

Mark Bowden



Mark is one of Britain's most celebrated and exciting young composers. His recent work *Five Memos* received a British Composer Award last December. Mark is currently Reader in Composition at Royal Holloway, University of London and Chair of the British section of the International Society for Contemporary Music. Of his Festival commission he says:



'I plan to write a work for Mark and Richard which will draw inspiration from the 13th-century wall paintings discovered in 1931 at Little Missenden Church. The paintings, in red and yellow ochre, allude to a different world. One of the most striking is that of St Christopher, the patron saint of travellers. Gigantic in stature, St Christopher is clad in a tunic with a mantle that falls in intricate folds. He stands holding a child in his arms who, in turn, holds the orb of the universe in his. Water, fish and an eel are clearly recognisable at St Christopher's feet. This scene has inspired me to create a work in several short movements exploring the idea of journeys, change and (re)discovery. I intend to draw upon a 13th-century troubadour melody associated with St Christopher, a song of a travelling musician, which will form the basis of the piece. I will use techniques of layering, transformation and fragmentation to create a musical response to the beautiful, mysterious paintings at Little Missenden.'