

James Rae



James Rae was born on Tyneside in 1957. He studied clarinet, bass clarinet, piano and composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama from 1975-79. His professors were Yona Ettlinger, Stephen Trier, Meriel Jefferson and Patric Standford respectively. He was awarded the A.G.S.M in Performance and Teaching, the Certificate of Advanced Studies (post Grad.) and the John Clifford Pettican Prize for orchestral playing. Since leaving the Guildhall, he has pursued a highly successful and varied career in the music profession. His work falls into three areas, performing, writing and teaching.

As a player, James Rae has worked in many West End and Royal National Theatre productions including Sir Peter Hall's award winning 'Oresteia' with music by Sir Harrison Birtwistle. He has also received many freelance engagements with some of the country's leading orchestras and ensembles. Projects have included the EMI album 'Classic Ellington' with Sir Simon Rattle and the C.B.S.O.

Saxophone Quartet playing has featured strongly in James Rae's career. He is the leader of the Phoenix Saxophone Quartet who over the years have given many recitals and BBC broadcasts. They have also recorded the complete works of Carey Blyton on two albums 'The Return of Bulgy Gogo' and 'Sherlock Holmes meets Dr Who'.

As a composer, James Rae is one of Europe's most published writers of educational wind music, having over 250 publications to his credit, most of which are published by Universal Edition. His publications include instrumental study books, sonatas, tutors, baroque, classical and jazz transcriptions plus many volumes of duets. In 2002 the artist Adele played his study 'Tumbledown Blues' in her successful audition for The Brit School! A vast quantity of his publications are to be found on all the major wind examination syllabuses worldwide. His Sonatina for flute and piano recorded by Roberto Alvarez and Kseniia Vokhmanina has now been released by the Odradek label in conjunction with their major European recital tour. He has also written four musicals suitable for schools in partnership with Mike Cornick and published by Universal Edition. A series of videos of 'Introducing the Saxophone' has recently been released as part of the MusicGurus tutorial series.

One of his larger commissions was a major work for concert band called 'The Turn of a Wheel' which has received performances in many parts of the world since its premier in November 1999. This was written for the North Tyneside

Concert Band of which he was a founder member as a boy. Another major commission for the same band was his overture 'Moving On' which was performed in the presence of H.R.H. Princess Anne at the opening of the restored Tynemouth Station on 2nd July 2012. In the same year, he was also commissioned to write another major work for band by The University of Kent. This was called 'Platform 1' and was composed for the opening of their £8m Colyer-Fergusson Music Building.

James Rae has worked extensively as a syllabus consultant and composer for both the Associated Board and Trinity College London. He has been highly involved with the development of the woodwind sight-reading requirements for both exam boards.

As a teacher, James Rae has held many posts in both the state and independent sector. He currently works at King's College School Wimbledon and Shrewsbury House School in Surbiton. He is the director of the King's College School Wind Orchestra and Concert Band and also directs three large bands and a chamber group at Shrewsbury House.

He has adjudicated at many music festivals and competitions throughout the country and has tutored and conducted on numerous courses including the highly popular Northern Saxophone Course and Jazz Zone. For ten years James Rae was also Saxophone Professor for the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. He has presented many masterclasses and workshops in music centres in the UK and around the world including engagements in Bergerac, Berlin, Falkensee, Furstenstenwalde and Dubai.

James Rae lives in Carshalton Beeches, Surrey. His interests outside of music include food, drink and anything at all to do with railways!