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STEPHEN LAYTON

Biography

Stephen Layton succeeded the late Richard Hickox as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the City of London Sinfonia in September 2010. Founder and Director of Polyphony, Layton is also Music Director of Holst Singers and in 2006 was made a Fellow and Director of Music of Trinity College, Cambridge. His former posts include Chief Guest Conductor of the Danish National Vocal Ensemble, Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Kammerkoor and Director of Music at the Temple Church in London.

Layton guest conducts widely and has worked extensively with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Singers, English Chamber Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Irish Chamber Orchestra and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. He also collaborates regularly with the Academy of Ancient Music and Britten Sinfonia, with whom he has recorded a wide range of repertoire including Handel, Bruckner, Poulenc and Stravinsky.

Layton's recent engagements include dates with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Estonian Philharmonic Choir and the Latvian Radio Choir. Highlights of the 2011/12 season included a tour and recording period with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Polyphony, with soloists including Carolyn Sampson and Ian Bostridge; a UK tour in celebration of the Scott Centenary with the City of London Sinfonia; a performance of Bach's Christmas Oratorio with the Copenhagen

Philharmonic Orchestra; and performances of Bach's St John Passion at Melbourne Recital Centre, Australia.

Highlights of the 2012/13 season include performances with Die Konzertisten and the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong; a performance of Lukaszewski's *Via Crucis* at the International Festival Wratistlavia Cantans; a performance of Bach's *Mass in B minor* with the Auckland Philharmonia and Choir; and a return to the Hallé to conduct their annual *Messiah*. 2012/13 is also eventful for Polyphony, with highlights including performances at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, as part of the Zaterdag Matinee series; Belfast Festival, as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations; and at Aldeburgh for a Britten celebration. 2012/13 will see Layton dedicating a lot of time to projects with the City of London Sinfonia, including a Poulenc celebration and a tour of the major UK Cathedrals to further enforce the orchestra's strong connection with choirs and vocal repertoire. Layton will round off the season with appearances at a number of the UK's leading festivals, and an engagement with the Latvian Radio Choir.

A champion of new music, Layton has premiered new repertoire by many composers, including Jackson, Tormis and Lauridsen and, more recently, by the young Latvian composer, Eriks Esenvalds. Layton's bold realisation of Sir John Tavener's epic seven-hour vigil *The Veil of the Temple*, a new departure in British choral music, met with outstanding acclaim both in London and in New York.

Stephen Layton's eclectic discography encompasses a vast range of repertoire, composers and genres. In 2001 his Hyperion recording of Britten's *Sacred & Profane* received a Gramophone Award and the Diapason d'Or in France for best choral disc of the year. In the US, Layton was nominated for Grammy Awards in 2006, 2007 and 2012 for his

Hyperion recordings of *Cloudburst* (Whitacre), *Lux Aeterna* (Lauridsen) and *Beyond all mortal dreams* (a collection of American a cappella repertoire) respectively. Layton's Hyperion recording of Tormis' *Songs* with the Holst Singers received the Spanish CD Compact Award 2009 in the choral music category. In 2009 Layton's live recording of Handel's *Messiah* with Polyphony and Britten Sinfonia (recorded at the annual St. John's, Smith Square performance in 2008) was released to great critical acclaim. Layton's latest Hyperion disc, 'Howells *Requiem*', with the Choir of Trinity College Cambridge, was named as Gramophone choral disc of the month in May 2012. In July 2012, Layton's disc, on OUR Recordings, with Michala Petri and the Danish National Vocal Ensemble The Nightingale won the Echo Klassik award in Germany.

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