Sean Shibe

Guitar / Electric Guitar

Sean Shibe continues to establish himself as a boundary-pushing force in contemporary classical music.

Highlights of Shibe’s 2025/26 season include the world premiere of Mark Simpson’s electric guitar concerto *ZEBRA* at the 2025 BBC Proms, his debut with London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Thomas Adès, a residency at the Southbank Centre including his debut with Philharmonia Orchestra under Marin Alsop, a residency at Porto’s Casa da Música, and recital tours across the UK, Europe and the US. This season he premieres works by Tyshawn Sorey, Poul Ruders, Carola Bauckholt and Ben Nobuto.

Recent engagements include a residency at Wigmore Hall, featuring a special programme marking Pierre Boulez’s centenary with the chamber cantata Le Marteau sans maître (a programme which also went to Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Aldeburgh Festival and the BBC Proms). Shibe also toured the UK with folk fiddler Aidan O’Rourke; collaborated across the UK and Europe with mezzo-soprano Ema Nikolovska in an innovative exploration of the Orlando myth incorporating electronics, melodica, protest songs and spoken word; and joined tenor Karim Sulayman for a critically acclaimed U.S. tour of their GRAMMY-nominated programme *Broken Branches*. He also made debuts in Shanghai and Hong Kong, and toured Australia with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, performing Cassandra Miller’s concerto Chanter in thirteen concerts nationwide.

Shibe works closely with a diverse range of musicians and ensembles. In recent years, he has collaborated with The Hallé, BBC Scottish Symphony and BBC Philharmonic Orchestras, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Britten Sinfonia, The King’s Singers, Manchester Collective, Dunedin Consort, Quatuor Van Kujik, Danish String Quartet, LUDWIG, and conductors Thomas Adès, Krzysztof Urbański, Anja Bihlmaier, Delyana Lazarova and Andrew Manze, flautist Adam Walker, violist Timothy Ridout, singers Allan Clayton, Ben Johnson, Robert Murray and Robin Tritschler, and performance artist Marina Abramović, among others.

Shibe is an ardent supporter of contemporary music, taking a hands-on approach to new commissions and working with composers to experiment with and expand the guitar repertoire. Premieres to date include works by Thomas Adès, Oliver Leith, Cassandra Miller, Sasha Scott, Daniel Kidane, David Fennessy, Shiva Feshareki, David Lang, Freya Waley-Cohen, James Dillon and Mark Simpson. He is equally committed to the canon, regularly pairing bold, new pieces with his own transcriptions of J.S. Bach’s lute suites and seventeenth-century Scottish lute manuscripts.

Widely praised for his original programming, Shibe’s recordings have consistently garnered critical acclaim, to date receiving six Gramophone Award Shortlistings. His latest solo album *Profesión* was awarded the 2024 BBC Music Magazine Award. Released the same year, his collaboration with tenor Karim Sulayman – *Broken Branches* - was nominated for the 2024 GRAMMY Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album, and his solo album *Lost & Found* was awarded the OPUS Klassik 2023 Award for Solo Instrument, adding to an OPUS Klassik 2021 Award for Chamber Music Recording, a 2019 Gramophone Concept Album of the Year Award and a 2021 Gramophone Instrumental Award for *softLOUD* and *Bach* respectively. His 2026 Pentatone release, *Vesper*, features world premiere recordings of works for solo classical guitar by Thomas Adès, Harrison Birtwistle and James Dillon.

Shibe studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with Allan Neave, later continuing at the Kunst-Universität Graz and in Italy under Paolo Pegoraro. He currently serves as a Guitar Professor at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He is a former BBC New Generation Artist, a 2012 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship recipient, winner of the 2018 Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist Award and the 2022 Leonard Bernstein Award, and an ECHO Rising Star during the 2023/24 season.