

Helen Harrison

Biography September 2023

'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**.

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.

Helen is the Music Director and Conductor for the prestigious Young Sinfonia, the Royal Northern Sinfonia's Youth Orchestra at the Sage Gateshead. Recent guest conducting highlights include concerts with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, a relaxed performance with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and multiple performances with Sinfonia Viva.

As a conductor of opera and stage Helen works regularly with Northern Opera Group, Outreach Opera and is the Music Director for Preston Opera. Productions 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.

Helen relishes training the next generation of musicians. Most recently she conducted the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain Under 12 Orchestra, the Trinity Laban Summer School Project Orchestra and Yorchestra Maestros. She conducts regularly at Leeds Conservatoire. As Music Director and Conductor of the award-winning Blackpool Symphony Orchestra she is proud of the music education projects she has established with local schools.

Helen read Music at Cambridge University and studied Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music. She is a 2022/2023 Participant on the flagship programme for Women Conductors run by the Royal Philharmonic and the Royal Northern Sinfonia. Helen 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 currently coached and mentored by Jessica Cottis.

Helen is a board member for Orchestras Live who work across England connecting communities with professional orchestras. 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 2022 cultural events. Helen regularly contributes to Operacast, a podcast covering news, reviews and discussion from the world of opera.