

Paul Hillier is from Dorset in England and studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. His career has embraced singing, conducting, composition and writing about music. Earlier in his career he was founding director of the Hilliard Ensemble, and subsequently founded Theatre of Voices. He has taught in the USA at the University of California campuses at Santa Cruz and Davis, and from 1996-2003 was Director of the Early Music Institute at Indiana University. He was Principal Conductor of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (2001-2007) and has been Chief Conductor of Ars Nova Copenhagen (2003-2023).

His close to 200 recordings, including seven solo song recitals, have earned worldwide acclaim and won numerous prizes – Diapason d'or, Grammys and Danish Radio P2 Prizes. Several have been Editor's Choice in leading international music magazines, and they have been chosen as reference recordings in music anthologies. His books about Arvo Pärt and Steve Reich, together with numerous anthologies of choral music, are published by Oxford University Press.

In 2006 he was awarded an OBE for services to choral music. In 2007 he received the Order of the White Star of Estonia and was awarded a Grammy for Best Choral Recording with EPCC. He received another Grammy Award for the David Lang CD 'The Little Match Girl Passion' with Theatre of Voices and Ars Nova Copenhagen. In 2008 he became Chief Conductor of the National Chamber Choir of Ireland and was appointed artistic director of the Coro Casa da Música in Porto. He has been artist in residence at Yale University's Institute for Sacred Music, done the Springfield Music Lecture at Rhodes College, Memphis, and performed in New York at Bang-on-a-Can Marathon, at Lincoln Centre and Carnegie Hall – and Takkelloftet at Royal Opera in Copenhagen, Barbican Centre, at Perth International Arts Festival in Australia and much more.

In the 2012 Grammy Awards show Paul Hillier was competing for the 7th time in 9 years – nominated with Ars Nova Copenhagen and music by Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen. In 2020, he headed the BBVA Frontiers of Knowledge Award Jury for Music and Opera – one of Europe's most important music prizes.

Paul Hillier has conducted and recorded with a large number of the leading chamber choirs in Europe, has collaborated closely with the Kronos Quartet, Smith Quartet, London Sinfonietta and artists like Peter Sellars, Bobbie McFarren, Tim Rushton and Richard Alston. He has also conducted the St Paul Chamber Orchestra, Netherlands Wind Ensemble, I Solisti del Vento, Swedish Wind Ensemble, Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Remix, Concerto Palatino, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, Concerto Copenhagen, Irish Baroque Orchestra, Fretwork, Estonian State Symphony Orchestra, Copenhagen Phil, Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester, Taiwan Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto and Utah Symphony Orchestra.

During his research Paul Hillier has found many unpublished gems – early and new music. This has led to an extensive collaboration with Edition-S called TOV-Edition, publishing neglected or new works, little books, pamphlets and other musical miscellanea.

Apart from his own compositions and arrangements, Paul Hillier is currently finishing his book 'Follow the Sound' on 20th-century vocal groups in the English tradition from both a music history point of view and the personal aspect of being a member of such a group.

In recent years, Paul Hillier and Theatre of Voices has branched out to focusing on recording of both computer game and film scores, and next generation minimalism by for example Jóhann Jóhannsson, Peter Due, Jonas Struck, Rutger Hoedemaekers, Owen Roberts, Martin Stig Andersen and Jonas Colstrup.

Hillier's repertoire spans from the earliest masterworks, over Mozart, early romantics and Wagner, to 20th C works by Brecht, Pärt, Walton, Stravinsky, Stockhausen and a huge number of commissions by both established and young international composers. Most noteworthy perhaps his decade long collaborations with Arvo Pärt and Steve Reich, but recent collaborations also include Galina Grigorjeva (Ukraine), BOAC: Michael Gordon - David Lang – Julia Wolfe (US), John Luther Adams (US), Howard Skempton (UK), Nina Janjgava (Georgia), Gavin Bryars (UK), Bernd Franke (Germany), Gabriel Jackson (UK), Kaija Saariaho (Finland), Heiner Goebbels (Germany), Helena Tulve (Estonia), Caroline Shaw (US), Harrison Birtwistle (UK), Arnannguaq Porborg Gerstrøm (Greenland), and from Denmark among others: Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, Fuzzy, Line Tjørnhøj, John Frandsen, Peter Bruun, Signe Lykke og Peter Navarro-Alonso.

"Everything Paul Hillier touches turns to choral gold"
James R. Oestreich, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Engelsstimmen in der Klangkathedrale - Paul Hillier und sein Theatre of Voices beschenken der Elbphilharmonie eine Sternstunde des Chorgesangs"
Lutz Lesle, DIE WELT – live concert

Stockhausen's STIMMUNG. The composer wrote:

"Dear Paul Hillier, now I have heard your record of STIMMUNG. Very good. I write immediately to recommend you with STIMMUNG for the opening of the Berlin Festwochen for my 80th birthday in 2008. The recording is exceptional"

"Dazzling new edition - Hillier has succeeded triumphantly". (STIMMUNG)
BBC Music Magazin Performance: ***** Sound: *****

"I never cease to be amazed at the range of musical styles that Paul Hillier .. can bring delightfully to life. One wonders if there is any period in which the peripatetic English conductor is not in sympathy. As it is, he works primarily from the Baroque backwards and the 20th century forward, but his limited forays into the Classical period (Bortniansky, for instance) and Romantic (the part-songs of Schubert, Schumann, Reger, et al.) show him equally at home. As this may be, the prolific German (and sometimes Danish) early- Baroque composer Heinrich Schütz is well in Hillier's usual range of operations, and Hillier has been making a series of recordings of this master's larger-scale liturgical works"
Ronald E. Grames, FANFARE - Heinrich Schütz (Dacapo)

"Hillier's repertoire choices are bold and beautiful. The performances are ^{[[[}outstanding. These days it seems that everything Hillier touches turns to gold and this album is the latest that benefits from his Midas touch. ..innovative repertoire choices and sterling sound quality make this everything you can possibly want from a Christmas album, or any other album for that matter."
David Vernier, CLASSICS TODAY (9/9) – The Christmas Story (Harmonia Mundi)