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, Platoon, and NMC records.

Upcoming premieres in 2024/25 include a large scale orchestral work - *Mother Tongue* – commissioned by London Philharmonic Orchestra and conducted by Ed Gardner; *The Moon, The Moss & the Mushrooms*, a song cycle for Roderick Williams and Christopher Glynn commissioned by Two Moors Festival, Shipston Song and Music-in-the-Round; a work for Archipelago Collective’s 10th anniversary festival; and a new piece for Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in response to Fanny Mendelssohn’s *Das Jahr*. The 2024/25 season also features co-commission premieres of *Demon* by Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, and *Stone Fruit* at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival with Colin Currie. Autumn 2024 sees an NMC release of Waley-Cohen’s Debut Disc, *Spell Book*, with performances from Manchester Collective alongside Tamsin Waley-Cohen, Ann Beilby, Nathaniel Boyd, Hèloïse Werner, Fleur Barron and Katie Bray.

2023/24 highlights included a concert at the Barbican devoted to Waley-Cohen’s works, including the premieres of two newly commissioned pieces to complete her dramatic song cycle *Spell Book*, performed by the Manchester Collective. *Stone Fruit,* a new work for the Colin Currie Percussion Quartet, premiered at Wigmore Hall in February 2024. Waley-Cohen’s orchestral work *Demon* was commissioned by City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and premiered in February 2023 by CBSO under the baton of Ilan Volkov. In 2023, her work for string orchestra and solo recorder player, *Variation on Sellinger’s Round*, was commissioned and premiered by Amsterdam Sinfonietta, led by Daniel Bard with soloist Lucie Horsch, in a series of concerts touring the Netherlands.

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Royal Academy of Music*,* Waley-Cohen was commissioned to write her first opera *WITCH,* based on a set of texts by Rebecca Tamás. The world premiere took place in March 2022, directed by Polly Graham and conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth. *WITCH* was subsequently nominated for an Ivor Novello Award. 2022 also saw the world premiere of *Pocket Cosmos*, premiered by commissioners London Chamber Orchestra and directed by Pekka Kuusisto.

Waley-Cohen has created several 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 2021/22 Composer-in-Residence with London Chamber Orchestra, 2019/20 Associate Composer at Wigmore Hall, and Associate Composer of St. David’s Hall’s contemporary music series, ‘Nightmusic’, from 2018-21. Winner of a Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize in 2017, Waley-Cohen held an Open Space Residency at Snape Maltings from 2015-17 and was 2016-18 Associate Composer of Nonclassical. She was 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/>