

Sarah Connolly
Doctor of Music
Durham Cathedral, 4 January 2024

Dame Sarah Connolly is an internationally renowned mezzo soprano. She is best known for her wide-ranging repertoire, with appearances in major operatic and choral works and an extensive recording career.

Born in County Durham and educated at Raventhorpe Preparatory School in Darlington and Queen Margaret's School, York, Sarah began singing, playing piano and composing as a child. After taking her A levels at Clarendon College of Further Education in Nottingham Sarah moved to London to study piano and singing at the Royal College of Music, of which she is now a Fellow.

Sarah's musical prowess was evident from her early teens. After spells in the BBC Singers and Glyndebourne Chorus, Sarah was nominated for an Olivier award for her performance as *Sesto* with English National Opera.

The breadth of Sarah's repertoire is astounding, she moves effortlessly from Handel to Turnage, Schumann to Knussen and even Mahler to Gershwin. Indeed, who can forget her 2009 *Last Night of the Proms* appearance as *Nelson*, in full costume complete with tri-corn hat.

Sarah also has a passion for newer works, giving a concert by British Composer Errollyn Wallen at the Wigmore Hall in November 2023, and she will sing her first role in Arabic in 2024.

In 2022 Sarah's career came full circle when she returned home to the Northeast as Royal Northern Sinfonia artist in focus 2022-23.

Despite her extensive performing commitments Sarah finds time to teach and mentor the next generation. Her prominent presence as champion and advocate of the music

profession supports young singers in a pragmatic and practical way. In 2021 Sarah was appointed President of British Youth Opera, and in 2024 will return to her alma mater, the Royal College of Music as a Vocal Professor.

As well as being the recipient of the Distinguished Musician Award from the Incorporated Society of Musicians, and the Royal Philharmonic Society's 2012 Singer Award, she was made a DBE in the 2017 Birthday Honours for her services to music, having previously been made a CBE in the 2010 New Year's Honours.

In late 2023 it was announced that Sarah would receive the Kings Medal for contribution to the Musical Life of Great Britain.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I present Dame Sarah Connolly to receive the degree of Doctor of Music, honoris causa.