

GILLIAN WEIR

Biography

Through her unique career as an internationally acclaimed concert organist performing worldwide at the major festivals and with leading orchestras and conductors, Gillian Weir has become established as a distinguished musician known for her virtuosity and integrity, her reputation extending well beyond the world of the organ. Her renown as a performer, which has stimulated numerous young players to follow her, is backed by her scholarly reputation; she is in demand as an adjudicator for the leading international competitions and as lecturer, broadcaster, teacher and writer, while her television appearances have reached vast new audiences.

Her repertoire is exceptional in its breadth and variety, stretching from the Renaissance to the many contemporary works she has premiered. She has performed the complete works of Bach as well as others including Messiaen, and her pre-eminent position as Messiaen interpreter has been underlined with her recording of his complete organ works, as well as her contribution to Faber's *The Messiaen Companion* and other publications. The CD set was received universally with such plaudits as that from *Le Monde*: "*This intégrale is a worthy successor to that by Messiaen himself.*"

Gillian Weir has received many prizes, awards and honours, and in the 1996 New Year's Honours List was created Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in recognition of her services to music, having been made CBE in 1989. Her achievements have been marked by the reissue on CD of her famed series of Argo recordings, and by her nomination by Classic CD magazine as one of the 100 Greatest Keyboard Players of the 20th Century as well as by the Sunday Times as one of the 1000 Music Makers of the

Millennium. In December 2000, ITV's South Bank Show chronicled her worldwide activities as a performer, teacher and recording artist in a highly acclaimed documentary. She is the Prince Consort Professor of Organ at the Royal College of Music, London, and Distinguished Visiting Artist at the Peabody Conservatory of Music, Baltimore USA, and is sought after for her master classes and as Artist-in-Residence.

Gillian Weir's career as recitalist and concerto soloist continues to encompass the globe. In 2008, the Messiaen centenary, she was in particular demand worldwide for celebratory performances of his music, through the reputation long accorded her as Messiaen authority and revelatory interpreter, ever since her first celebrated recordings of the organ works and her lectures, broadcasts and writings on this composer. On completion of his *Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité* Messiaen had given her the manuscript score to perform the UK première in London, and the re-release of her legendary CDs of the organ music (containing the three posthumously published works and thus one of only two complete sets available) received further acclaim in this anniversary year, being hailed by record magazines as still the finest available, and by Gramophone as "one of the finest organ recordings ever made."

Dame Gillian is a sought-after jurist for the world's major organ competitions. In 2008 she was a member of the jury of the Canadian International Organ Competition in Montreal, and in 2009 she was Chair of the Jury at the Jordan International Organ Competition in the USA, among others. She is a committee member for the international Liszt celebrations organised by the State of Thuringia for the composer's centenary, and next month will serve on the Jury of the associated International Organ Competition in

Erfurt; while next year she will be a jury member for the new major international competition sponsored by Longwood Gardens.

The latest in her recording projects has been the eagerly awaited release on DVD of the legendary series of TV programmes on six of the world's great instruments which were made for the BBC in 1989, seen by millions at the time and now available from Priory Records. Her series of CDs on new and historic organs have brought such acclaim as "55 minutes of bliss" (BBC Music Magazine for Bach's Clavier-Übung) and have documented among others the organs of the Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall in London as well as the Millenium Bach organ of St Thomas, Leipzig.

Recent engagements have included the opening of the new organ in the famous Salzburg Mozarteum, including concertos with its orchestra, and another solo recital at London's Royal Albert Hall as well as performances at Dresden's rebuilt Frauenkirche and the historic Merseburg Dom, with a host of other engagements in major concert halls, cathedrals and universities. Most notably in the last two months she was concerto soloist in three concerts with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra at the world-renowned Musikverein concert hall, in the festivities opening their new organ, and in the next few weeks will play in St Paul's Cathedral London in the City of London Festival, at the Leipzig Gewandhaus again and at Bach's own Thomanerkirche as well as in Merseburg Dom and in Denmark.

For further information on Gillian Weir's forthcoming appearances and recordings please see her website, www.gillianweir.com

Current as of February 2011