

Biography

Alexander L'Estrange (b. 1974) is one of Britain's most popular living choral composers and arrangers. His compositional voice is characterised by the distinctive combination of the British choral tradition and jazz, reflecting the composer's own musical background as a chorister at New College, Oxford, and a professional jazz pianist and bass player. From the **large-scale choral works** which draw together singers of all ages to the more intimate **sacred anthems** and **part-songs**, it is this combination which has contributed to the universal appeal of his music. Add to that mix a First Class Honours degree in Music from **Oxford University** and his charismatic choral leadership and it's no wonder that he's been dubbed "*the ideal 21st century musician*" (Howard Goodall CBE).

L'Estrange's flagship work is [Zimbe! Come sing the songs of Africa!](#), an ingenious 40-minute fusion of **African song and jazz** which received 150 performances worldwide within its first five years, something of a record for a new choral piece. *Zimbe!*'s success has spawned a series of commissions in a similar vein including [Ahoy! Sing for the Mary Rose](#) and [Song Cycle: vive la vélorution!](#). Each features a winning combination of SATB choir, **unison children's choir** and **professional jazz quintet**.

'Zimbe! is our generation's answer to 'St Nicolas' or 'Noye's Fludde'.' James Webb, conductor

His **song** output includes [Love's Philosophy](#), three stunning settings of poems by Shelley, Tennyson and Byron currently on the ABRSM Singing Syllabus, and a number of jazz songs, recorded by his wife, former Swingle Singer and lyricist [Joanna Forbes L'Estrange](#), on the album [New things to say](#). L'Estrange's stunning **sacred choral music** has been recorded by the award-winning chamber choir [Tenebrae](#) on the album [On Eagles' Wings](#) (SIGNUM Classics).

'On Eagles' Wings is an album I will return to again and again; I recommend it warmly to all lovers of choral music.' John Rutter

As a consummate **arranger**, L'Estrange is highly sought after by the world's leading **a cappella** groups including [The Swingle Singers](#), [Amarcord](#), [Voces 8](#) and [The King's Singers](#), for whom he arranged and produced the [Great American Songbook CD](#) to great acclaim. He is Consultant Editor for **Faber Music's** [Choral Basics](#) series for which he has written hundreds of arrangements of pop, show, folk, jazz, classical, commercial and original songs. **Television** work includes the theme tune for the CBeebies programme [Magic Hands](#) and a large body of work for the market-leading television production music company [Audio Network Ltd](#).

L'Estrange is passionate about **music education** and in particular the importance of **singing in schools** and the wider community. Working with organisations such as [United Learning](#) he has led thousands of children in performances of his music at venues such as London's [Lyceum Theatre](#) and the [Royal Albert Hall](#). He has contributed many original pieces and arrangements to the educational initiative [Sing Up](#) and, as a **jazz examiner** and trainer for the [ABRSM](#), heads jazz sessions for classical examiners. With Joanna, he co-devised the popular **choral workshop** [You can sing ... but can you swing?!](#) (with an accompanying set of **jazz warm-ups**, [published by Faber Music](#)) which gives classical singers the tools and confidence to give convincing and authentic performances of non-classical music. He regularly **presents workshops** and **adjudicates** throughout the UK with the mixture of energy, fun and consummate musicianship that has become synonymous with his name.