

Helen Charlston

Mezzo-Soprano



“Helen Charlston stood out on account of her warmly distinctive tone.”

The Telegraph

Acclaimed for her musical interpretation, presence and “warmly distinctive tone” (The Telegraph), **Helen Charlston** is quickly cementing herself as a key performer in the next generation of British singers. Helen won first prize in the 2018 Handel Singing Competition and was a finalist in the Hurn Court Opera Competition, and the Grange Festival International Singing Competition. She was a ‘Rising Star’ of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment 2017-2019 and a 2018 City Music Foundation Artist. In 2021, she joined Le Jardin des Voix academy with Les Arts Florissants, and the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists scheme, and also became winner of the Ferrier Loveday Song Prize in 2021 Kathleen Ferrier Awards.

In 2020, Helen premiered *The Isolation Songbook* with Michael Craddock and Alexander Soares, which is a set of 15 newly commissioned songs and duets written during lockdown as a musical response to the changing world in which we found ourselves.

Recent and upcoming concert highlights include Handel’s *Messiah* with BBC NOW and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Bach’s *Weihnachtatorium* with Casa da Musica, *Judas Maccabaeus* with the RIAS Kammerchor, Mendelssohn’s *Lobgesang* with the Royal Northern Sinfonia and Paul McCreesh, her debut at the Palau de la Musica in Barcelona for Bach’s *St Matthew Passion* with the Gabrieli Consort and Players, a worldwide tour of Handel’s *Messiah* with the Seattle Symphony, the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, performances as part of Barbican Sound Unbound 2019 and solo recitals at York Early Music Festival, London Handel Festival, Händel-festspiele Halle, Korčula Baroque Festival, Leicester International Music Festival and Fitzrovia Festival.

In 2019/20, Helen made debuts with the Academy of Ancient Music, Cambridge Handel Opera Company, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra, joined Fretwork for a solo recital programme at Wigmore Hall, and continued her commissioning project of lute songs with duo partner Toby Carr. In 2020, Helen premiered the full role of **Anna** in the

newly completed opera *Blue Electric* by Tom Smail.

Operatic roles include **Messaggera** & **Prosperpina** *L’Orfeo*, **First Witch** *Dido and Aeneas*, **Olga Eugene** *Onegin*, **Florence Pike** *Albert Herring*, **Ino Semele**, **Sara Tobias** and the *Angel* and **Dinah** *Trouble in Tahiti*. Helen created the role of **Dido** in the premiere of a new chamber opera based on Virgil’s writings about Dido: *Dido is Dead*, by young composer Rhiannon Randle.

Often heard on BBC Radio 3 in live concert relays, Helen features on recordings of Bach’s *B Minor Mass* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Trinity College Choir, and Bach’s *Actus Tragicus* & *Himmelskönig sei willkommen* with Amici Voices and Amici Baroque Players, both available from Hyperion. The “mesmerising delivery” of her aria in BWV 182 on the Amici Voices CD was singled out by Gramophone Magazine as the highlight of the recording. This season she will record John Eccles’ *Semele* in the role of **Juno** with the Cambridge Handel Opera Company and the Academy of Ancient Music.

Helen began singing as chorister and head chorister of the St Albans Abbey Girls Choir. She then studied music at Trinity College, Cambridge where she held a choral scholarship for four years and was a scholar on the Pembroke College Lieder Scheme, led by Joseph Middleton.

Valid for use until 1 February 2022
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