

Since making his concerto debut at the age of seventeen, American violist Stephen Upshaw has won several competitions and played in festivals around the world including the BBC Proms, Cheltenham, IMS Prussia Cove, Lucerne, Aix-en-Provence, Wien Modern and Salzburg Chamber Music Festival.

Much in demand as a chamber musician, he has shared the stage with artists such as Tai Murray, Gary Hoffman, Chi-Chi Nwanoku, Jennifer Stumm and Garth Knox.



Image by Malcolm Crowthers

Recent recital and chamber music engagements have taken him to Boston's Jordan Hall, London's Barbican and Wigmore Halls, Tokyo Opera City, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall and Vienna's Konzerthaus.

A noted interpreter of contemporary music, Stephen is also a member of London's Riot Ensemble whose recent disc 'Speak Be Silent' was selected as one of New Yorker

Magazine's 'Best Recordings of 2019'. He has also worked closely with many of today's leading composers, including John Adams, Julian Anderson, George Benjamin and Helmut Lachenmann.

Expanding the repertoire of the viola through the commissioning of new music has always been a feature of Stephen's work. He has taken part in over 300 world premieres including those of Georg Haas, Sally Beamish (alongside the composer) Mark Simpson and Michael Finnissy, the latter two having both composed solo pieces for Stephen.

A native of Atlanta, Stephen studied with Dr. Marilyn Seelman before earning a BMus (Hons) from the New England Conservatory in Boston under the tutelage of Carol Rodland and Martha Strongin-Katz. Stephen completed his Postgraduate studies in the class of David Takeno at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he was elected a Junior Fellow and won a Guildhall Scholarship. Chamber Music mentors include Paul Katz, Ferenc Rados, Alasdair Tait and members of the Takacs, Belcea, Endellion, and Arditti Quartets.

In 2016 Stephen was awarded a prestigious soloist Fellowship from Trinity Laban College of Music and Dance. Stephen has also toured regularly to the USA, Europe and Asia with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and its music director, Joshua Bell.

"What struck me most was solo viola player Stephen Upshaw. By tradition, viola players are retiring types. But if I ever saw a serious exception to that rule, it's Stephen. [His] execution was astonishingly powerful: full-on, self-assured, as well as searingly expressive. Supercharged viola players used to be an oxymoron but they aren't now." – Michael White (reviewing a performance of 'Sounding Motion', October 14th, 2012)