

philharmonia orchestra

GEORGE BENJAMIN **Conductor**

Born in 1960, George Benjamin started to play the piano at the age of seven, and began composing almost immediately. In 1976 he entered the Paris Conservatoire to study with Olivier Messiaen and Yvonne Loriod, after which he studied under Alexander Goehr at King's College Cambridge.

His first orchestral work, *Ringed by the Flat Horizon*, was performed at the BBC Proms when he was only 20. In recent years there have been major retrospectives of his work in London, Tokyo, Brussels, Berlin, Strasbourg and Madrid. The centre-point of a portrait at the 2006 Festival d'Automne in Paris was his first operatic work, *Into the Little Hill*, a collaboration with playwright Martin Crimp. He has accepted a Roche commission which will be premiered during his residency at the 2008 Lucerne festival.

He appears regularly as a conductor with the world's leading ensembles and orchestras, including the London Sinfonietta, Ensemble Modern, Berlin Philharmonic and the Cleveland and Concertgebouw orchestras. In 1999 he made his operatic debut conducting *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Brussels and he has conducted numerous world premieres, including works by Rihm, Chin, Grisey and Ligeti. His 2008 conducting schedule includes concerts in London, Paris, Vienna, Frankfurt, Cologne, Lucerne and Milan.

George Benjamin was the founding curator of the South Bank's *Meltdown* Festival, and was artistic consultant to the BBC's retrospective of 20th century music, *Sounding the Century*. Since 2001 he has been the Henry Purcell Professor of Composition at King's College, London. He is a Chevalier dans l'ordre des Arts et Lettres and a member of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, and was awarded the Deutsche Symphonie Orchester's first ever Schoenberg Prize for composition in 2002.