

Simon Holt is a composer whose music demands unusual commitment from his interpreters - his intricate sound-worlds often comprise complex, rich textures, offset by 'still centres' - for the purpose of making music which speaks with extraordinary power.

He was born in Bolton, Lancashire on 21 February, 1958. He immersed himself in playing the organ and piano as well as visual art during his sixth form years at Bolton School. In 1976, he attended Bolton College of Art for a year where he fulfilled a foundation course in all areas of visual representation. Shortly before achieving a diploma in composition from the Royal Northern College of Music, where he studied with Anthony Gilbert from 1978 to 1982, he received a commission from the London Sinfonietta, which became *Kites* (1983). He was soon firmly established with a series of commissions and fruitful collaborations not only with the Sinfonietta, but also with the Nash Ensemble and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, resulting in pieces such as *eco-pavan* (1998), *Sparrow Night* (1989) and *Lilith* (1990) respectively. Inspired by Messiaen, Xenakis and Feldman as well as visual artists such as Goya, Giacometti and Brâncusi, his music is innately dramatic and impulsive in nature. His output is diverse, consisting of chamber music, concertos, songs, opera, orchestral and piano music.

From 2000 onwards, Holt has written several concertos and orchestral pieces, including the percussion concerto, *a table of noises* (2007), for Colin Currie. He was Composer in Association with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales from 2008 to 2014, working closely with the conductor Thierry Fischer on pieces such as *Troubled Light* (2008) for orchestra and *Morpheus Wakes* (2011), a flute concerto written for Emmanuel Pahud, both for the BBC Proms. Previously, he had been commissioned to write two orchestral pieces; *Syrensong* (1987), his first orchestral piece, written for the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the viola concerto, *walking with the river's roar* (1991), for Nobuko Imai and the BBC Philharmonic. Recent commissions include the orchestral piece, *Surcos* (2016), for Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker and co-commissioned by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra who gave the UK première with the conductor Ilan Volkov and the basset clarinet concerto, *Joy Beast* (2016), for Mark Simpson and the BBC Philharmonic as part of the New Music Biennial 2017. In his 60th birthday year he was a featured composer at the 2018 Aldeburgh Festival, which included the world premières of *Llanto (para las chumberas)* and his 4th Quartet: *Cloud House*. For the past twenty years, he has done much of his writing in southern Spain, in his home close to Granada.

Simon Holt's music has been recorded on several record labels, most extensively with NMC.

Holt is currently Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music.