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William Christie appointed Emeritus Conductor of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment



William Christie, credit Jean-Baptiste Millot

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment is delighted to announce the appointment of distinguished period conductor William Christie as Emeritus Conductor.

Christie is a revered specialist in Baroque repertoire and founder of the ensemble Les Arts Florissants. American born, he has been resident in France for many years, and is especially known for leading the revival of French Baroque music. Christie is richly honoured in his adopted country, having been named Chevalier, Officer and Commandeur of the Légion d'honneur; as well as Commandeur of the Ordre du Merit. He was elected to the French Institute des Beaux-Arts; and has received numerous international awards, including honorary doctorates from the Julliard School; the University of New York at Buffalo; and Leiden University.

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Christie began their long association in 1996 with a landmark, breakthrough production of Handel's *Theodora* at Glyndebourne, the first of several collaborations with the OAE which established Handel as a major composer at the opera house. Most recently, Christie's and the OAE's *Hippolyte et Aricie* by Rameau (Glyndebourne 2013) met with critical acclaim.

William Christie says:

“This appointment comes as a lovely present and confirms years of extremely happy work with the Orchestra. The OAE has a strong personality; one of the first things any guest conductor recognises is the extraordinary individuality of members both old and new, and the considered, intelligent thinking, which makes up the marvellous entity which is the OAE. I may have contributed to this complex personality and adore it every time I am entitled to conduct them.

“As the OAE celebrates its 30th birthday we see that it has rethought the whole nature of instruments and repertory as one of the leading exponents of period performance. It’s always at the forefront of what’s new in old music and that’s very important.”

Crispin Woodhead, Chief Executive of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment says:

“We are extremely honoured to have William Christie join the OAE’s impressive roster of named conductors. The Orchestra is celebrating 30 years of breaking the rules, and its pioneering spirit chimes with his ever-searching, in-depth exploration of Baroque composers. French repertoire is far less known in the UK and we are very excited to introduce new works to our audiences with William Christie as French Baroque’s most revered exponent.”

Chairman of the OAE Sir Martin Smith comments:

“This appointment cements the OAE’s longstanding relationship with William Christie. It reflects the deep respect in which he is held, and is an acknowledgement of his great artistry. We look forward to working with him again in the 2016–2017 Season and to future collaborations.”

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Notes to Editors:

Player-led and ceaselessly innovative, the **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** is one of the world’s most respected period ensembles. They are a Resident Orchestra at Southbank Centre, Associate Orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera and tour both nationally and internationally.