"A performance like this shows dimensions of Purcell’s genius that are all too rarely heard on disc."

GRAMOPHONE

"...breaks new ground in scholarship, matching it with performances of the highest order..."

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

"Bright Orb of Harmony deserves to be set among that constellation of previous dazzling recordings by an ensemble that is less a choir, more an institution."

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INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW

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Henry Purcell

The Indian Queen

Julie Cooper
Kirsty Hopkins
Jeremy Budd
Mark Dobell
Matthew Long
Ben Davies
Eamonn Dougan
Stuart Young

The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS
Was Henry Purcell quite simply the greatest English composer of all time? I recall with fondness the late Allan Wicks, who was my choirmaster at Canterbury Cathedral, saying to me, a few years before he died: “Harry, I always knew Purcell was a great composer but it is only now that I understand why”. You may think this is a rather odd thing to say but Purcell is one of many composers who have so benefited from the period-instrument movement. We are now bold enough to believe and adhere to his harmonies, his unique setting of text and his at times outrageous dramatic effects.

Purcell was a brilliant music dramatist but he was not an opera composer. Based on Dryden’s play, Purcell’s music from *The Indian Queen* deals with the conflict between the Mexicans and Peruvians and principally with Queen Zempoalla who at the end of the drama calls upon the magician Ismeron to tell her of the future: but, of course, it doesn’t quite turn out the way the Queen intended.

I am blessed with wonderful singers in The Sixteen and there is so much exceptional vocal music for them to revel in but none better than the extraordinary recitative “You twice ten hundred deities” for the aforesaid magician Ismeron which opens Act III, and was described by the historian Charles Burney as “the best piece of recitative in our language”. But for me one of the greatest delights of rehearsing, performing and recording *The Indian Queen* was the depth of detail we could go into to allow Purcell’s instrumental writing to leap off the page. His string writing is second to none, where the viola really does provide a middle texture which is adventurous, sonorous and as important as all the other parts. There is a plethora of detail, colour and characterisation to be explored in every symphony, air and dance. But above all there is a wealth of variety capped by exquisite writing for trumpet, oboes and recorders.

Like Mozart and Schubert, Henry Purcell lived all too short a life – he lived just over 30 years – and for that reason it was left to his brother Daniel to complete *The Indian Queen*. Daniel was no Henry but his final Hymeneal masque allows a little light relief. Act V, which was the last music that Henry wrote, is a perfect Didoesque ending to The Indian Queen proper and just proves how we as music lovers suffer when these geniuses die young.

This recording was made possible by the generous support of the following:

- Stephen Harker
- Simon Haslam
- Sir Thomas Hughes-Hallett KB
- Roger Mayhew
- Timothy & Damaris Sanderson
**HENRY PURCELL** (1659-1695)

1. **Catch**
   *To all lovers of music, performers and scrapers*  
   (John Carr; 1686-7)
   Mark Dobell, Jeremy Budd, Matthew Long *tenor*

2. **Air**
   1.20

3. **Hornpipe**
   0.49

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**The Indian Queen** (1695)

*(John Dryden and Sir Robert Howard)*

**First Music**

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**ACT I**

6. **Overture**
   2.54

7. **Trumpet Tune**
   0.34

8. **Wake, Quivera, our soft rest must cease**
   Jeremy Budd *tenor*

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**ACT II**

9. **Symphony**
   4.26

10. **I come to sing great Zempoalla's story**
    Matthew Long *tenor*

11. **What flatt'ring noise is this**
    Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell, Matthew Long *tenor*
    Eamonn Dougan *bass*

12. **Begone, curst fiends of Hell**
    Matthew Long *tenor*

13. **We come to sing great Zempoalla's story**
    0.50

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**ACT III**

14. **You twice ten hundred deities**
    Eamonn Dougan *bass*

15. **Symphony: The God of Dreams rises**
    1.04

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**PROLOGUE**

16. **Why should men quarrel here, where all possess**
    Kirsty Hopkins *soprano*

17. **By ancient prophecies we have been told**
    Jeremy Budd *tenor*, Kirsty Hopkins *soprano*

18. **Trumpet Tune**
    0.44

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**The Indian Queen** (1695)

*(John Dryden and Sir Robert Howard)*

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**First Music**

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**PROLOGUE**

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    Kirsty Hopkins *soprano*

17. **By ancient prophecies we have been told**
    Jeremy Budd *tenor*, Kirsty Hopkins *soprano*

18. **Trumpet Tune**
    0.44
Seek not to know what must not be reveal’d
Julie Cooper soprano

Trumpet Overture
2.40

Ah, how happy are we
Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell tenor

We, the spirits of the air
Soloists: Kirsty Hopkins, Julie Cooper soprano
1.20

I attempt from love’s sickness to fly in vain
Julie Cooper soprano
Third Act Tune: Rondeau
3.51

ACT IV

They tell us that your mighty powers
Kirsty Hopkins soprano
4.22

Fourth Act Tune: Air
1.02

ACT V

While thus we bow before your shrine
Soloist: Stuart Young bass
5.41

Total playing time 72.27

DANIEL PURCELL (1664-1717)
The Masque of Hymen (1695)
(John Dryden and Sir Robert Howard)

Symphony
1.07

To bless the genial bed with chaste delights
Ben Davies bass
1.24

Come all, come all
Soloist: Julie Cooper soprano
1.02

I’m glad I have met him
Kirsty Hopkins soprano, Eamonn Dougan bass
0.52

Good people, I’d make you all blest if I could
Ben Davies bass
0.38

My honey, my pug
Kirsty Hopkins soprano, Eamonn Dougan bass
1.32

The joys of wedlock soon are past
Julie Cooper soprano
2.09

Sound, sound the trumpet, let Love’s subjects know
Mark Dobell tenor
1.49

Make haste, make haste to put on Love’s chains
Ben Davies, Stuart Young bass
1.13

Trumpet Air
0.26

Let loud Renown with all her thousand tongues
0.52

Total playing time 72.27
HENRY PURCELL

Henry Purcell grew up in the service of King Charles II and narrowly escaped being born into it (he was born in 1659; 1660 was the year of the Restoration). His father and uncle, both professional musicians, secured salaried posts in the Chapel Royal choir when business there resumed. Young Henry joined the same choir aged seven or eight, and while a chorister received expert tuition in composition and keyboard playing. He stayed at court when his voice broke, in a series of positions paying him to compose, perform and direct music meeting its voracious and very varied needs: anthems for the Chapel Royal (many with string accompaniments, giving courtiers a rounded concert experience while officially at prayer); a repertoire of sonatas on which the royal violinists could draw when asked to provide function music; songs for the singers in Charles's 'Private Musick'; organ and harpsichord pieces; social music (catches) for the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal to enjoy when off-duty; and a steady stream of strictly occasional odes and welcome songs. Following the deaths of Pelham Humphrey in 1674 and Matthew Locke in 1677, John Blow and Henry Purcell together emerged as the two most dependable court composers, sharing ode production duties between them to ensure that deadlines were met and that individual creative freshness could be maintained.

London's licensed theatres had re-opened within weeks of the Restoration and from the beginning made strategic use of music to attract crowds. More music than usual, along with spectacular dancing, costumes and moveable scenes, turned plays into 'operas'; highlights of the theatre season but obviously expensive to put on. New productions launched at widely spaced intervals, and once in the repertoire were revived as often as possible. Upfront investment took years to recover. Fierce competition between the two companies in operation from 1660 to 1682 increased the risk: if an opera and a popular comedy were scheduled head to head neither theatre could hope to sell out. The rivals amalgamated in 1682 (by which time one was close to bankruptcy), limping together through the politically turbulent later 1680s. By 1690 confidence had returned. The United Company enjoyed a total theatrical monopoly and moved to take advantage of it. A new, big-budget Purcell opera opened in spring 1690 (Dioclesian), spring 1691 (King Arthur) and spring 1692 (The Fairy Queen). Ticket prices doubled for the length of the run – while the other theatre under United Company control stayed helpfully shut. These Purcell premieres were trailed in the press, eagerly discussed, and skilfully exploited by merchandisers: opera word-books and sheet music went on sale, along with lessons teaching the purchasers of sheet music how to sing or play it. Like Andrew Lloyd Webber today, Purcell sustained a lucrative industry based in the theatre but with offshoots reaching far beyond it. Only a composer confident of his market worth would have wanted to write and release a catch like To all lovers of music (track 1 on this CD), poking fun at music publishers. John Playford, John Carr and Carr's business partner Samuel Scott are mentioned by name. (Carr and Scott enjoyed the joke, evidently: the catch appeared in Book I of Comes Amoris, 1687, under their imprint.)

By 1693 rising tension between actors and managers in the United Company made further extension of Purcell's blockbuster opera series seem unwise. Poor company morale affecting standards of performance on stage would in turn affect performance at the box office. Cheaper plays-with-music reduced the risk while retaining Purcell's services and keeping up...
appearances. *The Indian Queen* belongs in this category. It was not an ‘opera’ on anything like the scale of *Dioclesian*, *King Arthur* or *The Fairy Queen* and it cannot fairly be compared with them.

The complicated theatre politics of 1694-5 brought *The Indian Queen* into being. Discontent within the United Company came to the boil. Its leading actor and dramaturgical genius Thomas Betterton threatened to lead a walkout, taking all his most experienced colleagues with him. They would need permission to set up on their own and planned to petition the king for it. Worried company managers tried to buy Betterton’s support by paying him a bonus – £50 to ‘gett up’ *The Indian Queen* (i.e. turn it into an opera). *The Indian Queen* was a canny choice, being one of several well-crafted plays written by the veteran politician Sir Robert Howard several decades previously. And Howard had been asked by the Lord Chamberlain (theatre monitor on behalf of the crown) to chair crisis talks aimed at averting break-up. To help persuade him of the justice of their cause the United Company management promised Howard a musical revival of one of his own scripts. Purcell would supply the music – coincidentally (or perhaps not) a regular visitor to the Howard house, calling in to give Sir Robert’s fourth wife Annabella music lessons. When Purcell died late in 1695 Lady Annabella paid for his monument in Westminster Abbey. Purcell’s widow Frances dedicated *Orpheus Britannicus*, a posthumously published collection of her husband’s songs, to Lady Howard, mentioning in her dedication that lyrics by Robert Howard had occasioned Purcell’s last and greatest compositions. These may have been lyrics penned for *The Indian Queen*, work on them giving Howard an opportunity to re-live his artistic youth. He and John Dryden (later poet laureate) had shared lodgings in the 1660s, and while living together enjoyed many literary conversations. They became brothers-in-law when Dryden married Sir Robert’s sister. Though Howard published *The Indian Queen* as his own unaided work in 1665 there is no reason to dispute Dryden’s later claim to have written or polished up parts of it.

But the best laid schemes … Howard sided with the rebel actors when it came to it. On his recommendation their licence request was approved, allowing them to leave the United Company and open a new theatre. Betterton led the exodus, taking his vast experience of opera with him (*Dioclesian*, *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen* had all been Betterton productions). Managers of the formerly united company were left to stage *The Indian Queen* as best they could. Newly recruited actors covered most of the roles; Howard’s script was heavily pruned (revenge!), and Purcell’s music slotted none-too-tidily into place. To create favourable first impressions Purcell was asked to set the whole of the prologue – the usual speech-filled wait for singers to make their appearance was eliminated, in the hope that evidence of inexperience when the actors did open their mouths would be more readily forgiven.

The Betterton company’s inaugural production (premiering *Love for Love*, by William Congreve) was a triumphant success, running for thirteen days from 30 April 1695. *The Indian Queen* would have opened as soon as possible after that, to hit back and to show that the enterprise he had abandoned was still a going concern: early- to mid-June 1695 is the likely window. The masque of Cupid, Hymen and married people for which Henry Purcell’s brother (or conceivably his cousin) Daniel provided music was almost certainly added for a revival in 1696, after Henry’s death. Following five acts of bloodily unfolding tragedy it is a spectacular non sequitur, though it serves its mood-lightening purpose well, supplying the trumpety finale which opera audiences had come to expect.

Andrew Pinnock © 2015
The Indian Queen

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Inca refuses. Montezuma changes sides abruptly, to lead the Mexicans in their fight back. Zempoalla the Indian Queen presumes Acacis dead. She swears vengeance. Now the Mexicans are winning.

Montezuma captures the Inca and Orazia. But Zempoalla’s general Traxalla steals them from Montezuma’s tent. They are paraded humiliatingly at the start of Zempoalla’s triumph scene (‘I come to sing great Zempoalla’s story,’ etc.). Montezuma and Acacis – rivals in love now working together to protect Orazia – burst in to attempt a rescue. Both are overpowered. Montezuma is dragged away to join the Inca and Orazia in gaol.

A complication: Zempoalla has fallen hopelessly in love with Montezuma, and Traxalla has fallen for Orazia. New rivalries are introduced. Zempoalla visits the conjurer Ismeron hoping for relief but he is no help at all, calling up a God of Dreams who gives nothing away (‘Seek not to know what must not be reveal’d’) along with Spirits of the Air either immune to human passion (‘Ah how happy are we’) or helplessly victim to it (‘I attempt from love’s sickness to fly in vain’).

Visiting prison, Zempoalla offers Montezuma his freedom on predictable terms. Traxalla makes Orazia a similar offer. Both are scornfully refused. Montezuma and Orazia are left in prison awaiting execution. Acacis appears to rescue them. Soldiers under his command escort Orazia away. Reluctantly, Montezuma and Acacis fight a duel to decide who deserves her most. Acacis is mortally wounded. Zempoalla watches, distraught. Zempoalla – a near-tragic figure by now – cuts Montezuma free. She still loves him. Montezuma kills Traxalla. Then to everyone’s amazement Amexia the rightful Indian Queen enters (Zempoalla had usurped that position), with Montezuma’s childhood guardian Garucca and a large armed party. They take control. Amexia and Montezuma embrace – long-lost mother and her long-lost son. Zempoalla produces a hidden dagger and stabs herself before onlookers can prevent it, dying soon after. With Montezuma revealed as true heir to the Mexican throne the Inca readily agrees to a dynastic match with Orazia. Dead bodies remain on stage while final words are said (the 1695 version) or are cleared away ready for a final masque in praise of marriage (1696).

Andrew Pinnock © 2015
HENRY PURCELL (1659-1695)

Catch (Mark Dobell, Jeremy Budd, Matthew Long)
To all lovers of music, performers and scrapers,
To those that love catches, play tunes and cut capers;
With a new catch I greet you, and tho’ I say it that shouldn’t,
Like a fiddle, tis music, tho’ the words are but wooden.

But my brother, John Playford, and I shall present you
E’er long with a book I presume will content you.
Tis true we know well the sale of good music,
But to hear us perform would make him sick or you sick.

My maggotman Sam, at the first Temple gate,
Will further inform you, if not my wife Kate;
From between the two Devils near Temple Bar,
I rest, your friend and servant John Carr.

(John Carr; 1686-7)

The Indian Queen (1695)
(John Dryden and Sir Robert Howard)

FIRST MUSIC  SECOND MUSIC

ACT I

5  Overture

7  Trumpet Tune

PROLOGUE

3  Indian Boy (Jeremy Budd)
Wake, Quivera, our soft rest must cease,
And fly together with our country’s peace;
No more must we sleep under plantain shade,
Which neither heat could pierce nor cold invade;
Where bounteous nature never feels decay,
And op’ning buds drive falling fruits away.

3  Indian Girl (Kirsty Hopkins)
Why should men quarrel here, where all possess
As much as they can hope for by success?
None can have most, where Nature is so kind
As to exceed man’s use, though not his mind.

5  Boy (Jeremy Budd)
By ancient prophecies we have been told
Our land shall be subdu’d by one more old;
And see! That world’s already hither come.

Girl, Boy (Kirsty Hopkins, Jeremy Budd)
If these be they we welcome then our doom.

Boy (Jeremy Budd)
Their looks are such that mercy flows from thence,
More gentle than our native innocence;

Wake, Quivera, our soft rest must cease,
And fly together with our country’s peace;
No more must we sleep under plantain shade,
Which neither heat could pierce nor cold invade;
Where bounteous nature never feels decay,
And op’ning buds drive falling fruits away.

Why should men quarrel here, where all possess
As much as they can hope for by success?
None can have most, where Nature is so kind
As to exceed man’s use, though not his mind.

By ancient prophecies we have been told
Our land shall be subdu’d by one more old;
And see! That world’s already hither come.

If these be they we welcome then our doom.

Their looks are such that mercy flows from thence,
More gentle than our native innocence;
By their protection let us beg to live:
They come not here to conquer, but forgive.

*Girl, Boy* (Kirsty Hopkins, Jeremy Budd)
If so your goodness may your power express,
And we shall judge both best by our success.

**Trumpet Tune**

**ACT II**

**Symphony**

*Fame* (Matthew Long) and chorus
I come to sing great Zempoalla’s story
Whose beauteous sight, so charming bright,
Outshines the lustre of glory.

*Envy* (Eamonn Dougan) and two followers (Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell)
What flattering noise is this,
At which my snakes all hiss?
I/we hate to see fond tongues advance
High as the Gods the slaves of chance.

**Fame** (Matthew Long)
Scorn’ d Envy, here’s nothing that thou canst blast:
Her glories are too bright to be oercast.

**ACT III**

*Envy* (Eamonn Dougan) and followers
(Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell)
I fly from the place where flattery reigns;
See those mighty things that before
Such slaves like gods did adore,
Contemned and unpitied in chains.
I fly from the place where flattery reigns;
I hate to see fond tongues advance
High as the Gods the slaves of chance.
What flattering noise is this,
At which my snakes all hiss?

*Fame* (Matthew Long)
Begone, curst fiends of Hell,
Sink down, where noisome vapours dwell,
While I her triumph sound,
To fill the universe around.

**Chorus**
We come to sing great Zempoalla’s story …

*Ismeron* (Eamonn Dougan)
You twice ten hundred deities
To whom we daily sacrifice,
Ye pow’rs that dwell with fates below
And see what men are doom’d to do,
Where elements in discord dwell;
Thou God of Sleep, arise and tell
Great Zempoalla what strange fate
Must on her dismal vision wait.
By the croaking of the toad,
In their caves that make abode,
Earthly dun that pants for breath
With her swell'd sides full of death;
By the crested adders' pride
That along the cliffs do glide;
By thy visage fierce and black;
By the death's head on thy back;
By the twisted serpents plac'd
For a girdle round thy waist;
By the hearts of gold that deck
Thy breast, thy shoulders and thy neck:
From thy sleeping mansion rise
And open thy unwilling eyes;
While bubbling springs their music keep,
That used to lull thee in thy sleep.

### Symphony: The God of Dreams rises

#### God of Dreams (Julie Cooper)
Seek not to know what must not be reveal'd;
Joys only flow where fate is most conceal'd:
Too busy man would find his sorrows more
If future fortunes he should know before.

For by that knowledge of his destiny
He would not live at all but always die.
Enquire not then who shall from bonds be freed,
Who 'tis shall wear a crown, or who shall bleed.
All must submit to their appointed doom;
Fate and misfortune will too quickly come.
Let me no more with powerful charms be press'd:
I am forbid by Fate to tell the rest.

### Trumpet Overture

### Aerial spirits (Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell)
Ah, how happy are we,
From human passions free!
Those wild tenants of the breast
No never can disturb our rest.
Yet we pity tender souls
Whom the tyrant Love controls.

### Aerial spirits (Kirsty Hopkins, Julie Cooper) and chorus
We, the spirits of the air
That of human things take care,
Out of pity now descend
To forewarn what woes attend.
Greatness clogg'd with scorn decays,
With the slave no empire stays.
Cease to languish then in vain
Since never to be loved again.
Air (Julie Cooper)
I attempt from love’s sickness to fly in vain,
Since I am myself my own fever and pain.
No more now, fond heart, with pride no more swell;
Thou canst not raise forces enough to rebel.
For love has more power and less mercy than fate,
To make us seek ruin and of those that hate.

Third Act Tune: Rondeau

ACT IV
Air (Kirsty Hopkins)
They tell us that your mighty powers above
Make perfect your joys and your blessings by love.
Ah! Why do you suffer the blessing that’s there
To give a poor lover such sad torments here?
Yet though for my passion such grief I endure,
My love shall like yours still be constant and pure.
To suffer for him gives an ease to my pains;
There’s joy in my grief and there’s freedom in chains.
If I were divine he could love me no more,
And I in return my adorer adore,
O, let his dear life then, kind Gods, be your care,
For I in your blessings have no other share.

Fourth Act Tune: Air

ACT V
Chorus
While thus we bow before your shrine,
That you may hear, great pow’rs divine,
All living things shall in your praises join.

High priest (Stuart Young)
You who at the altar stand
Waiting for the dread command,
The fatal word shall soon be heard:
Answer then, is all prepared?

Chorus
All’s prepared.

High priest (Stuart Young)
Let all unhallow’d souls be gone
Before our sacred rites come on;
Take care that this is also done.

Chorus
All is done.

High priest (Stuart Young)
Now in procession walk along,
And then begin your solemn song.

Chorus
All dismal sounds thus on these off’rings wait,
Your pow’r shown by their untimely fate;
While by such various fates we learn to know
There’s nothing, no nothing, to be trusted here below.
Symphony

_Hymen_ (Ben Davies)
To bless the genial bed with chaste delights,
To give you happy days and pleasant nights,
Lo! I appear to crown your soft desires,
And with this sacred torch to consecrate Love’s fires.

A _follower of Hymen_ (Julie Cooper)
Come all, come all,
Come, come at my call,
Heroes and lovers, come away,
Come all, and praise this glorious day.

Chorus
Come all, and sing great Hymen’s praise,
The god who makes the darkest night
Appear more joyful and more bright
Than thousands of victorious days.

_Two married people_ (Kirsty Hopkins, Eamonn Dougan)
He I’m glad I have met him.
She Let me come at him!
He Bane of passion,
She pleasure’s curse!
Both Confounded inventor of better for worse!
You told us indeed you’d heap blessings upon us,
You made us believe you, and so have undone us.
He In railing
She and wailing,
Both Lamenting, repenting, we pass all our days,
What stomach have we to sing thy praise?

_Hymen_ (Ben Davies)
Good people, I’d make you all blest if I could,
But he that can do it must be more than a god;
And though you think now perhaps you are curst,
I’ll warrant you thought yourselves happy at first.

_Two married people_ (Kirsty Hopkins, Eamonn Dougan)
She My honey, my pug,
He My fetters, my clog,
Both Let’s tamely jog on as others have done,
She And sometimes at quiet,
He But oft’ner at strife,
Both Let’s hug the tedious load of a married life.
**Cupid** (Julie Cooper)
The joys of wedlock soon are past,
But I, if I please, can make 'em last.
Where love's a trade and hearts are sold,
How weak the fire, how soon 'tis cold!
The flame increases and refines
Where virtue and where merit joins.

**Follower of Cupid** (Mark Dobell)
Sound, sound the trumpet, let Love's subjects know,
From Heav'n's high vault to Erebus below,
That from this hour their discords all shall cease;
Love, that can only do it, will give 'em peace.

**Two followers of Cupid** (Ben Davies, Stuart Young)
Make haste, make haste to put on Love's chains,
Ye heroes that delight in arms!
Forsake fond honour's gaudy charms;
And join your trumpets to our rural strains.

**Trumpet Air**

**Grand Chorus**
Let loud Renown with all her thousand tongues
Repeat no name but his in her immortal songs.

Harry Christophers is known internationally as founder and conductor of The Sixteen as well as being a regular guest conductor for many of the major symphony orchestras and opera companies worldwide. He has directed The Sixteen choir and orchestra throughout Europe, America and Asia-Pacific, gaining a distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, Baroque and 20th- and 21st-century music. In 2000 he instituted The Choral Pilgrimage, a national tour of English cathedrals from York to Canterbury in music from the pre-Reformation, as The Sixteen's contribution to the millennium celebrations. The Pilgrimage in the UK is now central to The Sixteen's annual artistic programme.

Since 2008 Harry Christophers has been Artistic Director of Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society; he is also Principal Guest Conductor of the Granada Symphony Orchestra. As well as enjoying a partnership with the BBC Philharmonic, with whom he won a Diapason d’Or, he is a regular guest conductor with the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. With The Sixteen he is an Associate Artist at The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and features in the highly successful BBC television series, *Sacred Music*, presented by Simon Russell Beale.

Harry has conducted numerous productions for Lisbon Opera and English National Opera as well as conducting the UK premiere of Messager’s opera *Fortunio* for Grange Park Opera. He is a regular conductor at Buxton Opera where he initiated a very successful cycle of Handel’s operas and oratorios including *Semele, Samson, Saul* and *Jephtha*.

Harry Christophers is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and has been awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Leicester. He was awarded a CBE in the 2012 Queen’s Birthday Honours.
After three decades of worldwide performance and recording, The Sixteen is recognised as one of the world’s greatest ensembles. Its special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance, Baroque and early Classical periods, and a diversity of 20th- and 21st-century music, all stems from the passions of conductor and founder, Harry Christophers.

The Sixteen tours internationally giving regular performances at the major concert halls and festivals. At home in the UK, The Sixteen are ‘The Voices of Classic FM’ as well as Associate Artists of The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. The group also promotes The Choral Pilgrimage, an annual tour of the UK’s finest cathedrals.

The Sixteen’s period-instrument orchestra has taken part in acclaimed semi-staged performances of Purcell’s *The Fairy Queen* in Tel Aviv and London, a fully-staged production of Purcell’s *King Arthur* in Lisbon’s Belém Centre, and new productions of Monteverdi’s *Il ritorno d’Ulisse* at Lisbon Opera House and *The Coronation of Poppea* at English National Opera.

Over 100 recordings reflect The Sixteen’s quality in a range of work spanning the music of 500 years. In 2009 the group won the coveted Classic FM Gramophone Artist of the Year Award and the Baroque Vocal Award for Handel’s *Coronation Anthems*. The Sixteen also features in the highly successful BBC television series, *Sacred Music*, presented by Simon Russell Beale.

In 2011 the group launched a new training programme for young singers, called Genesis Sixteen. Aimed at 18 to 23 year-olds, this is the UK’s first fully-funded choral programme for young singers designed specifically to bridge the gap from student to professional practitioner.