



Michael Collins
Clarinet / Conductor

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Michael Collins MBE is one of the most complete musicians of his generation, enjoying a distinguished international career as both clarinettist and conductor. Renowned for his virtuosity, versatility, and artistic insight, he has recently gained widespread recognition for his work on the podium.

From 2010 to 2018, Collins served as Principal Conductor of the City of London Sinfonia, and from 2021 to 2023, he was Artistic Director of the London Mozart Players. From the 2025/26 season, he will take up a new role as Principal Guest Artist with the Ulster Orchestra.

Recent highlights include an Australian tour with the Australian String Quartet at UKARIA, appearances at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, and a play/direct performance with Omega Ensemble featuring the world premiere of Graeme Koehne's Dances on the Edge of Time. Upcoming engagements include the premieres of Sally Beamish's Izaki for clarinet and orchestra with the Tapiola Sinfonietta, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, and Academy of St Martin in the Fields. In 2026, Collins returns to the Philharmonia Orchestra to lead a programme of Mozart symphonies, ahead of their next BIS Records release, Mozart Vol. 3.

As a soloist, Collins has appeared with major orchestras worldwide including the Minnesota Orchestra, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Rheinische Philharmonie, Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional, and the Kuopio Symphony Orchestra, alongside tours across South Africa, Japan, and Mexico.

A passionate chamber musician, Collins is the founder and Artistic Director of Wigmore Soloists, Wigmore Hall's Associate Ensemble, launched in 2021 in collaboration with Wigmore Hall Director John Gilhooly. The ensemble brings together leading international musicians to perform a wide range of chamber works from duos to larger-scale repertoire. Their five critically acclaimed recordings for BIS Records have earned praise from BBC Music Magazine, Gramophone, and two Diapason d'Or awards. The 2025/26 season sees the ensemble tour Southern Europe and debut at the Auditorio de Tenerife Adán Martín and Palais Kaufmännischer Verein.

Collins has long been committed to expanding the clarinet repertoire. He has premiered landmark works including John Adams' Gnarly Buttons, Elliott Carter's Clarinet Concerto (for which he received a Gramophone Award), Brett Dean's Ariel's Music, and Mark-Anthony Turnage's Riffs and Refrains, commissioned by The Hallé. He has performed Turnage's work with the Residentie Orkest, Royal Flanders Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, and London's Philharmonia Orchestra. In 2007, he received the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist of the Year Award in recognition of his contributions to contemporary music.

An esteemed collaborator, he has performed with artists such as András Schiff, Martha Argerich, Stephen Hough, Mikhail Pletnev, Joshua Bell, and Steven Isserlis, as well as with the Borodin, Belcea, and Heath Quartets. His ensemble London Winds, now in its fourth decade, has appeared at the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh Festival, Edinburgh Festival, and Bath Mozartfest. During the 2019/20 season, Collins was Artist in Residence at Wigmore Hall, performing with Stephen Hough, the Vienna Piano Trio, Leonard Elschenbroich, Michael McHale, and the Borodin Quartet.

Michael Collins is among the most recorded clarinettists in the world, with an extensive discography across Chandos, Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, EMI, Sony, Signum Classics, and BIS. In 2017, he won a Grammy Award for Shakespeare Songs with Ian Bostridge and Antonio Pappano. Forthcoming recordings include Mozart Vol. 2 with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Weber's clarinet concertos with the Ulster Orchestra, and Brahms' chamber works with Wigmore Soloists.

In 2015, Michael Collins was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to music. In 2022, he celebrated his 60th birthday with commemorative concerts at Wigmore Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall with the London Mozart Players. He plays Yamaha clarinets.