

Although Stephen Reay was born in London, both his parents were born on Tyneside and come from a long line of Geordies. He took up the bassoon when he was fifteen years old and went on to study with Gwydion Brooke at the Royal Academy of Music where he was one of the few bassoonists to win the Academy's Recital Diploma.

For several years he played guest Principal with the Philharmonia, including performances of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante at the Royal Festival Hall and recordings with Itzhak Perlman and Giulini of the Beethoven Violin Concerto in 1980.

In 1981 Stephen Reay was made Principal Bassoon with the Sinfonia and has appeared regularly as soloist. In 1986 he gave the first performances of Robin Holloway's Bassoon Concerto, a Sinfonia commission, later broadcast on the BBC. In 1998 he gave the world première of Judith Bingham's Bassoon Concerto, another Sinfonia commission.

Recordings include Strauss' Duet Concertino with Richard Hickox, Martinu's Sinfonia Concertante with the City of London Sinfonia for Virgin Classics, the first performances of Joseph Horowitz's Euphonium Concerto arranged for Bassoon and Chamber Orchestra with George Malcolm, J C Bach's Concerto with the Ulster Orchestra and recitals on Radio 3's Concert Hall.

Stephen continues to make regular guest Principal appearances with the Philharmonia, including a performance of Scheherezade with Gennadi Rozhdestvensky in Madrid and Lisbon and most recently with the London Symphony Orchestra in their Vaughan Williams Series at the Barbican. In 1997 he was made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.