Tom Armstrong (b. 1968) studied composition with George Nicholson before reading music at York University, remaining to pursue a DPhil with Roger Marsh. He studied with Vinko Globokar at Dartington Summer School and with Magnus Lindberg, Colin Matthews and Oliver Knussen at the Britten-Pears School. He attended the prestigious International Course for Professional Choreographers and Composers at Bretton Hall in 1999 working with, amongst others, Kenneth Tharp and Wayne MacGregor. In 2011 Tom was selected for VOX3, part of the opera development programme at the Royal Opera House, where he worked with Dominic Muldowney and John Lloyd-Davies.

Tom’s instrumental and vocal music has been performed by leading ensembles and soloists including Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Sinfonia Viva, Endymion, Notes Inégales, Rarescale, the New Music Players, Psappha, the Composer’s Ensemble, [rout], Gemini, the Fidelio Trio, the Delta Saxophone Quartet, Stephen Gutman, Jane Chapman, Lionel Handy, and Martin Feinstein. The BBC Philharmonic and the pianist Andrew Ball have broadcast Tom’s music on Radio 3. Tom’s dance scores have been heard in the Lowry centre (*FIBBA*, commissioned by the National Youth Ballet in 2000) and Sadlers Wells (*Black Maria* 2007, *Distant Beauties* 2017). *Tall Ship Tales* (2001) was performed by the North and West Hertfordshire Youth Orchestra in the Royal Festival Hall (South Bank Centre, London). Recent performances have taken place in Italy (the Festival di Londra, Ripatansone, and the Lagonegro Guitar Festival), France (the Carmago Foundation), China (Tianjin Conservatory of Music) and Australia (Valla Beach Ukulele Camp, New South Wales).

Tom has worked on a number of large-scale projects and is no stranger to collaboration. *Black Maria*, by acclaimed children’s author Diana Wynne Jones, was created with choreographer Susan Crow and screenwriter Zara Waldebackas an evening length, multi-media work. Tom composed the one-woman show *Catching the Sun* with the playwright Stephanie McKnight (2007) and collaborated with the writer Sarah Diamond to create *The Cathedral on the Marshes* commissioned by the Crossness Engines Trust and funded by the PRSF, the RVW Trust, the Britten-Pears Foundation and Arts Council England. This work, for choir and concert band, celebrated the restoration of Joseph Bazalgette’s magnificent and ground-breaking sewage pumping station on the south bank of the Thames where it received its premiere by entirely local performers in 2012. That year also saw the release of *Opened Spaces* on CD (*Songs Now,* Meridian Records) and a staging of the operatic scene *Do the Right Thing* (lyrics by Bridget Minamore) as part of the ROH’s Exposure series.

Tom’s most recent work covers three areas of interest: establishing a more collaborative relationship between composer and performer, the creative possibilities of revision, and musical borrowing. *Albumleaves* (2013) for the Ligeti Quartet and trumpeter Simon Desbruslais and *JPR* (2015) for Trio Aporia (Stephen Preston - flute, Richard Boothby - viola da gamba and Jane Chapman - harpsichord) utilise indeterminacy and open form, handing the musicians more responsibility for the sound of the music in performance. *JPR*, *Distant Beauties* (commissioned by Images Ballet Company for their 2017 UK tour) and *Tänze* (for multiple keyboards) each borrow from pre-existing music (by Rameau, Tchaikovsky and Schubert respectively), subjecting it to processes of erasure to bring forth new material. Tom’s latest CD, *Dance Maze* (Resonus Classics 2018) is an investigation of the revision process in composition, with works recorded in different versions involving radically different approaches to the same materials. *Shadow Variations* (2019) for ukulele ensemble combines Tom’s interests in composer/performer collaboration and borrowing - it is a set of pieces that comment on and extend renowned ukulele exponent Samantha Muir’s *The Dowie Dens of Yarrow -* and reignites his commitment to music for amateurs and semi-professionals, an important strain of Tom’s work in pieces such as the Children’s opera *The Buried Moon* (1995-6) and *Bounce* (2004 - commissioned whilst resident on Making Music’s Breakout scheme). Two recent works, *Berceuse 1917* (written for Kate Ledger and Anna Snow in 2020) and *The Gramophone Played* (written for the New York based cellist Madeleine Shapiro in 2020-21), draw on Robert Macfarlane’s book *The Old Ways* and its semi-fictional account of the last months of the poet Edward Thomas’ life; *The Gramophone Played* returns to the digital medium that Tom last explored in *Black Maria.* Since 2020 Tom has been pursuing several long-term collaborations involving interventions in other composers’ music; he is at work on a major set of Bartók transcriptions and reworkings for the Hungarian guitarist Katalin Koltai, a programme of re-imagined ‘classics’ (both familiar and less familiar) for Trifarious and a song project with the pianist and composer Nathan Williamson. One of Tom’s reworkings of his own music, *Damascene Redux*, was released on the CD Late Music by the Delta Saxophone Quartet in 2023.

Composer/performer collaboration, the revision process and borrowing are areas Tom has written about as part of his academic research. Recent writings include ‘Collaboration and the Practitioner-Researcher: A Composer’s Perspective’ (Palgrave Macmillan 2020) and ‘One Into Three: Context Method and Motivation in Revising and Reworking *Dance Maze* for Solo Piano’ published in the Journal of the Royal Musical Association in 2022. He ran the AHRC-funded research network Music Composition as Interdisciplinary Practice in 2016 that commissioned new work from a variety of innovative artists including London Topophobia and squib-box. In 2022 he served as head of the organising committee of that year’s Performance Studies Network International Conference at the University of Surrey and is currently co-editing a special edition of Performance Research that develops certain papers from the conference. Tom is a Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Surrey where he teaches a wide range of composition-related topics at undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels.

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