Freya Waley-Cohen

Composer

British-American composer Freya Waley-Cohen demonstrates an “instinct for colour” *(The Arts Desk)*,proving her ability to move from “a bubbling, popping, feathered array of orchestral sounds” to a “quiet, eerie, interior world” *(The Guardian).* Waley-Cohen’s music 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 Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Proms, Wigmore Hall, Philharmonia Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, The King’s Singers, The Hermes Experiment, the Aldeburgh, Presteigne, Santa Fe, and Cheltenham festivals, and released on Signum, Nimbus, Nonclassical, Delphian and NMC records.

Recent successes include the world premiere of Waley-Cohen’s work *Pocket Cosmos* (2022), which was performed on 21 June 2022, directed by Pekka Kuusisto and commissioned by London Chamber Orchestra who performed the work. This concert concluded Waley-Cohen’s year as London Chamber Orchestra’s Composer in Residence. From 28 July to 2 August 2022, Waley-Cohen’s contemporary dramatic song cycle *Spell Book* (2020) was performed at Longborough Festival Opera in its first complete staging. It featured text from Rebecca Tamás’ powerful collection of poems entitled ‘WITCH’, and was directed by Jenny Ogilvie and performed by CHROMA and members of the Emerging Artists ensemble. In addition, Waley-Cohen was commissioned to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Royal Academy of Music, and the world premiere of her opera, *WITCH,* was performed from 23 to 26 March 2022, directed by Polly Graham and conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth.

Previous highlights of 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-Mère Festival, and The Phillips Collection and premiered by the Albion Quartet; *Happiness* (2018)*,*an orchestral song cycle commissioned by Melos Sinfonia and premiered with Lauren Fagan; and *Ink* (2018), commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society for the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Other highlights include a performance by George Fu at the Presteigne Festival of *Bad Habit* (2021); a performance of *Changeling* (2019) by London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Ed Gardner; and a performance of *Snap Dragon* (2017) by the Albion Quartet at Cheltenham Festival.

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.

As composer in residence at the London Chamber Orchestra for the 2021/22 season, this position included performances of Waley-Cohen’s works *Happiness* (2018) and *Saffron* (2016) as well as two new commissions for the orchestra. She was the 2019/20 Associate Composer of Wigmore Hall, which 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 Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize, Waley-Cohen held an Open Space Residency at Snape Maltings from 2015 – 2017 and was 2016 –18 Associate Composer of Nonclassical. She is a founding member and artistic director of ‘Listenpony’ concert series and record label. Waley-Cohen currently lives in London.

[](https://www.instagram.com/freya_waley_cohen/?hl=en)[](https://twitter.com/freyawaleycohen?lang=en)

[](https://open.spotify.com/artist/0iLtOBFxFDosHG2mi6vQ6H?si=KR_XNaqeTVqv2LfFEOTaT%E2%80%A6)

<https://www.freyawaleycohen.com/>