

Helen Harrison

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A warm, natural and communicative presence on the podium British conductor Helen Harrison inspires exciting and compelling performances from the artists she collaborates with from orchestras, opera companies and choirs.

2022 starts significantly for Helen as she takes up her new role as the Music Director and Conductor for the Young Sinfonia, the Royal Northern Sinfonia's Youth Orchestra at the Sage Gateshead. She has also been selected to take part in the Royal Philharmonic Society's two year ground breaking programme for women conductors in partnership with the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

Guest conducting engagements include 'In Harmony NE Side by Side with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Sinfonia Viva, Northern Opera Group, Leeds Conservatoire Chamber Orchestra, Outreach Opera and Wilmslow Symphony Orchestra.

Helen is the Music Director and Conductor of the award winning Blackpool Symphony Orchestra, Preston Opera, Lytham St. Annes Choral Society and previously the Lancashire Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Helen read Music at Cambridge University and studied Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music. She is coached and mentored by Jessica Cottis.

She participated in the Royal Opera House Women Conductors' International Masterclass (July 2021) conducting artists from the Royal Opera House and the City of London Sinfonia. In June 2021 she was invited by the Royal Philharmonic Society to work with the Royal Northern Sinfonia as one of four emerging conductors in a project to advance gender equality on the podium. James Murphy, CEO of the Royal Philharmonic Society commented, "We invite artist managers and colleagues who hire conductors to follow those participating."

Selected for the inaugural Women Conductors Course in September 2018 run by the Royal Opera House, the Royal Philharmonic Society and the National Opera Studio Helen has subsequently taken part in a range of courses run by the Royal Opera House working with Sian Edwards, Alice Farnham and Jessica Cottis. She has also conducted in International Masterclasses held at the RNCM.

A passionate believer in the power of classical music to change lives, Helen is a board member for Orchestras Live and chairs the Finance Committee. Orchestras Live believe orchestras are for everyone and that live orchestral music has the power to inspire people for a lifetime. Working across England, Orchestras Live connect communities with world class orchestral experiences delivered by renowned professional orchestras.

Helen brings a wealth of leadership, strategic and financial management expertise from her experience working in senior management roles as a qualified accountant in the corporate sector prior to pursuing her vocation as a conductor. She also brings insight from the not for profit sector most recently as Chair of Lancashire Mind working to support positive mental health and wellbeing across Lancashire.

Helen is in demand as a host and member of panels – live and online; most recently she appeared on a panel for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra as part of the Women's Euros 2022 events. She is a regular podcast contributor to the Operacast podcast covering the latest opera news, reviews and discussion from the world of opera.