Dragon* (2017) by the Albion Quartet at Cheltenham Festival.

Upcoming performances include the world premiere of Waley-Cohen’s piece *Pocket Cosmos* (2022), which will be performed on 21 June 2022. It was commissioned by the London Chamber Orchestra, who will perform the work, and will be directed by Pekka Kuusisto. This concert will conclude Waley-Cohen’s year as LCO’s Composer in Residence. From 28 July to 2 August 2022, Waley-Cohen’s contemporary dramatic song cycle *Spell Book* (2020) will be performed at Longborough Festival Opera in its first complete staging, performed by members of the Emerging Artists ensemble.

Waley-Cohen has created a number of immersive works and installations including *Permutations* (2017), an interactive artwork and a synthesis of architecture and music created during an Open Space Residency at Snape Maltings from 2015 – 2017.

Waley-Cohen is composer in residence at the London Chamber Orchestra for the 2021 – 2022 season, a position that includes performances of her works *Happiness* (2018) and *Saffron* (2016) as well as two new commissions for the orchestra. She was the 2019 – 2020 Associate Composer of Wigmore Hall, where the 2019 season featured a day of concerts focusing on her music. She is also associate composer of St. David’s Hall’s contemporary music series, Nightmusic. Winner of a 2017 RPS Composition Prize, Waley-Cohen held an Open Space Residency at Snape Maltings from 2015 – 2017 and was 2016 –18 Associate Composer of Nonclassical.