

Paul Ayres

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[short]

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]

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 City Chorus, the London College of Music choirs 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]

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. The San Francisco Examiner wrote: "*Messyah* may have smashed one of the most popular icons of the Christmas season, but it is hard to accuse Ayres of malice. He picked up all the pieces and reassembled them, always lovingly, often imaginatively, and occasionally hysterically comically... when Ayres cuts loose with his few pop settings with jazz combo accompaniment, the joyousness of the result is as true to the religious spirit as was the original setting."

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 City Chorus, the London College of Music choirs and the Walbrook Singers, and he is 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. He has also been heard playing 'Happy Hardcore' tracks on pipe organs in Norwich, Brighton, London, Dublin, Paris, Kassel, Haarlem and Sion-Valère in connection with exhibitions by Beck's Futures Award-winning artist Matt Stokes. 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.

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