The Flowering of Genius
Guerrero, Tallis, Byrd, Victoria
"The Sixteen’s sound is distilled, ethereal – hard to imagine a more sublime performance."
BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

Venetian Treasures
Gabrieli, Caldara, Monteverdi, Lassus, Cavalli
"...this programme forms a rich, satisfying sequence, an effect heightened by The Sixteen’s superb renditions."
GOLDBERG

Palestrina – Volume 1
"The approach of Harry Christophers is distinctive and revelatory, and he has surrounded the mass by a well-chosen array of motets in praise of the Virgin Mary."
BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

James MacMillan: Miserere
"MacMillan’s Strathclyde Motets and Tenebrae Responsories offer an opportunity to savour just what a superb choir The Sixteen are, and their especial affinity with this music heightens the impact of these powerful performances."
GRAMOPHONE

Palestrina – Volume 1
COR16091

James MacMillan: Miserere
COR16096

The Earth Resounds
Josquin
Brumel
Lassus
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS
EAMONN DOUGAN

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www.thesixteen.com
COR16097
The Earth Resounds

On this recording, I have decided to explore the quite amazing sacred music emanating from Flanders in the 15th and 16th centuries. This extraordinary music spans 100 years of innovation and brilliance and as John Milsom says in his wonderful notes, “in each case the composer has pushed beyond the normal bounds of artistic and technical orthodoxy to release the dramatic potential of the words.” This is music to our ears as, for The Sixteen, words are of the essence whatever the period of music.

Josquin, Brumel and Lassus were truly European composers, who left their origins to work in the top establishments of Aix-en-Provence, Ferrara, Rome and Munich. Their music has a unique sonority which I believe will astound you all – from the depth of expression and fascinatingly complex texts of Josquin (there is an almost surreal feeling in Praeter rerum seriem) to the overtly decorative Mass movements of Brumel (Missa Et ecce terraemotus), where the twelve parts interweave in extensive imitation and thrilling tracery, culminating in the magical harmonic stillness of Lassus (Timor et tremor) and his highly evocative 10-part setting of Aurora lucis rutilat, guaranteed, as John so rightly says, to “make the earth resound on Easter Day”.

Recording is always an interesting process and one in which we attempt to be as natural as possible. The two days we spent making this CD were, for me, some of the most challenging of my career. Temporarily incapacitated by a back problem, I was in the main unable to conduct and The Sixteen's Associate Conductor Eamonn Dougan was frequently required to conduct the choir under my direction in the way I wished the music to be interpreted; no easy task, but one which Eamonn dispatched with great aplomb.

This recording is a tribute to the way The Sixteen bond as a group and excel in all respects. My thanks to everyone involved for seeing it all realised.
The Earth Resounds

1. **Orlande de Lassus** (c.1532–1594)
   *Aurora lucis rutilat*  
   **5.11**

2. **Josquin Desprez** (c.1452–1521)
   *Praeter rerum seriem*  
   **5.48**

3. **Orlande de Lassus**
   *Timor et tremor*  
   **4.44**

4. **Josquin Desprez**
   *Huc me sydereo*  
   **5.43**

5. **Antoine Brumel** (c.1460–1512-1513)
   *Gloria* from Missa Et ecce terraemotus  
   **8.41**

6. **Orlande de Lassus**
   *Magnificat secundi toni super Praeter rerum seriem*  
   **9.57**

7. **Antoine Brumel**
   *Sanctus* from Missa Et ecce terraemotus  
   **6.45**

8. **Josquin Desprez**
   *O Virgo prudentissima*  
   **6.07**

9. **Orlande de Lassus**
   *Magnificat octavi toni super Aurora lucis rutilat*  
   **8.05**
   Total running time  
   **61.07**

**The Earth Resounds**

BBC Radio 4’s celebrated series *Desert Island Discs* once featured an interview with a professional inventor who made an astonishing claim: that he could never look at any manufactured object without wondering how it had been made. Few of us tread such an analytical path through life; normally it is the utility of things that matters, not how they came into being. But with works of art the situation is different. Typically we want to know who made the work in question. Sometimes we ask why it was made, or when, or for whom. And faced with an elaborate painting, a convoluted novel or a beguiling symphony, we might even ponder the creative process itself. How were these splendid artworks conceived and made?

The extraordinary sound-sculptures featured on this disc all bring these questions to mind. Musically they are audacious and arresting works, based on verbal texts that deal with themes of sublimity, mystery, pathos or peril; and in each case the composer has pushed beyond the normal bounds of artistic and technical orthodoxy to release the dramatic potential of the words. Clearly these are special pieces, made for special events or situations, yet their historical origins are obscure: not one of them can be dated or contextualized precisely, leaving us to guess when and why they came into being. What they do contain, however, is clear evidence of how they were made; and it is worth our while to ponder that evidence. By examining their craftsmanship, we not only gain some sense of their special properties, but also discover ways of listening to them.

Strangest by far is the 12-voice *Missa Et ecce terraemotus*, known sometimes as the ‘Earthquake Mass’. Its composer, Antoine Brumel, lived from roughly 1460 until 1512-13, working as a church musician variously in Chartres, Geneva, Chambéry, Laon, Paris and Ferrara; but...
none of those places can definitively lay claim to the Earthquake Mass, which today survives only in a huge manuscript choirbook copied for use in Munich some years after Brumel's death. Possibly the Mass was meant for Eastertide celebrations, since it takes its inspiration from the Resurrection story as told in Matthew 28:2: 'And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre where Jesus's body had lain'. Yet the sheer scale of the work suggests there is more to it than Easter alone. In truth, the story of its genesis may never be known.

Like most Masses of its age, this one quotes from pre-existing musical material. The model here is the plainchant antiphon 'Et ecce terraemotus', sung annually on Easter morning; but Brumel almost never allows this melody to rise to the sounding surface of his Mass. Only in the Sanctus at the word 'Hosanna' does it sing out loud and clear; elsewhere, Brumel tends to hide the chant deep within the polyphony, where we are least likely to spot it. Moreover, he has found a way of superimposing the melody on itself in three voices simultaneously, each statement starting on a different note and sung in a different rhythm, usually very slowly. As a polyphonic idea this is ingenious, but it is also virtually impossible for the listener to follow; so why is it there? The most likely answer is that Brumel crafted it as a backbone against which he could then add the remaining nine voices; and this is because it was the nine-voice flesh, not the three-voice backbone, that was his main concern. In fact, from a listener's point of view the Earthquake Mass is really not 'about' its plainchant model. It is about earthquakes.

Astonishingly, in this work Brumel has set out to simulate the phenomenon of trembling land, and to make us wonder at it. Against the slow-moving harmonies generated by the chant backbone, layer upon layer of quivering melody has been built up, creating textures that literally seem to shake. The music's vast but unstable bulk therefore functions as a sonorous equivalent to a real earthquake. But there is more to it than that; Brumel also tries to impress and overwhelm the listener with a surfeit of sound, in the same way that natural phenomena can fill us with awe. His approach brings to mind Debussy's great orchestral suite La Mer, which makes no attempt to mimic the sounds of the sea, but does powerfully invoke the motion of the swell, and (more significantly) does its utmost to arouse our emotions. Music can do this because, like physical movement, it passes through time; and it can also stun us by the sheer intensity of its noise. Debussy achieves those effects in La Mer – but amazingly, so does Brumel, in a choral work composed four centuries earlier.

How was this 12-voice Mass actually made? Few autograph scores survive from the Renaissance, and almost none for works by the most competent composers. This might imply that 16th-century musicians could devise whole pieces in their heads, and then write out sets of performers’ parts immediately, without any need for score notation. There may be some truth in this, yet a piece as intricate as the Missa Et ecce terraemotus could hardly have been made wholly in that way, any more than a great cathedral could be built without some reliance on sketches or plans. The reality is that composers, like architects, probably worked extensively on erasable surfaces, which by their nature leave no trace of the work-in-progress. A finished work may hint at the stages of construction; in Brumel's Mass, for instance, the three-voice chant-based backbone must have been conceived first, as a core around which everything else could be built. But Brumel's drafts themselves have long since disappeared: wiped away, like chalk from a blackboard.

Some Renaissance composers seem to have been inveterate sketchers. One of them was Brumel's most famous contemporary, Josquin Desprez (c.1452–1521). No autograph scores by Josquin survive, but many of his works contain clues about how they were made. All three motets by him included on this disc have backbones of plainchant – and
in each case the chant is much easier to discern than in Brumel’s Mass. Each motet inhabits a unique sound-world that supremely matches the subject of its verbal text, so it would seem that Josquin, when pondering a new set of words, could broadly sense how a finished piece should sound, even before working on the actual polyphony. And at a more local level, all three motets reveal Josquin’s love of scrupulous craftsmanship in which melodies are combined with one another in ingenious ways – kernel ideas which, once sketched, could then be expanded outwards to become longer vocal lines.

Two of these motets set texts by 15th-century Italian poets. This might suggest that Josquin wrote them while living and working in Rome or Ferrara; but possibly they were commissions or gifts for Italian patrons, sent (as music often was) from composer to recipient by courier.

Huc me sydereo, scored for five-voice choir, sets words attributed to Maffeo Vegio (1407-58), and is a harrowing meditation on the Crucifixion. The six-voice O Virgo prudentissima, to a text by the humanist poet Angelo Poliziano (1454-94), is an appeal to the Virgin Mary for protection at times of peril. Each motet additionally quotes a plainchant melody, with words taken from the medieval liturgy; and each therefore challenges the listener to follow two sets of words at once. Again we might ask why the composer has done this.

To an extent it is a matter of convention. Many motets written between the 13th and 15th centuries superimpose the singing of a new text (or more than one text) on a backbone of ancient chant, so in this regard Josquin merely treads the path of his forebears. But his way of combining new with old is exploratory and innovative. In Huc me sydereo, the phrases of Vegio’s text have been set to terse and expressive melodies that pass from voice to voice in imitation – which is straightforward to make when no plainchant is in play, but much harder to compose against a Tenor part singing the backbone of pre-existing chant. An erasable tablet would have been handy here, as a site for drafting combinations that are easy on the ear yet clever as craft.

In O Virgo prudentissima something more radical happens. At first Josquin’s methods recall those of Huc me sydereo, but as the piece proceeds the words of Poliziano’s text are invaded and thrust away by those of the plainchant. Thus all six voices, and not just the Tenor part, end up by singing the ancient liturgical text ‘O blessed Mother and unwedded Virgin, O glorious Queen of the world, intercede for us with the Lord’. This is not how chant-based motets normally behave.

Praeter rerum seriem is equally idiosyncratic. This striking motet, for six-voice choir, probably dates from Josquin’s later years – perhaps after 1504, following his return from Italy to his homelands near the Franco-Belgian border. Its backbone is a medieval chant widely sung by French choirboys and nuns at Christmas and on major feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with words that are rhythmical and rhymed, and a tune that is positively sprightly. This tune sounds continuously in Josquin’s motet, but is quoted in a most unusual way. In the motet’s first half, each of its notes is hugely distended, to the extent that the tune’s identity is lost even to listeners who know it well. The augmentations become less gross as the motet proceeds, but nonetheless they shrink down to an everyday pace only as the motet nears its end. Again we need to ponder the composer’s actions here: why has he so distorted this tune?

The most likely answer is that he wanted his musical setting broadly to mirror the meaning of the text. Praeter rerum seriem contemplates the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, an unfathomable act of God that lay (to quote the motet’s opening words) ‘outside the natural order’ of things. By massively stretching the tune, Josquin too has made it almost impossible to comprehend; but in the process he has also laid down a colossal backbone, declaimed by tenors and sopranos in turn, against which to devise music of utter solemnity. The vocal lines do not deliver the words in the declamatory manner of Huc me sydereo, but instead sing melodies of great stateliness that arise from purely musical invention. Meshed together, these
melodies create a dense fabric of dark minor harmonies that unfolds through time in unpredictable deep rhythms, leaving the listener guessing whether the music proceeds in broad counts of two or three. Few Renaissance motets are more massive, mysterious and monumental than this one.

One person known to have been impressed by *Præter rerum seriem* is Orlande de Lassus (c.1532–1594), who paid it the ultimate tribute by creating a work carved out of its musical substance. This act of homage is all the more interesting because of the age difference between the two men. Three generations separate them – which is to say that Josquin was to Lassus what Bach was to Beethoven: a veritable past master, still respected in a world of significantly changed musical fashion. Between Josquin and Lassus lies a whole musical genre that flourished only after Josquin's death: the madrigal, with its quicksilver responsiveness to the setting of words. Lassus grew up with madrigals in his ears, and his own music essentially speaks the language of current madrigal styles. Nonetheless Lassus did occasionally look back to a more distant past. We know, for instance, that he and his choir at the Bavarian court chapel sang Brumel's *Missa Et ecce terraemotus*, for they wrote their names into the Munich choirbook where this work survives. And we can gauge the depth of Lassus's respect for Josquin from his remarkable *Magnificat secundi toni super Præter rerum seriem*.

This title is a mouthful, and needs to be taken in three smaller bites. First, Lassus has here composed a Magnificat, using the words expressed by the Virgin Mary at the scene of the Visitation. Second, it is a *Magnificat super Præter rerum seriem* because Lassus quotes and develops musical ideas taken directly from Josquin's *Præter rerum seriem*. The quotations are justified for two reasons: first, they invoke a motet that had itself contemplated the mystery of the Immaculate Conception; and second, they allow Lassus to pay homage to Josquin through acts of citation and recomposition. Third, the piece is a *Magnificat secundi toni* because, like all Renaissance Magnificat settings, it draws on one of the traditional plainchant formulae used for singing this canticle – in this case, Mode 2 ('secundi toni'). The odd-numbered verses of the text were not set polyphonically by Lassus, but instead are sung to the Mode 2 chant. The even-numbered verses, conversely, are turned into polyphony that manages to allude to two different models at once – to the Mode 2 chant on the one hand, and to Josquin's *Præter rerum seriem* on the other.

The remaining pieces by Lassus draw us straight into the world of the madrigal. Here the music grows directly from the composer's intuitive reading of the texts, not from old plainchant melodies. *Timor et tremor* is a study in musical queasiness, brought on by the opening words ('fear and trembling'), and worked out as a sequence of stomach-churning chromaticisms. Relief is to be had only from trust in the Lord – expressed by Lassus in the reassuringly firm musical tread at the closing words 'non confundar' (let me not be confounded). The ten-voice *Aurora lucis rutilat*, a hymn for Easter morning, celebrates the triumph of the Resurrection by making brilliant use of two five-part choirs, one of higher voices, the other of lower. Here Lassus revels in the colourful imagery of the text, mirroring the vivid contrasts between life and death through exchanges between the high/low choirs. The words are delivered with great force but also extreme economy; each phrase of text is sung once only, save for the words 'fortissimus' (most mighty), 'triumphans' (triumphant), and the closing doxology. Lassus subsequently transferred some of this motet's music into his *Magnificat octavi toni super Aurora lucis rutilat*, a Mode 8 setting for use at Eastertide; but the allusions are slight when compared to those of the Magnificat on *Præter rerum seriem*. Instead, Lassus freely reinvents and extends the sound-world of *Aurora lucis rutilat* to create a truly spectacular display of choral fireworks. This is a Magnificat guaranteed to make the earth resound on Easter Day.

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The dawn glows with rosy light,  
heaven resounds with praises,  
the world rejoices in exultation,  
hell groans and shrieks;  
When that most mighty King,  
shattering the power of death,  
crushes hell underfoot  
and releases wretched man from punishment.  
He, who was closed in with a stone  
under guard of the soldiery,  
triumphant now in noble pomp  
rises victorious from death.  
With all weeping spent  
and all hell's anguish,  
that the Lord is risen in glory  
the angel now proclaims.  
We pray you, Creator of all things,  
in this great Easter joy,  
that from all assaults of death  
you defend your people.

Outside the natural order  
a Virgin yet a Mother  
gives birth to a God as man;  
and no man has known this virgin,  
nor can her child  
be claimed by any father.

It is the power of the Holy Spirit  
that carries out this work  
from heaven;  
who could explore in all its depth  
the manner and the means  
of your giving birth?  
By the providence of God,  
which orders all things  
so delightfully,  
transform your childbirth  
into a holy mystery.  
Hail, Mother.
Fear and trembling have come upon me,
and darkness has fallen upon me:
have mercy on me, Lord,
for my soul has trusted in you.
Hear, O God, my prayer,
for it is you who are my refuge
and my strong helper.
Lord, I have called upon you:
let me not be confounded.

Huc me sydereo

Tenor:

Plangent eum quasi unigenitum,
quia innocens Dominus occissus est.

Hic me crudeli vulnere fixit Amor.

Langueo, nec quisquam nostro succurrat Amori
quem nequeunt duae frangere iura crucis.
Pungentem capiti Dominum gestare coronam
fortis Amor docuit verbera tanta pati.

Felle sitim magni Regis satiavit amaro,
pactus ut hauriret lancea fecit Amor.

De me solus Amor potuit perferre triumphum,
ille pedes clavis fixit et ille manus.

Si cupis ergo animi mihi signa rependere grati,
dilige pro tantis; sat mihi solus Amor.

Gloria in excelsis Deo
Et in terra Pax
Hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicit te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam.

Domine Deus Rex coelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, 
Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, 
meritere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, 
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, 
meritere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus, 
tu solus Dominus, 
tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe, 
cum Sancto Spiritu 
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

Lord God, Lamb of God, 
Son of the Father.
You take away the sins of the world, 
have mercy on us.
You take away the sins of the world, 
receive our prayer.
You sit at the right hand of the Father, 
have mercy on us.
For you only are holy, 
you only are Lord, 
you only are most high, Jesus Christ, 
with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

He has shown strength with His arm; 
He has scattered the proud 
in the imagination of their hearts.
He has put down the mighty from their seat 
and exalted the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things, 
and the rich He has sent empty away.
He has taken up Israel, His servant, 
being mindful of His mercy.
As He promised to our forefathers, 
to Abraham and his descendants for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, 
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, 
and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: 
dispersit superbos 
mente cordis sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede: 
et exaltavit humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis: 
et divites dimisit inanes.
Suscepit Israel pueros suos: 
recordatus misericordiae suae.
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros: 
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.
Gloria Patri et Filio, 
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, 
et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.
Amen.

My soul magnifies the Lord 
and my spirit has rejoiced 
in God my Saviour.
For He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
For He who is mighty has done great things to me: and holy is His name.
And His mercy is from generation unto generation, unto those that fear Him.

He has shown strength with His arm; 
He has scattered the proud 
in the imagination of their hearts.
He has put down the mighty from their seat 
and exalted the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things, 
and the rich He has sent empty away.
He has taken up Israel, His servant, 
being mindful of His mercy.
As He promised to our forefathers, 
to Abraham and his descendants for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, 
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, 
and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Magnificat anima mea Dominum: 
et exultavit spiritus meus 
in Deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: 
eece enim ex hoc beatam me dicent 
omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: 
et sanctum nomen eius.
Et misericordia eius a progenie in 
progenies: timentibus eum.

Magnificat anima mea Dominum: 
et exultavit spiritus meus 
in Deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: 
eece enim ex hoc beatam me dicent 
omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: 
et sanctum nomen eius.
Et misericordia eius a progenie in 
progenies: timentibus eum.

SANCTUS 
Holy, holy, holy, 
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. 
Hosanna in the highest.
O Virgo prudentissima

Tenor:
O blessed Mother and unwedded Virgin,
O glorious Queen of the world,
intercede for us with the Lord.
Alleluia.

O wisest of Virgins,
whom heaven-sent Gabriel,
as messenger of the most high King,
declares to be full of grace:
You the Maker of all calls to be his bride,
you the Son of God to be his mother,
you the Blessed Spirit
to be his dwelling place.

You are called the Star of the Sea;
ever amid the craggy rocks
and the dark whirlwinds
you point to the haven of salvation.

Through you from their dread prison
our ancient fathers gain release;
through you for us are thrown open
the gates of heaven's starry courts.

Audi, Virgo puerpera,
tu sola Mater integra;
audi precantes, quaesumus,
tuos Maria famulos.
Beata Mater et inuupta virgo,
Repelle mentis tenebras,
disrumpe cordis glaciem;
gloriosa Regina mundi,
nos sub tuum praesidium confugimus.
intercede pro nobis ad Dominum.
Alleluia.

Hear, child-bearing Virgin
and only chaste Virgin,
disperse the darkness of our minds,
break the ice within our hearts;
O glorious Queen of the world,
for refuge to your protection we fly.
intercede for us with the Lord.
Alleluia.
Eamonn Dougan

Eamonn Dougan read music at New College, Oxford, before continuing his vocal and conducting studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He now pursues a busy schedule working as both singer and conductor.

In 2006 Eamonn was appointed the first Assistant Conductor of the world renowned vocal ensemble The Sixteen and is now The Sixteen's Associate Conductor. He has directed the ensemble to considerable acclaim in concerts across England and Europe with performances in France, Spain, Antwerp and on The Sixteen's annual Choral Pilgrimage; he made his debut at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, in a celebration of James MacMillan's 50th birthday.

Eamonn is Principal Guest Conductor of The National Youth Choir of Great Britain and Chorus Director of Britten Sinfonia Voices. He is a regular Guest Conductor with Wroclaw Philharmonic Choir, Poland, the Coro de la Comunidad, Madrid and the St. Endellion Festival Orchestra & Chorus. He is increasingly in demand as a guest conductor and choral coach and has assisted various conductors including Martyn Brabbins, Ryan Wigglesworth, Adam Fischer and Sir Mark Elder.

In September 2008 he was appointed a Visiting Professor to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London where he teaches ensemble singing and directs the Guildhall Consort.

His solo recordings include Bach's St John Passion and St Matthew Passion, Handel's Messiah and Brahms’ Requiem in its two-piano version as well as motets by Giovanni Grillo and the premiere recording of Arvo Pärt's Von Angesicht zu Angesicht.

He has appeared on disc and the concert platform throughout the world with many of Britain's leading ensembles and is a member of The Sixteen and I Fagiolini.

Harry Christophers

Harry Christophers is known internationally as founder and conductor of The Sixteen as well as 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 the Far East gaining a distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, Baroque and 20th-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.

In 2008 Harry Christophers was appointed 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 very special 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 Artistic Director at The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and features in the highly successful BBC television series, Sacred Music, presented by Simon Russell Beale.

Increasingly busy in opera, 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 and Saul.

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.
After three decades of world-wide 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 twentieth-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 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 Fairy Queen in Tel Aviv and London, a fully-staged production of Purcell's King Arthur in Lisbon’s Belem 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 one hundred recordings reflect The Sixteen's quality in a range of work spanning the music of five hundred years. In 2009 they won the coveted Classic FMGramophone Artist of the Year Award and the Baroque Vocal Award for Handel's Coronation Anthems. The Sixteen also feature 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.

SOPRANO Julie Cooper, Grace Davidson, Sally Dunkley, Kirsty Hopkins, Alexandra Kidgell, Charlotte Mobbs
ALTO Ian Aitkenhead, David Clegg, William Missin, Christopher Royall
TENOR Simon Berridge, Jeremy Budd, Matthew Long, Tom Raskin
BASS Christopher Adams, Ben Davies, Eamonn Dougan, Robert Evans, Jimmy Hilliday, Tim Jones, Rob Macdonald