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Max de Wardener

Biography

Composer, arranger, producer and multi-instrumentalist Max de Wardener is an arch-experimentalist whose work weaves an atmospheric tapestry of gentle oratorio, tonal grandeur and shimmering, cut-up electronics. An explorer in the worlds of contemporary composition, instrument making, electronica and sonic art, Max's work can be heard in a variety of fields covering live performance, recorded music, sound design and film and television. In 2009 he was a participant on the LSO Discovery Panufnik Young Composers Scheme which is designed to facilitate the development of orchestral writing for talented young composers.

Classically trained, de Wardener studied music at York University then completed post-graduate studies in jazz and studio music at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. He has worked as a composer and bass player in a variety of musical environments and has enduring associations with innovative musicians such as Matthew Herbert, Chartwell Dutiro (formerly of Thomas Mapfumo and Blacks Unlimited), UK trumpet rising star Tom Arthurs, the F-IRE Collective and fellow Accidental label-mates Dani Siciliano and Mara Carlyle.

In 1999 de Wardener started writing music for film and TV and his output and continued success in this area includes the BAFTA Award winning feature film *Last Resort* (Dir: Pawel Pawlikowski, 2000); Edinburgh Film Festival Michael Powell Award winning *Gas Attack* (Dir: Kenneth Glenaan, 2001); Directors' Guild of Great Britain (DGGB) award winner *Comfortably Numb* (Dir: Leo Regan, 2004); *DNA*, the Emmy Award winning five-part documentary on the history of DNA for Channel 4/PBS (Dir: David Glover, 2004); *Secret Life*, the Channel 4 drama starring Matthew Macfadyen (Dir: Rowan Joffe, 2007); *The Doctor who Hears Voices* (Dir: Leo Regan, 2008); and a feature documentary about a unique punk band called *Heavy Load* (Dir: Jerry Rothwell, 2008), which won the audience award at BritDoc 2008. Most recently, de Wardener completed the original music for *Woman in the Fifth* (Dir: Pawel Pawlikowski, 2011), which will be released in the autumn of 2011.

Since 2002 de Wardener has been releasing his own music in association with Matthew Herbert's Accidental label. He released a 12" of church organ music entitled *Stops* (2003) and *Where I Am Today* (2004), an electronic album that relies more on actual musicianship than recording techniques. With this album, recorders and organs rub shoulders with Harry Partch's cloud-chamber bowls, transistors and the sound of wires creating a clear-cut experimental agenda that has managed to remain beautiful and emotive.

Both of these releases allowed de Wardener to explore his interest in diverse and contrasting instrumentation and allowed him to shift towards performing his own music in a live setting. He has played at the Stavanger Nu Music Festival in Norway, Sonar Festivals in Barcelona and Hamburg and has also performed at festivals in Scotland,

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France and Japan. London appearances include concerts at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Islington's Union Chapel, where his acoustic arranged 'electronic' music was the highlight of the 'Accidental Powercut' performance.

In 2005 de Wardener was selected to participate in Take Five, the artist development initiative for emerging jazz musicians supported by the Jerwood Charitable Foundation and the PRS for Music Foundation and this has led to a renewed association with Tony Myatt, Director of the Music Research Centre at York University. This relationship became the key to the realisation of many of Max's compositional ideas and their research led to new ways of specifically controlling live amplification, which in turn led to repertoire for the specially formed Max de Wardener Group. They were subsequently part of a 2006 CMN tour and also performed live in the spectacular setting of the National Portrait Gallery – where de Wardener was one of four composers commissioned to create a new work to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the NPG.

Recent projects include the creation of repertoire for a new album; a remix for Danish post-pop group Efterklang; an ongoing collaboration with the London-based string ensemble Elysian Quartet; an arrangement of his own work *Minutia* for Australian recorder virtuoso Genevieve Lacey (Weaver of Fictions for ABC Classics); the release of *Nuzzle* - Mara Carlyle's album which includes Max's orchestrations for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; *Classist*, an EP featuring new works for string quartet released on Stanley Donwood's (Radiohead) Six Inch Records; *Ousia*, a site-specific event with Herald Angel winner Darren Johnston (Ren-sa) and Flat-e; arrangements for piano and electronics for Will Dutta's 2011 album and new works for virtuosic instrumentalists Joby Burgess (percussion) and Kala Ramnath (violin) with members of the LSO.

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