

# Helen Charlston

Mezzo-Soprano



" [Charlston] can give life to a line like few others; her diction is marvellous, and marvellously varied; everything flows with incomparable beauty."

**Gramophone**

**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.

This season, Helen makes her debut at the Gran Teatre del Liceu as **Sesto** in Calixto Bieito's production of *Giulio Cesare* conducted by William Christie, and sings Handel's *Messiah* at BBC Proms with The Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Bach's *St John Passion* with the Academy of Ancient Music, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with WDR Köln under Simon Halsey, and also with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra under Václav Luks, and Bach's *Magnificat* with RIAS Kammerchor under Justin Doyle in South Korea. In recital she performs *Battle Cry* with Toby Carr at Brucknerhaus Linz, with Sholto Kynoch at the Oxford International Song Festival, a programme of Handel with the Prague Philharmonia at Lobkowitz Palace, and she returns to Wigmore Hall.

Other opera appearances have included her debut at Versailles Royal Opera singing **Dido** in Purcell *Dido & Aeneas*, at Grange Festival singing **Sorceress/Spirit** in the same opera and most recently she covered the title role in Charpentier *Médée* at Opéra national de Paris. She has also toured two semi-staged productions with Les Arts Florissant and William Christie singing **Dido** and **Rosmira** in Handel *Partenope* across France and Canada.

Recent appearances on the concert platform include premieres of 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, Bach *B minor mass* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Richard Egarr, as well as Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at the BBC Proms with Maxim Emelyanychev, Britten's *Phaedra* live in concert with BBC Philharmonic, Handel's *Messiah* with the Warsaw Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, and Britten Sinfonia, Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus* with the RIAS Kammerchor at the Berlin Philharmonie with Justin Doyle, Mahler *Lieder eines fahrenden gesellen* with BBC Philharmonic and **Irene** in Handel *Theodora* with the Philharmonia Baroque in San Francisco.

An artistic advisor for York Early Music festival, Helen featured in a residency in 2024 performing a wide range music by Dowland and Couperin, to Schumann and Mendelssohn, and a set of new commissions for her and Toby Carr by Ben Rowarth and Anna Semple.

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 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 has been streamed over 1 million times.

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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