

## **Helen Harrison**

### **Biography May 2024**

A warm, natural and communicative presence on the podium British conductor Helen Harrison inspires exciting and compelling performances from orchestras, opera companies and choirs. State school educated, Helen understands the life changing possibilities of classical music and this underpins her work.

British conductor Helen Harrison is the Music Director for the Young Sinfonia, the Royal Northern Sinfonia's Youth Orchestra. This season's debuts include the BBC Concert Orchestra 'Friday Night is Music Night', Southbank Sinfonia and Northern Silents Sinfonia. Recent guest conducting includes the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sinfonia Viva.

Helen is equally at home in the opera pit and joins Longborough Festival Opera this summer as Assistant Conductor for their new production of 'La Boheme'. She conducts for Northern Opera Group, Hull Urban Opera and Outreach Opera. Productions Helen has conducted include La Boheme, Carmen, Eugene Onegin, Macbeth, Norma, Amahl and the Night Visitors, The Merry Widow, Don Giovanni, In the Heights and West Side Story.

Recognised as one of the leading conductors in the country for her work with young people Helen relishes training the next generation of musicians as Music Director of the Young Sinfonia and as guest conductor for the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain, Trinity Laban Summer School Orchestra and Leeds Conservatoire.

Helen is passionate about bringing the transformative power of music to her own community and is the Music Director for Preston Opera and the award-winning Blackpool Symphony Orchestra.

Helen read Music at Cambridge University and studied Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music. She was a 2022/2023 participant on the flagship programme for Women Conductors run by the Royal Philharmonic and the Royal Northern Sinfonia. She has taken part in international Masterclasses run by the Royal Opera House, the Royal Philharmonic Society, the National Opera Studio and the Royal Northern College of Music coached by Sian Edwards, Jane Glover, Alice Farnham, Mark Heron, Clark Rundell, Gergeley Madaras and Nicolas Pasquet. She is coached and mentored by Jessica Cottis.

Helen is the Vice Chair and Chair of the Finance Committee for Orchestras Live who work across England connecting communities with world class orchestras and their life changing power. She brings a wealth of leadership, strategic and financial expertise from her experience as a senior manager in the corporate sector prior to pursuing her vocation as a conductor. She has insight in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing from her previous role as a Chair of Lancashire Mind.

An engaging communicator, Helen is a skilled presenter and compere of concerts. Off the concert platform, she is an experienced panellist both as host and guest for live and online events. She appeared on a panel for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra as part of the Women's Euros cultural events. Helen regularly contributes to Operacast, a podcast covering news, reviews and discussion from the world of opera.

*'Underpinning all this was the orchestra under the capable direction of Helen Harrison. Her crisp beat and decisive intentions inspired confidence from the start', **Opera Magazine.***