

Philip Venables

Biography valid for 22/23 season.

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Pronouns: he or they

648 words

Philip Venables has been described as a “*composer of ferocious dramatic instincts*” and “*an arrestingly original musical personality*” by Alex Ross in The New Yorker and as “*one of the finest composers around*” by the Guardian. Philip’s output covers opera, music theatre, multimedia concert works, chamber music and song, an eclectic range of styles and influences, and themes often concerning social politics, violence, gender and storytelling.

Philip's most recent opera *Denis & Katya* (Opera Philadelphia, Music Theatre Wales, Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier), with director/dramatist Ted Huffman, won the 2019 Fedora Generali Prize for Opera and the 2020 Ivor Novello Award for Best Opera, and was shortlisted for the International Opera Awards. Critics have called it “*an intimate, haunting triumph*” (New York Times), “*a monumental, dramatically shattering event*” (Parterre Box), and “*the most brilliantly original operatic work I've seen in a decade... a sensitive, subtle and deeply questioning meditation on youth, voyeurism, and the age of social media*” (Musical America).

Philip's first opera, *4.48 Psychosis* (Royal Opera, London), was the first ever permitted adaptation of any of British playwright Sarah Kane's work. The opera won the 2016 UK Theatre Award for Opera, the 2017 Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Large-scale Composition and the 2017 British Composer Award for Stage Work, and was nominated for an Olivier Award and Sky Arts South Bank Award. The original production (dir. Ted Huffman) and subsequent ones in London (Royal Opera), New York City (Prototype Festival), Strasbourg (Opéra National du Rhin) and Dresden (Semperoper) received overwhelming praise: “*A new brand of opera*” (The Times) “*rawly powerful and laceratingly honest*” (The Telegraph); “*A Gesamtkunstwerk of unbelievable intensity*” (Klassikfakti); “*he ambushes and refreshes an old art form.*” (The Observer); “*4.48 Psychosis is a remarkable achievement*” (The Guardian); “*sledgehammer power*” (The New Yorker); “*opening our eyes to what musical theatre is capable of*” (The Times Literary Supplement); “*one of the most exhilarating operas in years*” (The Spectator).

Philip collaborates extensively in cross-media work, including with artist Douglas Gordon on *Bound to Hurt* (HAU Theater Berlin, Kampnagel Hamburg, Theater Basel), with drag/performance artist David Hoyle on *Illusions* (London Sinfonietta, UK New Music Biennial), *The Gender Agenda* (London Sinfonietta, Remix Ensemble, Asko Schoenberg and Ensemble Modern) and sound installation *Canal Street* (Manchester International Festival/Manchester Camerata), with violinist Pekka Kuusisto on *Venables plays Bartók* (BBC Proms/BBC Symphony Orchestra), with pianist Zubin Kanga, Ted Huffman and programmer Simon Hendry on *Answer Machine Tape, 1987* and with Mahogany Opera and Ted Huffman on a ‘snappy opera’ for children *The Big History of Little England*. Philip’s debut album *Below the Belt* was released on NMC in 2018: “*unmissable... music of forensic clarity and visceral force – but also great tenderness and generosity*” (BBC Music Magazine).

Philip was featured composer at the 2021 Festival d'Automne à Paris, including a new large-scale sound installation for the L'Église Saint-Eustache, and in the same

season made their professional conducting début, with the London Sinfonietta. They were a MacDowell Fellow with Ted Huffman in 2017 and in the Opera Creation Workshop at Aix-en-Provence Festival in 2019. They studied at Cambridge University and then with Philip Cashian and David Sawer at the Royal Academy of Music, which elected Philip as Associate (ARAM) in 2016 for their contribution to composition. Philip completed their doctorate in 2016 while Doctoral Composer in Residence at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the Royal Opera House with Julian Philips and James Weeks. Philip's work is published by Ricordi.

The 22/23 Season sees performances of *Answer Machine Tape, 1987* at Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, November Music and the Festival d'Automne à Paris. Productions of *Denis & Katya* will happen in Pittsburgh, Hannover, Vienna, Helsinki and Copenhagen, and of *4.48 Psychosis* at the Semperoper Dresden. In June 2023 Philip will present their third opera with Ted Huffman, *The Faggots and their Friends Between Revolutions*, with Manchester International Festival, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and Bregenz Festspiele.

www.philipvenables.com

SHORT VERSION (226 words)

Collaborative composer Philip Venables is described as “*an arrestingly original musical personality*” by Alex Ross in The New Yorker and “*one of the finest composers around*” by The Guardian.

Philip's previous two operas, *4.48 Psychosis* (2016, text by Sarah Kane) and *Denis & Katya* (2019, text by Ted Huffman), have been performed by leading companies in London, New York City, Amsterdam, Dresden, Philadelphia, Strasbourg, Paris, Hannover and Montpellier. The operas have won numerous accolades including the Fedora Prize, an RPS Award, and an Ivor Novello Award, as well as shortlisted nominations for an Olivier Award and a Sky Arts South Bank Award. The Times branded *4.48 Psychosis* “*a new kind of opera*” and The New York Times *Denis & Katya* as “*an intimate, haunting triumph*.”

2021 saw a major focus on Philip's work in the Festival d'Automne à Paris and Philip's professional conducting debut with the London Sinfonietta, as well as the premiere of *Answer Machine Tape, 1987* with Zubin Kanga. Philip was a MacDowell Fellow in 2017, doctoral composer in residence with the Royal Opera and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in 2014–2016, and elected Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2016. Philip's work is published by Ricordi.

2022/23 sees further performances of *Answer Machine Tape, 1987* and the world premiere of Philip's third opera, *The Faggots and their Friends Between Revolutions*.

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