

Kit Downes CV

Kit writes, performs and teaches music, as well as playing the piano, Hammond Organ, church organ and various other keyboards in a variety of different ensembles.

Having originally been an organ scholar at St Peter Mancroft in Norwich, he then left to study piano, organ and composition at both the Purcell School of Music (where he now teaches), and later at the Royal Academy of Music (where he is now an Associate). Kit began performing with and composing for the UK band 'Empirical' – with whom he toured the US, Canada and Europe (playing at 'Newport Jazz Festival'), whilst also performing with Acoustic Ladyland, Micachu, Lee Kontiz and Django Bates.

Kit has received a Mercury Music Award nomination (in 2010), BBC Jazz Award, and a British Jazz Award for his own albums, and now tours with his own group 'ENEMY', Troyka, songwriter Josienne Clarke, Julian Arguelles' Quartet, Squarepusher, Thomas Strønen and Sylvain Darrifourcq – playing all over the world. In 2013 and 2015 he was nominated in the Rising Star category in Downbeat Magazine (US), and in 2014 won the 'Best Album Award' at the Parliamentary Jazz Awards. In 2015 Kit recorded his first album for ECM with Thomas Strønen's 'Time is a Blind Guide'. Kit now teaches piano and composition at the Purcell School of Music, and is also a patron of the 'Musical Keys' charity.

In 2013 he was asked by Django Bates to join his new ensemble 'The TDEs' to play a new commission for both BBC Radio 3 and Cheltenham Jazz Festival (alongside his Troyka band mates). Later in 2014 he began touring with world famous clinic drummer Benny Greb - after playing the Meinl Drum Festival last year, he later went onto co-produce Benny's latest album 'Moving Parts'.

Also In 2014 he was asked by the Southbank Centre to write a new work for the opening festival of the recently refurbished Royal Festival Hall Organ. Then in 2015 he worked with Aldeburgh Music and Tom Challenger on a project called 'Vyamanikal' - a series of recordings documenting extended techniques on various local church organs - the project was later performed live at the Aldeburgh Festival. He was asked by the Cologne Philharmonie to write a new work for their organ in 2016, and has performed original commissions by Shiva Feshareki for the Union Chapel Organ. He has previously been commissioned by the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, the Wellcome Trust, Darmstadt Organ Festival 2015 (with drummer Jonas Burgwinkel), BBC Radio 2, BBC Jazz on 3, Jazzwise Magazine, Cheltenham Jazz Festival, London Contemporary Music Festival, London Jazz Festival and Aldeburgh Music. Upcoming commissions include a work for organ and 4 cellos for 'Tre Voci' to be performed in Oslo in 2016, as well as a new work for 'Stavanger Organ Day 2016', and an adaptation of 'Vyamanikal' for Manchester Jazz Festival 2016 and co-curating a music technology instillation at Cheltenham Jazz Festival 2016. He has also started songwriting with BBC Folk Award winner Josienne Clarke, and this year recorded on her new album for Rough Trade.

In 2015 he was asked to join Squarepusher's live band 'Shobaleader One' - interpreting works from Squarepusher's back catalogue for a live band.

Kit has also collaborated (on a range of acoustic and electronic instruments) with composers Matt Rogers and Mica Levi, electronic musician Leafcutter John, drummer Seb Rochford, filmmaker Ashley Pegg, artist Dave McKean, animator Lesley Barnes and geneticist Adam Rutherford (for the Wellcome Trust).

For more information please visit:

www.kitdownes.com