

AARON AZUNDA AKUGBO

TRUMPET

‘Aaron Azunda Akugbo served up a flute of sparkling champagne, the effervescent brilliance of his playing radiating through the outer movements, with stylish ornamentation’

Bachtrack, BBC Proms 2023

Nigerian–Scottish trumpeter Aaron Azunda Akugbo has emerged as one of the leading young exponents of the instrument. Classically trained as both a trumpeter and singer, he cites Louis Armstrong as his greatest musical inspiration, and brings charisma, humour and an engaging stage presence to performances, connecting easily with both colleagues and audiences. These qualities were recognised with his selection as one of the 2027–28 ECHO Rising Stars, nominated by Palau de la Música Catalana, Barbican Centre, Het Concertgebouw, and The Glasshouse (ICM).

In 2026–27, Akugbo joins the 300th anniversary concert for Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and performs as soloist and ensemble player as part of Barbican Centre’s Always Already There Festival, curated by Elaine Mitchener, to include works by Ayanna Witter-Johnson and Regina Harris Baiocchi.

Last season he performed the world premiere of a solo trumpet arrangement of Bernstein’s *West Side Story* with Manchester Camerata at Classical Pride, a festival celebrating LGBTQ+ voices in classical music. He made his debut with BBC Singers at Barbican Centre, curating a programme based on his own musical influences. He also performed Wynton Marsalis’ Trumpet Concerto, with Fantasia Orchestra conducted by Joanna Macgregor, and Shostakovich’s Concerto no.1 for Piano and Trumpet with Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Steven Osborne..

He is frequently invited to festivals, most recently including Bath International, Lichfield, Petworth, Ryedale, St Magnus, Lammermuir, Frankfurt Alte Oper, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Dublin International Chamber Music festivals. He has performed at Lucerne Festival three times, including giving the world premiere of Joy Guidry’s *They know what they’ve done to us* for trumpet and electronics in 2022, commissioned for him by the I&I Foundation.

Akugbo made his London concerto debut at Royal Festival Hall in 2020, and his BBC Proms concerto debut in 2023, performing Haydn’s Trumpet Concerto both times with Chineke!, Europe’s first black and minority ethnic orchestra. He has performed with Lucerne Festival Strings, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of the Swan and Brighton Philharmonic. His concerto performances often feature standard works alongside lesser-known pieces, for example, by Eric Ewazen and

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Florence Price.

A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music and ex-principal of National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, Akugbo is Principal Trumpet of Aurora Orchestra. He has received lessons and masterclass tuition from many leading trumpet players, including Urban Agnas, Reinhold Friedrich, Jeroen Berwaerts, Gabor Tarkovi, Guillaume Jehl and Eric Aubier.

He is a founding member of Connaught Brass, inaugural winners of the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble Award in 2019, Britten Pears Arts chamber music residency artists in 2022, and supported by The Tillet Trust, City Music Foundation and Kirckman Concert Society.

He plays a combination of Vincent Bach Stradivarius and Scherzer instruments.