

JESSICA HORSLEY - Biography

“Jessica Horsley conducts with assurance and poise. Thanks to the clarity of her baton technique and her natural sense of stylistic purity, she conveys even the smallest nuances of the music with consummate ease.” (Jiří Němeček, Violinist) Her highly acclaimed conducting debut in Basel took place in the Stadtcasino in March 2015 with a pioneering programme of orchestral music by women composers (www.frauenkomponiert.ch). She specialises in conducting music from the late nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries.

Jessica Horsley swapped bow for baton in 2010, mentored initially by Thuring Bräm. She completed postgraduate studies in conducting with Arturo Tamayo at the *conservatorio della svizzera italiana* in Lugano in 2012, specialising in modern and contemporary repertoire and directing works such as Pierre Boulez's, *Le Marteau sans maître* (1957), Arnold Schönberg's, *Erwartung* (1909), and *The Key to Songs* (1985) by Morton Subotnick. She went on to broaden her repertoire to include the major works of the nineteenth century, benefitting from advanced coaching with Kirk Trevor (CZ/US), Tomáš Netopil (CZ/DE) and Sasha Mäkilä (FI) and gaining particular recognition as an interpreter of Brahms. She has worked with orchestras such as *Plovdiv State Opera* (BG) and the *Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic* (CZ) and ensembles including *St. Michel Strings* (FI) and *900* (CH), as well as for the Swiss radio network *Rete Due*.

Jessica Horsley performs regularly as a violist, both as a soloist and with various European Early Music ensembles. She has worked with groups such as *Ferrara* (Crawford Young) and *Gilles Binchois* (Dominique Vellard), and was a founder member of the viol consort *The Earle His Viols*, which specialised in the chromatic and enharmonic music of the early seventeenth century. The first CD of the consort, *canzon del principe*, with music from the Rossi manuscript (c. 1600), won several accolades. A second recording of music from the circle around Cardinal Barberini in Rome c. 1635 was awarded five “Diapason”. Her CD with David Hatcher of virtuosic music for two bass viols by Godfrey Finger, *Furiosa*, was released to high acclaim in 2011. She has performed and recorded in the US, Canada, South Africa, Namibia, Australia, and throughout Europe and has appeared at festivals in, for example, Amsterdam, Berlin, Frankfurt, Magnano, Melbourne, Saarbrücken and Witten. Following a serious accident to her left hand in 2010, she has worked her way back to top playing form.

In recent years Jessica Horsley has devoted much attention to new works and commissions, being privileged to work with musicians such as Peter Rundel, Heinz Holliger, Rachid Safir, and Walter Grimmer and groups such as Collegium Novum (Zürich) and the Ensemble Modern (Frankfurt am Main). She is a specialist on the little-known baryton and took on the solo baryton part in Klaus Huber's ‘...à l'âme de marcher sur ses pieds de soie...’ at the Holland Festival in 2010. Recent commissions for solo baryton include works by Heidi Baader-Nobs, Thuring Bräm, Giorgio Colombo Taccani, Helena Winkelman, and a new arrangement of a work by Klaus Huber. She plays a baryton by the Swiss maker Kuno Schaub.

Jessica Horsley was something of a child prodigy, performing as a soloist and chamber musician from an early age. She was proficient on several instruments, attracting for example the accolade of “youngest organist in Great Britain” in a television broadcast at the age of ten, performing violin concertos as a teenager, and winning competitions as a young pianist. After finishing school with various awards and a first piano diploma, she gained a further diploma in piano performance from the Royal College of Music in London. She went on to read music as a Choral Scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge (BA), where she was introduced to the world of early music and the viol. After completing a master's degree in Modern History with Russian at the University of London with distinction, Jessica Horsley studied the viol with Paolo Pandolfo at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (CH). She was subsequently awarded the *prix de perfectionnement* in viol with Ariane Maurette at the Conservatoire Supérieur de Paris (FR) and profited in addition from advanced coaching with Jaap ter Linden (NL), Eunice Brandão (CH), Marianne Mueller (FR), and Philippe Pierlot (BE). Parallel to this she completed a doctorate at the University of Tübingen (DE) on the *Blue Rider Almanac* (“Der Almanach des Blauen Reiters als Gesamtkunstwerk“, Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M., 2006) with the award “magna cum laude”. She has also published on visual sources and cultural history, and on the Modernist period. In addition to her mother tongue, English, she speaks fluent German, French and Italian, can read Russian, and has a working knowledge of Chinese.