

## **Paul Ayres**

Standard biographies, which may be used for concert programmes, publicity material, etc

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Please use these paragraphs exactly as printed, without further editing

(or if you need to edit, please double-check with Paul *before* publishing – just to make sure everything is accurate and up-to-date!)

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[short – 52 words:]

Paul Ayres studied music at Oxford University, and now works freelance as a composer & arranger, choral conductor & musical director, and organist & accompanist. His compositions usually involve words – solo songs, choral pieces, incidental music – and he works with many choirs and theatre groups. Please visit **www.paulayres.co.uk** to find out more.

[medium – 180 words:]

Paul Ayres was born in London, studied music at Oxford University, and now works freelance as a composer & arranger, choral conductor & musical director, and organist & accompanist. His compositions usually involve words – solo songs, choral pieces, music for theatre productions – and he is particularly interested in working with pre-existing music, from arrangements of folksongs, hymns, jazz standards and nursery rhymes to ‘re-compositions’ of classical works, as in *Purcell’s Funeral Sentence*, *4A Wreck* and *Messyah*. New pieces have been commissioned by the BBC Singers, the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, Concordia Youth Choir, The Esoterics, Texas Lutheran University, Wartburg College, Wheaton College and Alexandria Choral Society. Paul is the regular conductor of three choirs (National Westminster City Chorus, London College of Music Chamber Choir and the Walbrook Singers) and he is the associate accompanist of Crouch End Festival Chorus. He has led many education workshops for children, played piano for improvised comedy shows and musical theatre, and has given solo organ recitals in the UK, Scandinavia, Europe, North America and Australia. Please visit **www.paulayres.co.uk** to find out more.

[long – 511 words:]

Paul Ayres was born in the suburbs of London, where his first teachers included Margrit Kensbock (piano) and John Miley (choirmaster at St Giles’ Church Ickenham, where Paul sang in the choir and later played the organ). He studied music at Oxford University (as organ scholar of Merton College), and ever since graduating with First-Class Honours in 1991 he has worked freelance as a composer & arranger, choral conductor & musical director, and organist & accompanist.

His compositions usually involve words – solo songs, choral pieces, music for theatre productions – and he is particularly interested in working with pre-existing music, from arrangements of folksongs, hymns, jazz standards and nursery rhymes to ‘re-compositions’ of classical works, as in *Purcell’s Funeral Sentence*, *4A Wreck* and *Messyah*. Paul was a finalist in the very first BBC Young Composer of the Year competition, his children’s opera *The Stolen Moon* was shortlisted for the British Composer Awards in 2005, and he won the international award in the Esoterics (Seattle) Polyphonos Composition Competition in 2006. His music has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Classic FM and BBC2, and performed by many groups throughout the world. New pieces have been commissioned by the BBC Singers, the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, Concordia Youth Choir, Texas Lutheran University, Wartburg College, Wheaton College and Alexandria Choral Society.

Paul has worked as director of music at St Peter’s Church Ealing, conductor of Ealing Youth Choir, Jubilate Women’s Choir and Hanwell Children’s Choir, accompanist for Harlow Chorus and London Pro Arte Choir, and assistant director of music at St George’s Church Hanover Square. Currently, he is the regular conductor of three choirs (National Westminster City Chorus, London College of Music Chamber Choir and the Walbrook Singers) and the associate accompanist of Crouch End Festival Chorus. Paul has accompanied cabaret singers and played for improvised comedy shows at many venues in London and Edinburgh, and has been musical director for various youth theatre shows and school productions. He has given solo organ recitals at St Paul’s Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, St Thomas’s Fifth Avenue, Washington National Cathedral and throughout the UK, Scandinavia, North America and Australia. Of his solo CD ‘Handel-Inspired’ (Priory label), *The Gramophone* wrote: “Ayres is outstanding as composer, arranger, editor and skilful player... this CD is undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable and original recordings I’ve heard.” Paul enjoys working with students, and he has led composition workshops for Handel House Museum, Foundling Museum, the Yorke Trust and for many primary and secondary schools.

Some of his more unusual gigs have included accompanying a chorister singing Meatloaf’s ‘Bat out of Hell’ (for BBC2’s *Even Further Abroad* with Jonathan Meades); arranging ‘That’s Amore’ for string quartet (for Mark and Spencer’s promotional campaign); singing/conducting ‘I predict a riot’ in madrigal style to inebriated revellers in the West End (promotion for Bacardi) and playing ‘Happy Hardcore’ (1990s dance music sub-genre) tracks on pipe organ in Norwich, Brighton, London, and on tour in Ireland and Switzerland in connection with exhibitions by Beck’s Futures Award-winning artist Matt Stokes.

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