

# Philip Venables

Philip Venables' music is often concerned with violence, politics and speech within concert music and opera. His work has been recently described as *"brutally effective"* (Times), *"brutally exhilarating"* (Seen & Heard), *"duly playful and occasionally disturbing"* (Guardian), *"a dark and violent portrait of sexual desire"* (SoSoGay.com) and *"original and intelligent in both form and content... reminiscent of Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle; dripping in inexplicable meaning"* (Exeunt Magazine). And most recently, from The Guardian: *"Venables's Illusions, a collaboration with performance artist David Hoyle, batters at the limits of form, emotion and sexuality in a ferocious assertion of LGBT individualism in the face of establishment nihilism and uncertainty – a brilliant, extreme work that grips like a vice and won't let go."*

Philip's music has been performed and broadcast internationally. Performers and commissioners include The Royal Opera, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Wigmore hall, London Contemporary Opera, (*The Schmürz*, with writer Michael Brett), the London Sinfonietta (*The Revenge of Miguel Cotto* with poet Steven Fowler; *Illusions* with performance artist David Hoyle), Endymion & EXAUDI (*numbers 76-80: tristan und isolde*), Ensemble 10-10 (*ANIMA*), Black Dyke Brass Band, Rambert Dance, HAU Theater Berlin, Kampnagel Hamburg and Theater Basel.

In 2016 Philip made his Royal Opera debut with *4.48 Psychosis* (dir. Ted Huffman), the first ever permitted adaptation of any of Sarah Kane's work. *4.48 Psychosis* won the UK Theatre Award 2016 for Achievement in Opera. It was universally acclaimed: *"Venables proves he's one of the finest composers around"* (Guardian); *"He challenges the conventions of opera. Via an array of resources he ambushes and refreshes an old art form"* (Observer); *"Experimentation in the service of absolute emotional precision: Venables' economical work is one of the most exhilarating operas in years, even while it gives voice to some of the darkest thoughts imaginable."* (Spectator).

Other recent projects include *Bound to Hurt*, a collaboration with Turner prize-winner Douglas Gordon. Forthcoming projects include a violin concerto, a new version of *Illusions* for the New Music Biennial 2017, development of a verbatim opera project based on victims' accounts of rape with Size Zero Opera and a revival of *Unleashed*. In 2017 Philip will take a residency at MacDowell colony in New Hampshire. His debut disc of chamber music will be released by NMC in 2018.

Philip Venables was born in Chester in 1979 and lives between London and Berlin. He studied at Cambridge University and then with Philip Cashian and David Sawer at the Royal Academy of Music, which elected him Associate (ARAM) in 2016 for his significant contribution to composition. Philip was awarded an AHRC grant for Ph.D research into speech, violence and music at the Royal Academy of Music from 2012-13, and was a Soundhub Associate with the LSO at St Luke's in the same season. From 2013–2016 he was Doctoral Composer in Residence with the Royal Opera House and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, studying with Julian Philips and James Weeks. He is a director of the agency Bright Ivy Ltd.



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## Press Quotes

*"Philip Venables proves he's one of the finest composers"* The Guardian

*"He challenges the conventions of opera. Via an array of resources he ambushes and refreshes an old art form"* The Observer

*"It's unhinged and chilling [...] Most of all, it is dizzyingly colourful."* The Financial Times

*"Philip Venables's Illusions, a collaboration with performance artist David Hoyle, batters at the limits of form, emotion and sexuality in a ferocious assertion of LGBT individualism in the face of establishment nihilism and uncertainty – a brilliant, extreme work that grips like a vice and won't let go."* The Guardian, UK

*"original and intelligent in both form and content... reminiscent of Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle; dripping in inexplicable meaning"* Exeunt Magazine

*"Experimentation in the service of absolute emotional precision: Venables' economical work is one of the most exhilarating operas in years, even while it gives voice to some of the darkest thoughts imaginable."* The Spectator

*"Venables's Fight Music, evoking a community beating up an outsider (the poor whimpering cello) was brutally effective"* The Times, UK

*"I cannot recall having been as powerfully moved by an opera as this, much of it watched with my hand clasped over my mouth."* Tempo Journal