Freya Waley-Cohen

Composer

 British-American composer Freya Waley-Cohen has an “instinct for colour”

(*The Arts Desk*), writing music that can move from “a bubbling, popping, feathered

array of orchestral sounds” to a “quiet, eerie, interior world” (*The Guardian*).

Waley-Cohen has been commissioned by institutions and ensembles including Los

Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Proms, Wigmore Hall, Philharmonia Orchestra, Britten

Sinfonia, The King’s Singers and The Hermes Experiment, as well as the Aldeburgh,

Presteigne, Santa Fe, and Cheltenham festivals. Her music has been released on

Signum, Nimbus, Nonclassical, Delphian and NMC records.

In the 2022/23 season, Waley-Cohen’s orchestral work *Demon*, commissioned by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, was premiered on 22 February 2023 at Birmingham Symphony Hall, performed by the CBSO under the baton of Ilan Volkov. Her work for string orchestra and solo recorder player, *Variation on Sellinger’s Round*, was commissioned and premiered by the Amsterdam Sinfonietta, led by Daniel Bard with soloist Lucie Horsch, in a series of concerts touring the Netherlands 10 – 17 February. Additionally, the flute trio *Glass Flowers* was premiered on 26 April at the Royal Academy of Music, and subsequently toured across the UK by commissioner Sarah O’Flynn (flute), Clare O’Connell (cello) and Roderick Chadwick (piano).

Highlights of the upcoming 2023/24 season include a concert at the Barbican devoted to Waley-Cohen’s works, including the premieres of two newly commissioned works to complete Spell Book, performed by the Manchester Collective, and a new work for the Colin Currie Percussion Quartet premiering at the Wigmore Hall in February 2024.

Other recent successes include the world premiere of *Pocket Cosmos*, premiered in June 2022 by commissioners London Chamber Orchestra and directed by Pekka Kuusisto. This concert concluded her year as London Chamber Orchestra’s Composer-in-Residence for the 2021/22 season. During Waley-Cohen's tenure, LCO also performed her works *Happiness* (2018) and *Saffron* (2016) as well as several new commissions.

In the summer of 2022, Waley-Cohen’s contemporary dramatic song cycle *Spell Book* (2020) was performed at Longborough Festival Opera in its first complete staging. In addition, Waley-Cohen was commissioned to write an opera, *WITCH,* based on the same set of texts by Rebecca Tamás, in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Royal Academy of Music. The world premiere took place in March 2022, directed by Polly Graham and conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth. *WITCH* was subsequently nominated for a 2022 Ivors Composer Award.

Waley-Cohen has created a number of immersive works and installations including *Permutations* (2017), an interactive artwork and a synthesis of architecture and music created during an Open Space Residency at Snape Maltings from 2015 – 2017.

Waley-Cohen was the 2019/20 Associate Composer at Wigmore Hall, which held a day of concerts in March 2023 focused on her music. She was also Associate Composer of St. David’s Hall’s contemporary music series, ‘Nightmusic’, from 2018 – 2021. Winner of a 2017 Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize, Waley-Cohen held an Open Space Residency at Snape Maltings from 2015 – 2017 and was 2016 – 2018 Associate Composer of Nonclassical. She is a founding member and artistic director of ‘Listenpony’ concert series and record label. Waley-Cohen currently lives in London.

[](https://www.instagram.com/freya_waley_cohen/?hl=en)[](https://twitter.com/freyawaleycohen?lang=en)

[](https://open.spotify.com/artist/0iLtOBFxFDosHG2mi6vQ6H?si=KR_XNaqeTVqv2LfFEOTaT%E2%80%A6)

<https://www.freyawaleycohen.com/>