

JASON YARDE

Composer, arranger, producer, musical director and saxophonist Jason Yarde writes music that has been described as powerful, spiritual, evocative, rhapsodic, hair-raising and formidable. He composes across various styles (progressive jazz, classical, hip-hop, fusion, free improvisation, broken beats, R&B, reggae, soul, song writing) and for a variety of media (orchestras, chamber ensembles, big band, dance, film, electro-acoustic and midi) and his potential and originality is such that he was nominated for the Bird Award at the 2004 North Sea Jazz Festival and for the Jazz on 3 Innovation Award for the 2005 and 2006 BBC Jazz Awards. In 2006 Jason participated in the LSO's Discovery Panufnik Young Composers Scheme and has since progressed to be a LSO, UBS Sound Adventures Artist. Most recently his Proms compositional debut 'Rhythm and Other Fascinations' won the first ever BASCA award for 'Contemporary Jazz Composition' in 2010.

Yarde began playing alto and soprano saxophones with the Jazz Warriors while still a teenager and then went on to MD this landmark orchestra also becoming one of its principal writers. He has a BA (Hons) in Performance Arts from Middlesex University - a degree incorporating a year at William Paterson College in New Jersey where he studied orchestration, studio engineering, jazz performance and saxophone under Joe Lovano, Gary Smulyan and Steve Wilson. Since then he's been a key member of award winning groups Quite Sane, J-Life and a longtime sideman of Louis Moholo.

As well as composing for his own performance projects – ACOUTASTiC BOMBASTiC, Trio !WAH! & MY Duo – he has written for dance (JazzX-Change, Phoenix Dance Company, Garth Fagan Dance - arrangements), music theatre (Jonzi-D's Aeroplane Man), opera (composing 'The Big But' as part of Tete a Tete's Blind Date season) and TV – highlights include the original music for Rough Crossings – drama-documentary based on the Simon Schama book of the same name (BBC2), and for director/choreographer Alison Murray's Pantyhead (Ch4), Horseplay (D4C/BBC2) and Teenage Rampage (Ch4). He is also active in the contemporary UK urban scene having written music, lyrics and arrangements for artists such as Julie Dexter and the Mercury Music Prize nominees, Terri Walker and the rapper Ty.

Jason Yarde is a brilliant musical director and his highly distinctive arranging style reflects the numerous artists and ensembles that have shaped his wide musical outlook. He has arranged for Keziah Jones, Bembe Segue, Return To Roots Orchestra (South Africa), Two Banks of Four, 4-Hero, Gregory Isaacs, Alton Ellis, Dennis Brown, King Sounds, Super Blue, Shadow, Kronos Quartet, Plan B, Guy Barker, Manu Dibango and Hugh Masekela in collaboration with both Jazz Jamaica All Stars and with the London Symphony Orchestra. Other work in this area includes the critically acclaimed Future Sounds of Jazz project which featured many of the leading lights of the British jazz scene including Soweto Kinch, David Okumu and Matthew Bourne and his collaboration with Grime producer DaVinChe on the arrangements for the ground-breaking Urban Classic – a project which featured some of the UK's most exciting Grime artists and the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by Charles Hazlewood.

In addition, Yarde has enjoyed much success as a record producer. His credits include Empirical's 'Out'n'In', the debut of UK pianist Gwilym Simcock and a large part of the catalogue of UK independent, Dune Records, including Tomorrow's Warriors presents... J-Life, Jazz Jamaica All Stars' Massive, Robert Mitchell's Voyager, Denys Baptiste's Let Freedom Ring! and Soweto Kinch's 2003 Mercury Prize nominated, Conversations With The Unseen. As a player, on UK and European dates he's appeared in the big bands of Sam Rivers, Hermeto Pascoal, McCoy Tyner, Manu Dibango, Roy Ayers and Andrew Hill. He went on to share the front line with Byron Wallen in Hill's last touring small band and continues to do so in a number of projects lead by Jack DeJohnette.

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