

Steve Smith guitarist / multi-instrumentalist / composer - biography



Performer

Since graduating from the Royal Northern College of Music in 1982, Steve Smith has emerged as one of today's pre-eminent contemporary guitar players. A genuine multi-instrumentalist and composer he is a master of many forms and styles.

Critical acclaim has followed his many appearances with leading ensembles including; The London Sinfonietta, The Nash Ensemble, The London Symphony Orchestra, and all the BBC orchestras.

Artists with whom he has worked include; Sir Andrew Davies, Oliver Knussen, John Adams, Sir Simon Rattle and Mstislav Rostropovich.

In 1989 he performed in the Royal Opera House revival production of Sir Michael Tippett's *'The Knot Garden'* in which he played the previously unperformed electric guitar part at the request of the composer. That performance resulted in further invitations to perform and record Sir Michael's works. Steve Smith is considered a leading authority in the performance of Sir Michael's guitar writing. He went on to premiere the composer's fifth opera; *'New Year'* at Glyndebourne.

Later, Steve worked with American legend, John Adams on his clarinet concerto *'Gnarly Buttons'* performing in both the Queen Elizabeth Hall premiere in London with the London Sinfonietta and the recording for Nonesuch records in 1997.

During Sir Simon Rattle's tenure at the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Steve was first choice for any required plucked instrument. He featured strongly in the Channel 4 Television series *'Leaving Home'* in

which he could be seen performing an array of instruments including; tenor and G-banjo, mandolin, classical, electric and bass guitars.

Steve has appeared many times at the BBC Promenade concerts in addition to other international festivals. At the Aldeburgh International Festival he performed a Per Nørgård portrait concert, at yet another, he was soloist in Hans Werner Henze's '*Kammermusik*', a work he has performed multiple times, including one occasion when the programme included Pierre Boulez's '*Le Marteau sans Maître*'!

Always intrigued by possibilities thrown up by the versatility of the guitar, Steve is active in a wide variety of genres. He has worked on Hollywood film scores, recording sessions for television and in London's West End.

composer

Steve is also an active composer; his works have been performed in the USA, France, Sweden, Finland and the UK. 2006 saw the premiere of his score to Anthony Asquith's 1928 silent '*Underground*' commissioned and performed by the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC. Other work include, many ensemble pieces involving the guitar and music for stage and Television.

teacher

Steve was tutor of guitar at the *Duke Ellington School of the Arts* from 2003-6 whilst resident in Washington, DC. He has lectured at the Royal College of Music junior department, and has been involved in many education projects with the London Sinfonietta and others. At the inaugural music technology course *Soundscape*, held at the University of East Anglia, Steve lectured on applications of MIDI GUITAR technology. The course included a performance of his composition for MIDI GUITAR, FM SYNTHESISER and SEQUENCER, '*Pete Marsh*'. In autumn 2008 he was appointed tutor of guitar at Colchester Institute.