Harry Christophers’s taut, vibrant, and beautifully sprung account is bright and dazzling...  
BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

Christopher Purves charms, broods, fumes implacably, plots villainously and confronts his doom vividly in the manner of a Shakespearean tragedian.  
GRAMOPHONE (Recording of the month)

What a winning combination: Handel’s Messiah, the most popular oratorio ever written, sung by The Sixteen, the most richly sonorous of the early music choirs.”  
THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

Powerful choral singing from The Sixteen and alert playing by the period-instrument band make this the most pleasurable Samson yet recorded.”  
THE SUNDAY TIMES

To find out more about The Sixteen, concert tours, and to buy CDs visit www.thesixteen.com
The story of Acis and Galatea, which I recall vividly from my student days as a classicist, comes from Ovid’s charming collection of tales, his *Metamorphoses*. Ovid was a great storyteller; the myths have a unifying theme – that of transformation – of animals turned into stone, chaos to harmony, of humans becoming stars or trees, or, in the case of Acis, into a fountain. The myth has always been a favourite with composers. In Handel’s hands the result is a charming pastoral for which he owes much to the librettist John Gay (of Beggar’s Opera fame). He is faithful to Ovid: the drama is simple and uncluttered but yet subtly emotional and dramatic. I very much regard it as a transition from the masques of Henry Purcell to the full scale oratorios of Handel and thus the perfect entertainment to put a spotlight on the wonderful singers and instrumentalists I have within The Sixteen. I have kept true to Handel’s original troupe. When he first performed it at Cannons, the estate of James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, he had at his disposal five singers, so only one voice per part, and about seven instrumentalists: two violins, two oboes, who also doubled on recorder, two cellos and continuo. I have taken the liberty of using my full continuo section which has been so much a part of The Sixteen’s sound world for many years: the unique pairing of David Miller’s archlute with Frances Kelly’s harp, Joe Crouch (cello) and Alastair Ross (harpsichord and organ) – they are so alert to every nuance and the colours they achieve are quite extraordinary.

I regard Acis and Galatea as youthful in every respect. There is a grace, a charm, an innocence about so much of the writing; it is only the giant Polyphemus who brings terror to the proceedings. It makes me very proud to be able to draw from The Sixteen five singers who are stylishly eloquent in their respective roles, but also sing as a disciplined yet exhilarating and individual ensemble. Grace’s lilting ‘As when the dove’, Jeremy’s lyrical ‘Love in her eyes sits playing’, their youthful exuberance and sheer giddy happiness when they duet in ‘Happy we!', Mark’s intensely stylish ‘Consider, fond shepherd’ and Simon’s gentle and thoughtful ‘Would you gain the tender creature’ all serve as a delicate tapestry to Stuart’s brilliantly executed ‘O ruddier than the cherry’, just enough comedy without resorting to panto buffoonery – you will just have to envisage his ‘capacious mouth’. Of course, the instrumentalists play an equally personal role. I am in total awe of how Sarah and Dan can sound as one, achieving similar electricity and virtuosity, Hannah’s sensual and intensely musical oboe, Sarah relishing in Handel’s inspirationally comic recorder writing and Joe and Imogen providing a string bass line that is constantly at one with the action around them.

I feel very pleased to have such talent in front of me; I hope this album conveys the abundant enjoyment we had recording it.
George Frideric Handel  
(1685-1759)  
Acis and Galatea  
(c. 1718)  
A Serenata or Pastoral Entertainment  
Libretto by John Gay and others, after Ovid’s Metamorphoses, XIII

### CD1 ACT ONE

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The metamorphoses of Acis and Galatea

Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* was a significant source of inspiration to Renaissance painters, poets and musicians alike. Ovid’s emphasis on magical transformations – particularly those of one party amongst would-be lovers – appealed especially to creators of opera, where both the passion of love (often unrequited) and the spectacle of transformation created opportunities for musical and scenic display. Thus *Dafne*, the tale of Apollo’s pursuit of the nymph and his transformation of her into a tree when she continues to reject his advances, was what is today considered the first opera, in 1598 (by Jacopo Peri). The story of Eurydice and Orpheus was the next (where metamorphoses are effected on multiple levels by Orpheus’s song, which in particular recalls Eurydice fleetingly from death to life); it was set by Peri as *Euridice* in 1600 and, most famously, by Monteverdi as *L’Orfeo* in 1607.

The tale of Acis, Galatea and Polyphemus was another Ovidian piece – seemingly invented by him – that had been set several times before Handel came to it. Given his interest in French opera (Handel’s overtures, most notably, show French influence), Handel may have known Jean-Baptiste Lully’s 1686 *Acis et Galatée*. Of more recent vintage was John Eccles and P. A. Motteux’s *Acis and Galatea* (1701), which was written for the English spoken-drama theatre, Drury Lane, and revived regularly into the 1720s; to cater for English popular tastes and ‘make the piece the more dramatical’, it included a quarrelling peasant couple, Roger and Joan. This was unlikely to have been a model for Handel, however; a more likely prompt for his initial interest in the story was Giovanni Bononcini’s one-act work, *Polifemo*, as it was written and performed in 1703, during Handel’s sojourn in Italy. Handel’s first setting of the tale, as *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*, was undertaken five years later, when he visited Naples in June 1708, probably as a commission from the Duchess of Laurenzano for the wedding of her niece.

Handel returned to the story in 1718, when he was working and living at the house of James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos, at the palatial estates he built at Cannons, where he established an artistic circle to rival those of the Italian courts. Another of that artistic group then based at Cannons, John Gay, seems chiefly to have provided the text for this one-act pastoral drama (though it is uncertain how much of the libretto is his). It initially featured just the three main characters, but then had Damon added, while Coridon was inserted later still, being given just one aria to a text by another member of the Cannons circle, John Hughes. It seems Gay et al also drew from the Ovidian story via John Dryden’s English translation, *The Story of Acis, Polyphemus and Galatea*, which was published in 1717. The publication of Dryden’s translation may indeed have partly been the impetus for the work. The performance venue might also have provided inspiration: Brydges’ lavish building works at Cannons in this period included garden works, incorporating then-fashionable water features and a jet d’eau. Although it is not certain where, within the Cannons estate, the work was first performed, the popular tradition that it was performed on the terrace immediately outside the house and overlooking the garden might suggest the garden redesign had a role in the work’s choice and production.

Other inspiration may have come from the tradition of English pastoral works...
that had recently graced the London stage. Aside from Eccles and Motteux's *Acis and Galatea*, Congreve's *Judgment of Paris* (set by a number of composers), Thomas Addison and Thomas Clayton's *Rosamund* (1707), Congreve and Eccles' *Semele* (1707), John Hughes and J.E. Galliard's *Calypso and Telemachus* (1712), and Colley Cibber and J. Pepusch's *Venus and Adonis* (1715), had followed in the pastoral mode, setting tales of mythological romantic entanglements in verdant landscapes. Winton Dean suggests a direct model in this line for Handel and Gay would have been Hughes and Pepusch's *Apollo and Daphne* (1716), which (being another tale of metamorphosis) similarly ends with the transformation of the desired lover into an inanimate feature of the landscape; indeed Pepusch, like Hughes, was also part of the Cannons circle of artists. The intimacy of these simple mythological and pastoral works was certainly apparent in the 1718 *Acis and Galatea*, which, from the lack of stage directions in either the autograph or other early surviving copies, appears to have been unstaged, but performed before a painted backdrop, and with all the singers on stage at all times (as no entrances or exits are marked). As in the Italian tradition, the soloists took the chorus parts, the names 'Mr Blackley,' 'Mr Row' and 'Hardres' being indicated against the three tenor parts in the first chorus; however, the only soloists recorded were James Blackley as Acis and Francis Rowe as Damon (presumably 'Hardres' sang Coridon).

Despite the varied influences visible in the libretto and available to Handel musically, unusually, the composer newly set almost the entire piece, borrowing only briefly from earlier vocal and instrumental works – all Italian. The music for the work is certainly suitably pastoral, using instruments considered markers of such music – oboes and recorders throughout the work; the Earl of Carnarvon almost certainly had to hire a second oboe in specially, though the oboists would have doubled as recorder players, as these instruments alternate. Markings in the autograph seem to indicate that the continuo group would have included a double bass (or an equivalent instrument), but no bassoon. The work opens with a lively overture with bucolic obbligato oboe giving way to a chorus with strings, oboes and then voices duetting in echo-effect over a bass drone. The lovers are introduced in succession, Galatea's 'Hush, ye pretty warbling quire!' the first of many triple-time airs (unusually, over half the numbers in the piece are in triple time), and continues the echo theme in her duet with an octave recorder, representing the warbling birds. As she leaves, Acis enters from the other side to sing his more formal 'Where shall I seek the charming fair?', a taste of gallantry appropriate to more heroic roles at this time. Acis's friend, Damon, advises him to abandon the pursuit over a walking bass that suggests Acis's 'heedless running' continues unabated. Galatea's return prompts Acis's sighing 'Love in her eyes sits playing', and Galatea's reciprocal 'As when the dove', which has the flavour of English folk song to it. Indeed, all of the airs for the two main characters in this first part, despite their da capo designation, belong in their short-breathed, mostly conjunct themes and musical simplicity to an English rather than an Italianate tradition.

The duet 'Happy we!', which in the version most often performed today marks the end of the first act, in the original leads straight into the old-fashioned chorus 'Wretched lovers!', which introduces a change in tone by ushering in the cyclops Polyphemus. All the airs thus far have been simple
in vocal style, befitting the pastoral mode, but Polyphemus provides both humour and a crude menace. His two-and-a-half-octave range and alternately leaping and melismatic vocal style reflected a long-standing tradition for bass singers in a variety of serious repertoire. But while the seventeenth century admired the virtuoso bass, in the eighteenth century he was seen as rather tasteless and treated as a figure of fun: here that versatility is turned to comic effect, beginning with ‘O ruddier than the cherry’, which creates a grotesque bathos (so beloved of the period) by the simple act of setting Polyphemus’s banal Renaissance similes (‘ruddier than the cherry’, ‘nymph more bright than moonshine night’) to the accompaniment of the octave recorder. Polyphemus’s following air, ‘Cease to beauty to be suing’, similarly combines threat in its sinuous accompaniment and humour in the word-painting on ‘ever whining’. Coridon’s single aria, ‘Would you gain the tender creature’, offers advice to Polyphemus, while Damon subsequently seeks to deter Acis from pursuit in ‘Consider, fond shepherd’ (following Acis’s battle cry, ‘Love sounds thilarm’, returning to his opening heroic gesture, though still without the vocal display one would expect from contemporary Italian opera). It is not surprising that Coridon’s aria was assigned to Damon in subsequent performances, as together they give Damon’s character a little more life, and almost make him operatically Machiavellian (although such characterisation is not further fleshed out). Coridon’s solitary appearance in the pastoral is thus all too easily erased – he does not appear in modern editions either. After Coridon and Damon’s brief appearances, the focus returns to the principal couple, as Acis’s ambition to challenge Polyphemus, despite Galatea’s pleading (‘Cease, oh cease’), leads to what begins as a lovers’ duet, ‘The flocks shall leave the mountains’, but rapidly becomes a trio with Polyphemus arriving to dispatch Acis. The chorus of mourning that follows, along with Galatea’s air (with chorus), ‘Must I my Acis still bemoan’, casts a sombre tone on the end of the work. Galatea’s final air, ‘Heart, the seat of soft delight’, is then a welcome return to the pastoral mode, with its flowing quavers depicting the fountain into which she has transformed Acis.

How successful this work was we do not know, but the story of Acis and Galatea did not end at Cannons. Indeed, it achieved longevity in large part because of its relative brevity and simplicity, and the limited cast it required (only five singers and seven instrumentalists in its 1718 version). It was published in 1722, but had already been performed around the country in what we might now call ‘amateur’ performances since 1719. It remained popular with local musical societies. It is somewhat surprising, then, that it was not until 1731 that the work was performed on stage in London, as a benefit for a singer. This first performance inspired a staging the following year, mounted by the aspiring young composer and operatic entrepreneur, Thomas Arne, and offered as a ‘Pastoral Opera . . . as it was perform’d before his Grace the Duke of Chandos at Cannons’. This in turn seems to have galvanised Handel himself into a public performance, but one that trumped Arne both in range of material and size of ensemble. Some measure of the work’s success in all its iterations can be found not only in its repeated performance by various non-professional groups around the country, but also in its professional re-orchestrations by, among others, Mozart and Mendelssohn, in which versions it is still performed today.

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O, the pleasure of the plains!
Happy nymphs and happy swains,
Harmless, merry, free and gay,
Dance and sport the hours away.
For us the zephyr blows,
For us distills the dew,
For us unfolds the rose,
And flow’rs display their hue.
For us the Winters rain,
For us the Summers shine,
Spring swells for us the grain,
And Autumn bleeds the wine.
O, the pleasure…

Ye verdant plains and woody mountains,
Purling streams and bubbling fountains,
Ye painted glories of the field,
Vain are the pleasures which ye yield;
Too thin the shadow of the grove,
And Autumn bleeds the wine.
O, the pleasure…

Where shall I seek the charming fair?
Direct the way,
kind genius of the mountains!
O tell me, if you saw my dear!
Seeks she the grove,
or bathes in crystal fountains?
Where…

Stay, shepherd, stay!
See, how thy flocks in yonder valley stray!
What means this melancholy air?
No more thy tuneful pipe we hear.

Shepherd, what art thou pursuing?
Needless running to thy ruin;
Share our joy, our pleasure share,
Leave thy passion till tomorrow,
Let the day be free from sorrow,
Free from love, and free from care!
Shepherd…

Oh, didst thou know the pains of absent love,
Acis would ne’er from Galatea rove.

As when the dove
Laments her love,
All on the naked spray;
When he returns,
No more she mourns,
But loves the live-long day.
Billing, cooing,
Panting, wooing,
Melting murmurs fill the grove,
Melting murmurs, lasting love.
As when…

Happy we!
What joys I feel!
What charms I see
Of all youths/nymphs thou dearest boy/
brightest fair!
Thou all my bliss, thou all my joy!
Happy…
Chorus
Wretched lovers! Fate has past
This sad decree: no joy shall last.
Wretched lovers, quit your dream!
Behold the monster Polyphemus!
See what ample strides he takes!
The mountain nods, the forest shakes;
The waves run frightend to the shores:
Hark, how the thund'ring giant roars!

Accompagnato Polyphemus
I rage – I melt – I burn!
The feeble god has stabb'd me to the heart.
Thou trusty pine,
Prop of my God-like steps, I lay thee by!
Bring me a hundred reeds of decent growth
To make a pipe for my capacious mouth;
In soft enchanting accents let me breathe
Sweet Galatea's beauty, and my love.

Air Polyphemus
O ruddier than the cherry,
O sweeter than the berry,
O nymph more bright
Than moonshine night,

Galatea
Of infant limbs to make my food,
And swill full draughts of human blood!
Go, monster, bid some other guest!
I loathe the host, I loathe the feast.

Air Polyphemus
Cease to beauty to be suing,
Ever whining love disdaining.
Let the brave their aims pursuing,
Still be conqu'ring not complaining.

Recitative Polyphemus
Whither, fairest, art thou running,
Still my warm embraces shunning?

Galatea
The lion calls not to his prey,
Nor bids the wolf the lambkin stay.

Polyphemus
Thee, Polyphemus, great as Jove,
Calls to empire and to love,
To his palace in the rock,
To his dairy, to his flock,
To the grape of purple hue,
To the plum of glossy blue,
Wildings, which expecting stand,
Proud to be gather'd by thy hand.

Recitative Acis
His hideous love provokes my rage.
Weak as I am, I must engage!
Inspiri'd with thy victorious charms,
The god of love will lend his arms.

Air Acis
Love sounds th'alarm,
And fear is a-flying!
When beauty's the prize,
What mortal fears dying?
In defence of my treasure,
I'd bleed at each vein;
Without her no pleasure,
For life is a pain.
Love sounds...

Air Damon
Consider, fond shepherd,
How fleeting's the pleasure,
That flatters our hopes
In pursuit of the fair!
The joys that attend it,
By moments we measure,
But life is too little
To measure our care.
Consider...

Recitative Galatea
Cease, oh cease, thou gentle youth,
Trust my constancy and truth,
Trust my truth and pow'rs above,
The pow'rs propitious still to love!
**Trio**  
Galatea & Acis  
The flocks shall leave the mountains,  
The woods the turtle dove,  
The nymphs forsake the fountains, 
Ere I forsake my love!

**Polyphemus**  
Torture! fury! rage! despair!  
I cannot, cannot bear!

**Galatea & Acis**  
Not show'rs to larks so pleasing,  
Nor sunshine to the bee,  
Not sleep to toil so easing,  
As these dear smiles to me.

**Polyphemus**  
Fly swift, thou massy ruin, fly!  
Die, presumptuous Acis, die!

**Accompagnato**  
Acis  
Help, Galatea! Help, ye parent gods!  
And take me dying to your deep abodes.

**Chorus**  
Mourn, all ye muses! Weep, all ye swains!  
Tune, tune your reeds to doleful strains!  
Groans, cries and howlings  
fill the neighbouring shore:  
Ah, the gentle Acis is no more!

**Solo & Chorus**  
Galatea  
Must I my Acis still bemoan,  
Inglorious crush'd beneath that stone?

**Chorus**  
Cease, Galatea, cease to grieve!  
Bewail not whom thou canst relieve.

**Galatea**  
Must the lovely charming youth  
Die for his constancy and truth?

**Chorus**  
Cease, Galatea, cease to grieve!  
Bewail not whom thou canst relieve;  
The goddess soon can heal thy smart.

**Air**  
Galatea  
Heart, the seat of soft delight,  
Be thou now a fountain bright!  
Purple be no more thy blood,  
Glide thou like a crystal flood.  
Rock, thy hollow womb disclose!  
The bubbling fountain, lo! it flows;  
Through the plains he joys to rove,  
Murm'ring still his gentle love.

**Chorus**  
To kindred gods the youth return,  
Through verdant plains to roll his urn.

**Recitative**  
Galatea  
'Tis done! Thus I exert my pow'r divine;  
Be thou immortal, though thou art not mine!

**Air**  
Galatea  
Heart, the seat of soft delight,  
Be thou now a fountain bright!  
Purple be no more thy blood,  
Glide thou like a crystal flood.  
Rock, thy hollow womb disclose!  
The bubbling fountain, lo! it flows;  
Through the plains he joys to rove,  
Murm'ring still his gentle love.

**Chorus**  
Galatea, dry thy tears,  
Acis now a god appears!  
See how he rears him from his bed,  
See the wreath that binds his head.  
Hail! thou gentle murm'ring stream,  
Shepherds' pleasure, muses' theme!  
Through the plains still joy to rove,  
Murm'ring still thy gentle love.

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**THE SIXTEEN**

**Violin I**  
Sarah Sexton

**Violin II**  
Daniel Edgar

**Cello**  
Joseph Crouch  
Imogen Seth-Smith

**Oboe / Recorder**  
Hannah McLaughlin  
Sarah Humphries

**Theorbo**  
David Miller

**Harp**  
Frances Kelly

**Organ / Harpsichord**  
Alastair Ross
Jeremy Budd  tenor

Born in Hertfordshire, Jeremy started out as a chorister at St Paul’s Cathedral in London before going on to study at the Royal Academy of Music. Since finishing his studies he has been much in demand on the concert platform predominantly for his Baroque repertoire. Jeremy has worked with many of the foremost conductors in this field including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Harry Christophers, Paul McCreesh, John Butt, Bernard Labadie and Jeffrey Skidmore.

Notable performances have included a tour of Monteverdi’s Vespers of 1610 with Harry Christophers and The Sixteen, an abridged performance of Bach’s St Matthew Passion in collaboration with Streetwise Opera and The Sixteen, the Evangelist in Bach’s St Matthew Passion at Symphony Hall with Jeffrey Skidmore and Ex Cathedra, Monteverdi’s Madrigals with Jonathan Cohen and Arcangelo in Saffron Hall, Purcell’s King Arthur with Paul McCreesh and also a programme of Purcell Odes in the Wigmore Hall. Recently Jeremy has also performed Gibbons’ Verse Anthems with Fretwork and toured Bach’s Christmas Oratorio with Masaaki Suzuki and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Grace Davidson  soprano

Grace Davidson is an English soprano who specialises in the performance and recording of Baroque music. She won the Early Music Prize while studying singing at the Royal Academy of Music. Since then, she has worked with leading Baroque ensembles of our day, singing under the batons of Sir John Eliot Gardner, Paul McCreesh, Philippe Herreweghe and Harry Christophers. Her discography includes a decade of CDs with The Sixteen, many of which feature her as soloist and include Handel’s Jephtha (as Angel) and Dixit Dominus, Monteverdi’s Vespers of 1610 and Pianto della Madonna from the Selva morale e spirituale and Bach’s Lutheran Masses. She has also recorded Fauré’s Requiem with the London Symphony Orchestra on the LSO Label and her Pie Jesu was described as ‘matchless’ by Richard Morrison on BBC Radio 3’s Building a Library.

Stuart Young  bass

Stuart Young has been singing with The Sixteen since 2008 and has participated in many of their tours around the world including visits to South Korea, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand and regularly in the Choral Pilgrimages across the UK. He appears as a soloist on a number of The Sixteen’s recordings including Selva Morale e Spirituale by Monteverdi, Saul by Handel and Purcell’s The Indian Queen and has recorded various other Purcell and Monteverdi works over the past few years. Solo performances have included the title role in Mendelssohn’s Elijah, Verdi’s Requiem, Belshazzar’s Feast by Walton, Dream of Gerontius by Elgar, Bach’s St Matthew Passion and Ein Deutsches Requiem by Brahms.

Stuart graduated in music from the University of Exeter and went on to study as a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music with Mark Wildman and Audrey Hyland. Besides his work with The Sixteen, Stuart has performed and recorded with many ensembles including The Monteverdi Choir, The Cardinall’s Musick, The Choir of Westminster Abbey, The Gabrieli Consort, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Exaudi and The King’s Consort. He is also a Vicar Choral in St Paul’s Cathedral Choir under the direction of Andrew Carwood.

Mark Dobell  tenor

Originally from Tunbridge Wells in Kent, Mark Dobell was a choral scholar of Clare College, Cambridge, where he read Classics. He later studied as a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music, and was awarded the Clifton Prize for the best final recital.

Mark has worked as a soloist all over the world with renowned conductors including Harry Christophers, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Roger Norrington and Sir James MacMillan. His extensive concert and oratorio repertoire includes many of the major works of Handel, Bach and Mozart, as well as pieces by composers as varied as Monteverdi, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Britten, Jonathan Dove and Karl Jenkins.
Mark can be heard on numerous recordings. Most notably he is featured as a soloist on The Sixteen's recordings of Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 and Mozart's Solemn Vespers (recorded live at the Barbican), as well as Durante's Requiem and Howard Goodall's Invictus with Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford. Other solo recordings include repertoire by Pelham Humfrey, Purcell, Bruckner, Holst, Sir James MacMillan and Roderick Williams.

Simon Berridge tenor

Simon Berridge was born in Hertfordshire and went on to pursue his music studies at Trinity College, Cambridge. He subsequently studied voice as a postgraduate at the Royal College of Music.

Simon has worked with many of the leading British ensembles including The Sixteen. He has also worked with several European ensembles including Collegium Vocale of Gent and Les Arts Florissants.

His solo performances have included Messiah with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 at the BBC Proms and Edinburgh Festival, Bach's Magnificat in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Handel's Israel in Egypt in the Covent Garden Festival with The Sixteen, Bach's St Matthew Passion in the London Handel Festival and the St John Passion (Evangelist and arias) performed live on Spanish Radio in the National Auditorium.

Simon's operatic roles have included 'Sandy' in The Lighthouse by Peter Maxwell Davies, 'The Madwoman' in Curlew River by Benjamin Britten, and the 'Auctioneer' in The Rake's Progress.

Harry Christophers

Harry Christophers stands among today's great champions of choral music. In partnership with The Sixteen, the ensemble he founded almost 40 years ago, he has set benchmark standards for the performance of everything from late medieval polyphony to important new works by contemporary composers. His international influence is supported by more than 150 recordings and has been enhanced by his work as Artistic Director of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society and as guest conductor worldwide.

The Sixteen's soundworld, rich in tonal variety and expressive nuance, reflects Christophers’ determination to create a vibrant choral instrument from the blend of adult professional singers. Under his leadership The Sixteen has established its annual Choral Pilgrimage to cathedrals, churches and other UK venues, created the Sacred Music series for BBC television, and developed an acclaimed period-instrument orchestra. Highlights of their recent work include an Artist Residency at Wigmore Hall, a large-scale tour of Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610, and the world premiere of Sir James MacMillan's Stabat mater; their future projects, meanwhile, comprise a new series devoted to Purcell and an ongoing survey of Handel's dramatic oratorios.

Harry has served as Artistic Director of the Handel and Haydn Society since 2008. He was also appointed as Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Granada Orchestra in 2008 and has worked as guest conductor with, among others, the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and the Deutsches Kammerphilharmonie. Christophers' extensive commitment to opera has embraced productions for English National Opera and Lisbon Opera and work with the Granada, Buxton and Grange Park festivals.

He was appointed a CBE in the Queen's 2012 Birthday Honours for his services to music. He is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Welsh College of Music and Drama, and has Honorary Doctorates in Music from the Universities of Leicester, Canterbury Christ Church and Northumbria.
The Sixteen

Whether performing a simple medieval hymn or expressing the complex musical and emotional language of a contemporary choral composition, The Sixteen does so with qualities common to all great ensembles. Tonal warmth, rhythmic precision and immaculate intonation are clearly essential to the mix. But it is the courage and intensity with which The Sixteen makes music that speak above all to so many people.

The Sixteen gave its first concert in 1979 under the direction of Founder and Conductor Harry Christophers CBE. Their pioneering work since has made a profound impact on the performance of choral music and attracted a large new audience, not least as ‘The Voices of Classic FM’ and through BBC television’s Sacred Music series.

The voices and period-instrument players of The Sixteen are at home in over five centuries of music, a breadth reflected in their annual Choral Pilgrimage to Britain’s great cathedrals and sacred spaces, regular appearances at the world’s leading concert halls, and award-winning recordings for The Sixteen’s CORO and other labels.

Recent highlights include the world premiere of James MacMillan’s Stabat mater, commissioned for The Sixteen by the Genesis Foundation, an ambitious ongoing series of Handel oratorios, and a debut tour of China.

For further information about recordings on CORO or live performances and tours by The Sixteen, call: +44 (0) 20 7936 3420 or email: coro@thesixteen.com

Many CORO recordings are also available as studio master quality downloads at www.thesixteen.com

Recording Producer: Mark Brown
Recording Engineer: Mike Hatch (Floating Earth)
Recorded at: Church of St Augustine’s, Kilburn, London, 25-27 June 2018
Cover Image: Statue of Acis and Galatea – Medici Fountain, Jardin du Luxembourg, Paris, France. © Ken Felepchuk / Alamy Stock Photo
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