

Helen Charlston

Mezzo-Soprano



“Charlston’s vocal tone boasts an astonishingly beautiful weight and heft, which she deploys with irresistible urgency throughout both tender and bravura passages.”

The San Francisco Chronicle

Helen Charlston was recently a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist (2021-23), and finalist of the 2021 Kathleen Ferrier Awards for which she was a recipient of the Ferrier Loveday Song Prize. In 2023 she won a Gramophone Award for Best Concept Album, and collected the Vocal award at the BBC Music Magazine Awards, both for her second Delphian album: *Battle Cry*: the only recording that year to win at both ceremonies.

Described as “surely one of the most exciting voices in the new generation of British singers” (Alexandra Coghlan, Gramophone 2022), Helen was a ‘Rising

Star’ of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment 2017-2019, and was selected for Le Jardin des Voix academy with Les Arts Florissants in 2021. Helen’s other accolades include the first prize in the 2018 Handel Singing Competition and finalist in the Grange Festival International Singing Competition. In July 2022 Helen was announced as one of Classic FM’s Rising Stars (30 under 30).

In the 2022/23 Season she made her debut at Versailles Royal Opera singing **Dido** in Purcell *Dido & Aeneas*, and at Grange Festival singing **Sorceress/Spirit** in the same opera. This season she will cover the title role in Charpentier *Médée* at Opéra national de Paris.

On the concert platform in 2023/24, Helen premieres a new song cycle written for her as a companion piece to Schumann *Dichterliebe* by Héloïse Werner at the Oxford International Song Festival and Wigmore Hall, reunites with Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Richard Egarr to perform Bach *B minor mass*, tours Bach’s *St John Passion* with Les Arts Florissants in Asia, records Britten *Phaedra* live in concert with BBC Philharmonic, sings Handel’s *Messiah* with the Warsaw Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, Britten Sinfonia and Huddersfield Choral Society, Bach Cantatas with Dunedin Consort, and Monteverdi’s *Vespers* in Geneva with Ensemble I Gemelli.

An artistic advisor for York Early Music festival, Helen will feature in a 3-day residency at the 2024 festival, performing a wide range of programmes with music by Dowland and Couperin, to Schumann and Mendelssohn, and a set of new commissions for her and lutenist Toby Carr by Ben Rowarth and Anna Semple.

Last season Helen sang Mendelssohn *Elijah* at BBC Proms with Scottish Chamber Orchestra / Maxim Emelyanychev, Handel’s *Judas Maccabaeus* with the RIAS Kammerchor at the Berlin Philharmonie with Justin Doyle, Mahler *Lieder eines fahrenden gesellen* with BBC Philharmonic, **Irene** in Handel *Theodora* with the Philharmonia Baroque in San Francisco and Mahler *Symphony No. 3* with Kensington Symphony Orchestra. She toured two semi-staged productions with Les Arts Florissants/William Christie singing **Dido** Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*, and **Rosmira** Handel *Partenope* across France and Canada.

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. In 2022, Delphian Records released her second album, *Battle Cry: She Speaks* with Toby Carr, which received high praise from British press including Editor’s choice in Gramophone and has been streamed by over 1 million people worldwide.

In addition to Helen’s two recital albums on the Delphian label, she has recorded with BIS, Signum and Hyperion, and on the Academy of Ancient Music’s own label in Dussek *Messe Solemnelle* which won a Gramophone Award in 2021, and Eccles’ *Semele* in the role of **Juno**, also shortlisted for a Gramophone Award. Helen’s regular collaborators include Toby Carr, Sholto Kynoch, Joe Middleton, Kunal Lahiry and Roman Rabinovich.

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