

PRESS RELEASE
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***A New Heaven: Harry Christophers and The Sixteen, Choral Conversations with Sara Mohr-Pietsch* published 15 August by Faber & Faber**

As **The Sixteen** celebrates its 40th anniversary, its founder and conductor **Harry Christophers CBE** and music broadcaster, writer and curator **Sara Mohr-Pietsch** embark on a series of conversations that look back over those four decades, and to the future. *A New Heaven: Harry Christophers and The Sixteen, Choral Conversations with Sara Mohr-Pietsch* is to be published by Faber & Faber on **Thursday 15 August**.

Accessible to everyone interested in classical music, from the professional to the amateur, each chapter is linked to a piece of music which prompted Christophers' and Mohr-Pietsch's discussions and they are all compiled on an accompanying disc. All but one can be found on The Sixteen's own award-winning label, CORO.

In May 1979, a group of singers and instrumentalists, brought together and conducted by Harry Christophers, gave their first concerts as The Sixteen. Now, 40 years later, the choir celebrates its ruby anniversary with a season full of concerts all over the UK and internationally, going back to key works in its history which have provided its foundation as well as looking forward with new commissions. This mixture has cemented it as one of world's greatest ensembles, known for its tonal richness, expressive intensity and compelling collective artistry. Highlights of the year ahead include a nine-venue tour of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* in February; the annual Choral Pilgrimage, a much loved staple in The Sixteen's programming, which takes in 27 locations throughout the year and includes a new commission by Sir James MacMillan *O virgo prudentissima*; and also The Sixteen's choir and orchestra join forces with The Grange Festival Chorus for five fully-staged performances of Handel's dramatic oratorio *Belshazzar*, conducted by Christophers at The Grange Festival, 20 June – 6 July.

Harry Christophers says: *'One can trace the story of The Sixteen's remarkable 40 years through our many recordings and I'm delighted that we are also marking it in words with the help of the wonderful Sara Mohr-Pietsch. It has always been about the music for me and with a specific work being the springboard for each chapter, we ensure that it still is very much at the centre of our celebrations. I hope everyone who reads it will enjoy both reminiscing about our beginnings and get excited about where we're going.'*

Sara Mohr-Pietsch says: *'I've long admired The Sixteen for their luxurious sound and ambitious programming, and it was a pleasure to discuss and unpack both with Harry in our conversations. Like his singers, Harry is warm and unpretentious, and speaks with great clarity about his deep love of music, as well as sharing fascinating insights about the world of choral music and the recording industry. It's been a real honour to be involved in The Sixteen's 40th anniversary celebrations, and made to feel part of the family.'*

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Prelude

Chapter One: Musical Beginnings (Part One)

Thomas Tallis: *O nata lux*

CD: *An Immortal Legacy, COR16111*

Chapter Two: Musical Beginnings (Part Two)

William Mundy: *Vox patris caelestis*

CD: *The Voice of the Turtle Dove, COR16119*

Chapter Three: The Sound of The Sixteen

Francis Poulenc: *Figure humaine*

CD: *Francis Poulenc: Sacred Works, ERATO 5624312*

Chapter Four: The Life of The Sixteen

Tomas Luis de Victoria: *Vadam et circuibo*

CD: *The Call Of The Beloved: Tomas Luis de Victoria, CORO16007*

Chapter Five: Sir James Macmillan and Genesis Sixteen

James MacMillan: *Miserere*

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Chapter Six: America

George Frederic Handel: *Messiah*

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Chapter Seven: Conducting

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Chapter Eight: The Future

John Sheppard: *Libera nos I*

CD: *The Voice of the Turtle Dove, CORO16119*

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Notes to Editors

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 and Canterbury Christ Church.

Sara Mohr-Pietsch is a music broadcaster, curator and writer, best known for her work on BBC Radio 3. She is the Artistic Director of Dartington International Summer School & Festival, and a prominent figure in concert halls and at music festivals around the UK.

Sara's work with BBC Radio 3 includes hosting live concerts from Wigmore Hall, Music Matters and Choir & Organ. She created Open Ear, Radio 3's new music showcase which has played at Tate Modern and LSO St Luke's. Her podcast series Composers' Rooms was nominated for a Prix Europa. She has fronted the BBC Proms on television for BBC Four, and live cinema relays from the Royal Opera House.

Alongside her broadcasting work, Sara hosts events and talks for organizations including Southbank Centre, Barbican, Snape Maltings and the National Theatre. She has led education workshops for the Berlin Philharmonic and Edinburgh International Festival, and created innovative podcasts for festivals including Spitalfields Music. She writes about music for The Guardian, BBC Music Magazine and Huffington Post.

Sara was recently announced as the Artistic Director of Dartington International Summer School & Festival from 2020, succeeding Joanna MacGregor in curating the celebrated annual event, which welcomes both amateur and professional musicians for a range of courses, workshops and concerts in the idyllic setting of Dartington Hall in Devon.

A choral singer since the age of 8, Sara Mohr-Pietsch studied Music at the University of Cambridge, where she was the first student at Newnham College to hold a choral scholarship, and gained her Masters in Musicology from the University of Edinburgh.

Faber & Faber

Faber & Faber celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2019. Founded in 1929 in London, it is one of the world's great publishing houses. Publishing the foremost voices in fiction, non-fiction, music, poetry and drama, Faber's list of authors includes thirteen Nobel Laureates and six Booker Prize-winners.