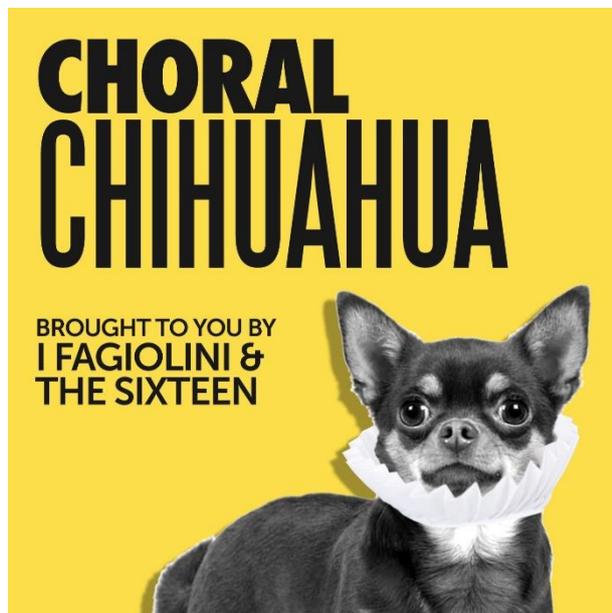




PRESS RELEASE

11 May 2020

The Sixteen and I Fagiolini launch podcast: Choral Chihuahua



Harry Christophers, Eamonn Dougan and Robert Hollingworth team up to discuss choral music

Today, **Monday 11th May**, two of the country's best choral music ensembles, **The Sixteen** and **I Fagiolini** present a new podcast: **Choral Chihuahua**. The first episode is available now on all good podcast providers.

Choral Chihuahua sees three renowned British choral conductors **Harry Christophers** (Founder and Conductor, The Sixteen), **Eamonn Dougan** (Associate Conductor, The Sixteen and singer with both ensembles) and **Robert Hollingworth** (Director, I Fagiolini) muse on things that matter to them: composers they love, points of choral technique, classic but also niche choral works, and other singers, conductors and ensembles they admire. The podcast's name is inspired by a vocal warm-up advocated by Eamonn, tune in to episode three to find out more.

What is tertiary shift and does it matter to anyone except Robert? Why was Harry first drawn to the music of Sir James MacMillan? Can Eamonn explain why all singers should embrace their internal choral chihuahua?

With a light-hearted touch, three stalwarts of the UK's enviable and varied choral scene chew the choral cud about how, and why one does it, and what they have learned along the way – insight and inventiveness in equal measure. Each episode is 35 minutes long, released every fortnight, with a variety of guests throughout the series: chat mingled with music.

The first six episodes

1. Opening Bars

Eamonn talks to Harry and Robert about how they started their own ensembles

2. The Spem Episode

Three conductors on the 40-part mammoth that is Tallis' *Spem in alium*

3. Why the Chihuahua?

Eamonn, Robert and Harry talk about what makes them tick musically and come up with a few surprising answers

4. When Sally met Harry

In the first guest interview, we meet a legendary founder member of The Sixteen

5. Next Gen

The trio discuss different youth schemes available for young choral singers

6. James MacMillan

Harry Christophers talks to MacMillan about their fruitful association

Future guests include soprano **Carolyn Sampson**, conductor **Grete Pedersen**, baritone **Roderick Williams**, composer and conductor **Eric Whitacre**.

Choral Chihuahua is brought to you by I Fagiolini and The Sixteen and produced by Percius, The Sixteen, and Polyphonic Films. It is supported by I Fagiolini Charitable Trust

Available from all good podcast providers:

- [Spotify](#)
- [Apple](#)
- [Acast](#)

For further press information about The Sixteen please contact:

Rebecca Driver Media Relations

Tel: 07425 151 458

Email: ruth@rdmr.co.uk

Web: www.rdmr.co.uk

For further press information about I Fagiolini please contact:

Libby Percival

Percius | Artist and Project Management

Tel: +44 7718 752 481

www.percius.co.uk

Notes to Editors

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 *Symphony No. 5 'Le grand Inconnu'*, commissioned for The Sixteen by the Genesis Foundation, an ambitious ongoing series of Handel oratorios, and a debut tour of China. For information, please visit thesixteen.com

I Fagiolini

'*Musical shapeshifters*' I Fagiolini is internationally renowned for having made its name through innovative productions and concerts under the direction of Robert Hollingworth. Signature projects have included *The Full Monteverdi* by John La Bouchardière; *Tallis in Wonderland*; *Simunye*, the South African collaboration; *How Like An Angel (HLAA)* with Australian contemporary circus company C!RCA, for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad and performing at the Perth International Arts Festival; and *Betrayal: a polyphonic crime drama*, an immersive theatre piece sung to the music of Gesualdo with dancers and singers set in 'crime scenes'.

A year-long celebration of Monteverdi's 450th anniversary in 2017 featured performances of *The Other Vespers* and *L'Orfeo* at Glyndebourne, AMUZ, Cadogan Hall for the BBC Proms, and Queen's Hall for the Edinburgh International Festival. In 2019 the production developed with director Thomas Guthrie's use of masks with performances in Stour, York and London.

I Fagiolini explored 'Art through the prism of Music' with leading da Vinci expert Professor Martin Kemp in *Leonardo: Shaping the Invisible* (CORO) which celebrated the 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci's death in music and image. Following its success, Robert and music from the album appeared in Phil Grabsky's new da Vinci film for Exhibition on Screen *Leonardo: The Works*.

Upcoming projects include *I Fagiolini – Au Naturel*: a rich choral calendar inspired by Pieter Brueghel the Younger's *The Seasons*, a programme based on T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and an immersive Purcell dance programme, *A Purcell Phantasy*, with the Scottish Ensemble. The group is delighted to be Ensemble-in-Residence at the University of York.

Harry Christophers

Harry Christophers stands among today's great champions of choral music. In partnership with The Sixteen, he has set benchmark standards for the performance of everything from late medieval polyphony to important new works by contemporary composers.

Under his leadership The Sixteen has established its hugely successful annual Choral Pilgrimage, 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 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 Christophers has served as Artistic Director of the Handel and Haydn Society since 2008, is Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Granada Orchestra 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.

Harry Christophers was awarded a CBE in the Queen's 2012 Birthday Honours list. He is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and has Honorary Doctorates in Music from the Universities of Leicester, Canterbury Christ Church and Northumbria and Kent.

Eamonn Dougan

Eamonn Dougan is an inspirational communicator with a wide-ranging repertoire and is a renowned vocal coach and baritone. Eamonn is Associate Conductor of The Sixteen, founding Director of Britten Sinfonia Voices, Music Director of the Thomas Tallis Society, and Chief Conductor for Jersey Chamber Orchestra.

Recent conducting engagements have included the world premiere of James MacMillan *All the Hills and Vales Along* at the Cumnock Tryst Festival, he assisted Sir Mark Elder for the world premiere concert and recording of Puccini *Le Villi* with Opera Rara and the London Philharmonic Orchestra and conducted the off-stage chorus for Berlioz *L'Enfance du Christ* with The Hallé, Britten Sinfonia Voices and Genesis Sixteen for BBC Proms. In 2019 he directed The Sixteen's highly acclaimed tour of Australia and Singapore, *Messiah* with Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León and Cappella Amsterdam, Bilbao Orkestra Sinfonikoa and Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla, and made his debut at the La Seine Musicale with renowned ensemble Accentus and in Copenhagen with Danish National Symphony Orchestra, VokalEnsemblet and KoncertKor. Eamonn directed De Profundis on their recent Hyperion release Juan Esquivel's *Missa Hortus Conclusus*. Eamonn's developing opera work has included *Dido and Aeneas*, Mozart *La finta giardiniera* and *Così fan tutte* with Ryedale Festival Opera.

Eamonn has a highly successful five-disc Polish Baroque series with The Sixteen. Discs in the series include music by Bartłomiej Pekieli, *The Blossoming Vine*, music by Górczycki, *Helper and Protector* music by Marcin Mielczewski

Eamonn is a Visiting Professor to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, where he teaches ensemble singing and directs the Guildhall Consort.

Robert Hollingworth

Robert Hollingworth is passionate about presenting music to audiences in innovative ways. He founded I Fagiolini in 1986; with them he has presented signature projects including *Simunye*, *The Full Monteverdi*, *Tallis in Wonderland*, *How Like An Angel* with Australian contemporary circus group C!RCA for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, *Betrayal: a polyphonic crime drama*, and *Leonardo: Shaping the Invisible* with Professor Martin Kemp.

Robert has directed the English Concert, BBC Concert Orchestra, RIAS Kammerchor, VOCES8 & VOCES8 Scholars with Academy of Ancient Music, Irish Baroque Orchestra; and some of the world's finest chamber choirs including Capella Cracoviensis, Accentus, NDR Chor, Netherlands Chamber Choir, National Chamber Choir of Ireland and BBC Singers. He conducted De Profundis on their Hyperion album Vivanco's *Missa Assumpsit Jesus & motets*.

Robert conducted the world premiere of Benji Merrison's new piece, *xoxvx ovoid*, with the National Youth Choir of Great Britain for the Aldeburgh Proms. He made his Russian debut as part of the British Council's 'UK-Russia Year of Music' conducting Blow *Venus and Adonis*. This season will feature a return to Capella Cracoviensis, De Profundis, Russia, and a new collaboration with dance company Shobana JeyaSingh.

Robert is the Artistic Director for Stour Music festival succeeding Mark and Alfred Deller. An influential communicator, he was the Keynote Presenter at Australian National Choral Association's ChoralFest and at the American Choral Directors Association with I Fagiolini. He is Reader in Music at the University of York, where he founded and continues to lead the MA in Solo Voice Ensemble Singing course and directs university chamber choir 'The 24'.