

Handel and Haydn Society Receives \$10 Million Gift To Honor Harry Christophers

H+H Names Christophers Conductor Laureate

Donation Helps Establish the Harry Christophers Fund for Artistic Excellence

(Boston November 29, 2022) The Handel and Haydn Society has just received a transformative gift of \$10 million in honor of Artistic Director Harry Christophers. The money was donated outright and anonymously and will help create the Harry Christophers Fund for Artistic Excellence. H+H announced the donation before Friday's performance of Handel's *Messiah* at Boston's Symphony Hall. At the same time, H+H also named Christophers as Conductor Laureate; the title will take effect after Christophers concludes his tenure as Artistic Director, in May 2022. H+H also announced he would be honored at a gala celebration at Symphony Hall on May 9, 2022. Christophers is in his 13th and final season as Artistic Director.

The \$10 million donation is the largest single gift in H+H history and will have a lasting effect on America's oldest performing arts organization. While the donor asked to remain anonymous, they said in a statement, "Harry has fulfilled the mission of the Handel and Haydn Society. I wish to ensure that the next artistic director propels the magic, joy, and learning Harry Christophers created to new levels. I want the new artistic director and H+H to ensure it is the best in the US if not the world as to what it does, transforming lives with unsurpassed excellence."

"This breathtaking gift will have a profound and lasting impact on the organization," said Rob Shapiro, Chair of the H+H Board of Governors. "This gift allows H+H and the new artistic director to take what Harry has started and build on it, bringing H+H to new and broader audiences and expanding our repertoire as we continue to explore the vast baroque and classical catalog."

Christophers was appointed Artistic Director at H+H in 2009, the 13th artistic director in the organization's history. During his tenure, the organization has been transformed. H+H has grown to be regarded as one of the finest Baroque and Classical ensembles in the nation. Christophers led the organization through its 2015 Bicentennial. He has hired more than 60% of the current roster of musicians, whom he has led in 15 commercial recordings, the most of any H+H artistic director. There has been an increase in touring, sharing the H+H magic with audiences at Tanglewood and in New York City.

The Harry Christophers Fund for Artistic Excellence will support Christophers's farewell season and extend his legacy in perpetuity. The Fund will support conductor and soloist fees, orchestra and chorus compensation, audio and video recording and distribution, and touring.

"The title of Conductor Laureate and the Fund are just two ways of saying thanks to a leader who has given more than we could have ever asked for in his tenure as Artistic Director," said David Snead, President and CEO of the Handel and Haydn Society.

"Through the Fund, Harry's impact on H+H will be felt for decades to come."

Donors can support the Harry Christophers Fund for Artistic Excellence at handelandhaydn.org/harry-christophers-fund-for-artistic-excellence/.