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THIERRY ESCAICH Biography

Composer, organist and improviser Thierry Escaich is a unique figure in contemporary music and one of the most important French composers of his generation. The three elements of Escaich's artistry are inseparable, allowing him to express himself as a virtuosic performer, interpreter and creator at the highest level.

Escaich composes works in many genres and forms, including opera, symphonic and chamber music. His catalogue numbers over 100 works which, with their lyrical, rich harmonies and rhythmic energy, have attracted a wide audience. Drawing from the French line of composition of Ravel, Messiaen and Dutilleux, and imbued with references from contemporary, jazz, popular and spiritual music, the distinctive sound-world of Escaich's music is anchored by an obsessive rhythmic drive and compelling architecture. Escaich's works are performed by leading orchestras in Europe and North America and by musicians such as Lisa Batiashvili, François Leleux, Andris Nelsons, Alain Altinoglu, Louis Langrée, Semyon Bychkov, Paavo Järvi, Alan Gilbert, Emmanuelle Bertrand and Paul Meyer.

Major works in Escaich's catalogue include *Chaconne* for orchestra; oratorio *Le Dernier Évangile*; and a double concerto for violin and cello, *Miroir d'ombres*. His first opera *Claude*, on a libretto by Robert Badinter after Victor Hugo's *Claude Gueux*, was premiered at the Opéra de Lyon in March 2013 to great acclaim, soon followed by a second full-length opera, *Shirine*, premiered at the Opéra de Lyon in May 2022. His chamber opera, *Point d'orgue*, received its commissioned premieres by Opéra National de Bordeaux and Opéra Théâtre de Saint-Étienne in 2022. Recent new works include a Flute Concerto premiered by the Rotterdam Philharmonic, a Piano Concerto (*Études symphoniques*) for Seong-Jin Cho and the Czech Philharmonic

Orchestra, and a Cello Concerto for Gautier Capuçon co-commissioned by Gewandhaus zu Leipzig and Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Works for organ are an important feature of Escaich's music and they are performed by organists around the world, including solo and chamber works, three concerti, and the symphonic poem *La Barque solaire* for organ and orchestra. Escaich's *Organ Concerto No.1* was selected as a highlight of the organ concerto repertoire in Gramophone: "His concerto exploits the full sonic and color ranges of orchestra and organ in this thrilling three-movement work, the second movement rising to an awe-inspiring climax only topped by the shattering coda of the finale." Escaich made his debut with the Vienna Philharmonic in 2022 and has also appeared as soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre National de France, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, and Concerto Budapest. Escaich was Organist and Composer in Residence at the Dresdner Philharmonie in the 2022/23 season.

Thierry Escaich is one of the ambassadors of the great French school of improvisation, and was recently appointed one of the three titular organists at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris following the reopening of the Cathedral. He appears in recitals internationally, combining repertoire pieces with his own compositions and improvisations. His passion for cinema has led him to perform "cine-concerts", improvised accompaniments on both the organ and piano for silent films such as *Phantom of the Opera* and *Metropolis*.

A major highlight of the 2023/24 season will be the world premiere of a new Violin Concerto for Renaud Capuçon, premiered by the Munich Philharmonic and toured to the Paris Philharmonie, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and Vienna Musikverein. The Munich Philharmonic will also give the German premiere of piano concerto *Études symphoniques* with Seong-Jin Cho,

conducted by Semyon Bychkov, and in the same week, Escaich performs a program of chamber music with musicians from the orchestra. In May 2024, a new concertante work for violin and orchestra will be premiered at the Queen Elisabeth Competition. Escaich will perform as concerto soloist with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Wrocław Philharmonic and Pacific Symphony. Also this season, Escaich performs recitals at Glasgow Cathedral Festival, St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral Edinburgh, Collégiale Saint-Thiéobaut in Thann, Konzerthaus Dortmund, Brucknerhaus Linz and Festival Kirchklang.

Many of Escaich's works have been recorded by Accord/Universal. His 2011 release *Les Nuits hallucinées* crowned his residency with the Orchestre National de Lyon and received numerous distinctions, including a "Choc de l'année" from *Classica* magazine as an outstanding release of the year. The first production of *Claude* was released on DVD (BelAir Classiques). Other releases include *Baroque Song* on Sony Classical, *Aria* with Richard Galliano, *Fusion* with the Ellipsis Saxophone Quartet and *Cris* with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

Thierry Escaich has been honored by five "Victoires de la Musique" awards (2003, 2006, 2011, 2017 and 2022) and continues to teach composition and improvisation at the Paris Conservatoire, where he himself studied and obtained eight "premiers prix". In 2013 he received the honor of being appointed to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and in 2018 he took the prestigious role of Featured Composer at the Radio France Présences Festival.

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