



## GRAHAM JOHNSON

### Accompanist

Described as "that peerless song accompanist" by the Daily Telegraph (November 2015) Graham Johnson is recognised as one of the world's leading vocal accompanists. Born in Rhodesia, he came to London to study in 1967. After leaving the Royal Academy of Music, his teachers included Gerald Moore and Geoffrey Parsons. In 1972 he was the official pianist at Peter Pears' first masterclasses at the Snape Maltings, which brought him into contact with Benjamin Britten – a link which strengthened his determination to accompany. In 1976 he formed the Songmakers Almanac to explore neglected areas of piano-accompanied vocal music; the founder singers were Dame Felicity Lott, Ann Murray DBE, Anthony Rolfe Johnson and Richard Jackson – artists with whom he has established long and fruitful collaborations both on the concert platform and in the recording studio. Some two hundred and fifty Songmakers programmes were presented over the years. Graham Johnson has also accompanied such distinguished singers as Sir Thomas Allen, Victoria de los Angeles, Elly Ameling, Arleen Auger, Ian Bostridge, Brigitte Fassbaender, Matthias Goerne, Thomas Hampson, Simon Keenlyside, Angelika Kirchschrager, Alice Coote, Philip Langridge, Serge Leiferkus, Angelika Kirchschrager, Christopher Maltman, Edith Mathis, Lucia Popp, Christoph Prégardien, Dame Margaret Price, Thomas Quastoff, Dorothea Röschmann, Kate Royal, Christine Schaefer, Peter Schreier, Dame Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Sarah Walker.

His relationship with the Wigmore Hall is a special one. He devised and accompanied concerts in the hall's re-opening series in 1992, and in its centenary celebrations in 2001. He is Senior Professor of Accompaniment at the Guildhall School of Music and has led a biennial scheme for Young Songmakers since 1985. He has had a long and fruitful link with Hyperion Records, with both Ted Perry and Simon Perry, for whom he has devised and accompanied a set of complete Schubert lieder on 37 discs, a milestone in the history of recording, and a complete Schumann series. There is an ongoing French Song series where the complete songs of such composers as Chausson, Chabrier, Fauré and Poulenc are either already available, or in preparation. All these discs are issued with Graham Johnson's own programme notes, which set new standards for CD annotations. He has recorded two solo recital discs with Alice Coote, for Hyperion. He has also recorded for Sony, BMG, Harmonia Mundi, Forlane, EMI and DG. Awards include the Gramophone solo vocal award in 1989 (with Dame Janet Baker), 1996 (*Die schone Müllerin* with Ian Bostridge), 1997 (for the inauguration of the Schumann series with Christine Schäfer) and 2001 (with Magdalena Kozena). He was The Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist of the Year in 1998 and in June 2000, he was elected a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music.

He is author of *The Songmakers' Almanac*; *Twenty years of recitals in London*, *The French Song Companion* for OUP (2000), *The Vocal Music of Benjamin Britten* (Guildhall 2003), *Gabriel Faure - the Songs and their Poets* (2009) and *Franz Schubert: The Complete Songs* (Yale University Press 2014). His latest book, *Poulenc – The Life in the Songs*, was published in August 2020 to great critical acclaim.

Graham Johnson was made an OBE in the 1994 Queen's Birthday Honours list, created Chevalier in the Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the French Government in 2002, made an Honorary Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2010, and awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal in 2013. He received Honorary Doctorates from Durham University, the New England Conservatory of Music, and the Edith Cowan University in Western Australia. He was awarded the Hugo Wolf Medal in 2014 for his services to the art of song.

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