



STEPHEN LAYTON ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE FROM TRINITY COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE TO PURSUE HIS GUEST-CONDUCTING CAREER

Stephen Layton MBE announced this evening that he is to leave Trinity College Cambridge after 17 years as Fellow and Director of Music to devote more time to his international guest-conducting career. His last concerts with the choir will be on a tour to Germany this summer, where they will perform the Duruflé Requiem in six concerts, including at Frankfurt Cathedral.

Stephen's guest-conducting in the coming weeks includes returning to Sydney Opera House to conduct the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, conducting the annual *St John Passion* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and, after Easter, returning to The Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, with Polyphony and Britten Sinfonia.

The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge has achieved world-class status under Stephen's directorship; it has become celebrated for its exploration of new choral works and synonymous with paving the way for young professional singers. In 2012, the Choir was awarded the Gramophone Award for Choral Music for Howells' *Requiem* and a US Grammy nomination for Best Choral Performance for *Beyond All Mortal Dreams*, both on the Hyperion label. Trinity's wide-ranging concert, touring and recording repertoire, including Bach's *B Minor Mass* and *Christmas Oratorio* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, culminated in the acclaimed 2023 recording and film of the Duruflé *Requiem* in Paris's St Eustache. In 2012, Layton pioneered the audio live-streaming form, and in 2019 launched video livestreams, taking every note of Trinity Choir's music to audiences around the world.

Stephen Layton said: "The time has come for me to move on from Trinity College Cambridge and pursue my own guest-conducting career, something I have always hoped to do. It has been a joy and an exceptional privilege to work with The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge for so many years. I am extremely proud of what we have achieved together. Beyond the services, discography, technological advances and touring successes, it is the students who form the major part of my legacy: those members of this extraordinarily gifted group who changed the nature of a 'college choir' into a leading artistic professional beacon on the world stage. I warmly wish them rich success for the future and I know that they will go from strength to strength."

Dame Sally Davies, Master of Trinity, said: "The music at Trinity was one of the reasons I was thrilled to come to Trinity and as Master it is my absolute pleasure to regularly attend services and concerts in the College's Chapel. Under Stephen Layton's leadership the Choir has exceeded all expectations to become one of the best choirs in the world.

"Stephen is not only an incredibly accomplished conductor, but also has a talent for identifying opportunities that enable members of the Choir – who are drawn from our student body – to grow and develop their musical talents and interests. I am sure alumni and current members of the College will

join me in thanking Stephen for the 17 years he has dedicated to nurturing our choir members and putting Trinity firmly on the global musical map.”

Stephen Layton’s guest-conducting career will see him continue to tour the world each season, working with leading choirs, orchestras, and composers. His interpretations have been heard from Sydney Opera House to the Concertgebouw, from Tallinn to São Paolo, and his recordings have won or been nominated for every major international recording award. Stephen Layton secured Gramophone’s 2001 Best Choral Performance Award with Polyphony for Britten’s *Sacred and Profane*, and two Grammy nominations for Polyphony in 2005 for Lauridson’s *Lux Aeterna* and in 2006 for Whitacre’s *Cloudburst*, all on the Hyperion label. In 2010, Gramophone Magazine heralded Stephen’s choir, Polyphony, as the second best in the world, with Trinity Choir in fifth place. Stephen’s 2012 recording of Poulenc’s *Half Monk | Half Rascal (OUR)*, with the Danish National Vocal Ensemble, was nominated for a Gramophone Award in the same year he won the award with Trinity College Choir’s Howells disc. Stephen Layton boasts five Grammy nominations in all, together with the Diapason d’Or de l’Année in France, the Echo Klassik award in Germany, the Spanish CD compact award and Australia’s Limelight Recording of the Year. In 2022, Stephen was made Honorary Doctor of Music at the University of Derby.

Stephen Layton has introduced a vast range of choral works to the UK and the rest of the world. His close associations with some of the greatest established composers, including Arvo Pärt, and the late John Tavener, and also emerging composers including Ēriks Ešenvalds, Uģis Prauliņš, Paweł Łukaszewski and Jaakko Mäntyjärvi, have given rise to a whole new sound-world which has transformed the choral music landscape. In 2003 he edited, choreographed and conducted the world premiere of John Tavener’s seven-hour vigil *Veil of the Temple*, working closely with the composer to realise the work which Tavener described as “the supreme achievement of my life.” Stephen subsequently led the American premiere of the work at New York’s Lincoln Center.

Stephen Layton’s easy authority across multiple genres has seen him deliver his own editions of Handel with orchestras such as Seattle, Minnesota and Philadelphia, whilst in the same season premiering the *avant-garde* vocal music of today.

Stephen will continue to direct Polyphony and the Holst Singers, and education will remain a major focus as he continues to deliver masterclasses and workshops at colleges and conservatoires around the world.

Ends

Pictures can be downloaded [here](#).

For further information and recent footage of Trinity College Choir performing Maurice Duruflé’s Requiem at Église Saint-Eustache in Paris visit [here](#).

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