

# Helen Welch

## Testimonials

Helen Welch is a consummate professional vocalist. She truly owns the stage during her shows - displaying a quick wit and a well-timed blend of humor and banter that keeps everyone engaged throughout the evening. Helen has developed a wide-ranging repertoire of arrangements that match the special qualities of her voice. She can belt, but she can also caress a phrase with such genuine vulnerability that she creates an unforgettable moment that stays with us long after the program has ended. The most important thing to me is that she's a true musician; Her diction, rhythm, intonation and vocal technique are all flawless. She takes pleasure in risking going to the edge of a song's interpretive possibilities because she can actually handle the challenges out there with great success. Having conducted pops concerts next to her and now, having sat in an audience simply enjoying one of her performances, I continually marvel at her. She brought tears to my eyes THREE times during one evening as I sat spellbound among the other members of the audience listening to songs from, as she put it, "The Old and New American Songbook". Helen's the real thing! A natural entertainer who is also an accomplished artist. In my experience that is a truly rare combination. I will continue to recommend her to my colleagues, as I already know they'll thank me afterwards!

And I mean every word!

John Thomas Dodson



### John Thomas Dodson

American conductor, John Thomas Dodson is Music Director of the Lexington Bach Festival and Conciertos de la Villa de Santo Domingo, a music festival in the Colonial City, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the capital of the Dominican Republic. Previously he served as Music Director for Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra, Adrian Symphony Orchestra, Bryan Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra New York, Coronado Music Festival and Philharmonia Orchestra of Tucson.

Hi Helen,

I hope all is well and you and Doug (and your horse) are enjoying a wonderful spring!

I so apologize that it's taken me so long to respond to your request for some quotes! There is no excuse (other than I'm drowning in emails! - which is true, but not really a good excuse I know!!). Here is a quote you can use in whole or in part as you try to continue to book "Superstar!":

"Helen, we were all thrilled with "Superstar!" You and your band were terrific! It is a truly incredible tribute to the music of The Carpenters and your voice is perfect for the songs! I was honored to be able to present such a wonderful show for our audience here at Stocker Arts Center. This is definitely one of the best shows I have seen you do. Congratulations and I wish you all the best as you continue to tour "Superstar!"

I hope it will help you get lots of additional bookings!

I know you're mostly concentrating on "Superstar!", but I wanted to check in with you to see if you're interested in doing a show in the black box during the 2018-2019 season. We love having you perform at Stocker, so I wanted to extend the invitation - though I will totally understand if you so no.

Let me know. Even if you aren't able to perform here this season, I hope we can get together sometime over the summer to catch up.

Best to you and Doug,

Janet Herman Barlow, Director, Stocker Arts Center/Lorain County Community College, Elyria, OH

Dear Helen,

What a wonderful night that was! I hope travel conditions were safe this morning and that you are home safe and sound by now. This trip has certainly offered some difficult times for you, but I hope it turned out to be a good one in the end.

If someone called on me to review your performance last night, I think I could sum it up in one word. "WOW!" From your first appearance on our stage to your final wave of goodbye, our audience was laser-focused on your performance. As you know, many of our patrons braved a difficult Iowa winter night to get to the show, and everyone I talked to were so glad they did! Many of them told me it was the best show we have ever presented, and after nine seasons and 61 shows at the Rosemary Clausen Center, that's saying something.

As much as our audience loved your performance, they are sophisticated enough to know you don't do it alone. Every one of the guys on your great team were mentioned in the conversations I had. I also took note of how folks lingered after the show to meet them and you. When we first started this venture, "Iowa Nice" seemed to prevail, and people left shyly without wanting to bother the performers. That certainly wasn't the case last night. It showed me that our audience appreciated you not only as talented performers, but also as genuinely nice people!

As you know, our management team is made up of volunteers, and we receive no monetary compensation for what we do. Our rewards come from the smiles on the faces of our audience members and the opportunity for us to meet some wonderful people. We were rich men and women last night!

Thank you for agreeing to come to Holstein, Thank you for being the professionals you are and giving us an incredible performance after dealing with some of the most adverse travel experiences imaginable. And thanks for taking us on a journey back in time, when The Carpenters were part of our lives, and we were young and convinced we could make this world a better place. I'm sure you stirred quite a cocktail of emotions for all of us.

I'm sorry we no longer have a qualified review writer with us, and I certainly don't have the ability to do it myself. But I can assure you that you and your show will be talked about for a long time here. Like it or not, you have become part of us now - part of our shared history and memories - part of the very fabric of this wonderful community. Something like that doesn't just happen. You have to earn it, and you certainly did that. We look forward to seeing you again.

I will be happy to contact Terry to tell him what a great night we had with you, as a person as well as a performer. Please let us know when you will get to Luverne, or any other place within 300 miles of Holstein, and you just might see us in the audience. If we learned one thing last night, it's that experiencing one show by Helen Welch is not enough! We're hooked now. Best wishes to you and all those associated with you. Thanks again, and Cheers!

Ken



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October 19, 2018

Dear Terry,

As you know, Helen Welch performed her SUPERSTAR: The Songs, The Stories, The Carpenters production at our venue last week. Having seen her showcase at Arts Midwest twice in the past, we knew our audience would absolutely LOVE her. And of course, they did!

We received more than a dozen emailed comments from her new fans over the course of the following week. To say these comments were glowing would be an understatement. Adjectives to describe Helen ranged from "class act," "great!" and "terrific!" to my personal favorite, "mesmerizing!"

The faces of audience members as they exited the theatre that night were clearly euphoric! I can't remember seeing so many smiling faces EVER and we've had many excellent shows. I think the music and Helen's delivery of it and the stories she told were what made the difference. Interestingly, there were no lights on in the parking lot that night, so as people were leaving I reminded them to be careful, as it was quite dark out there. They just nodded, with the same grin as before the reminder. Everyone who commented said they would **absolutely** come to another of Helen's shows.

In addition to the excellent performances by singer and band, I must speak to the professionalism of the entire ensemble. They were easy to work with, eager to please, upbeat and as kind as they come. Even if they'd had to drive five hours from Chicago because they missed their connecting flight (which almost happened) or if Helen's luggage with costumes, shoes and make-up hadn't arrived in time to be used, I'm confident the show would have gone on without missing a beat, without any pouting or negativity, or any other prima donna-like behavior we sometimes see in the business. You would have never known they'd been up since 3AM when they stepped out on stage!

And Howard Perl, Helen's manager! What a gift to a presenter, and I'm sure to Helen, too! I wish EVERY artist had a Howard Perl! He whipped out personalized videos, press releases, all sorts of photos, kept track of times, helped set up for a Skype interview and replied to frantic emails at all times of the day and night! Amazing and much appreciated! I never felt alone in preparing for Helen's show. Helen and those who support her ALSO support the presenter. I felt spoiled indeed!

I'm confident that we will ask Helen and her superb band back to the Tack in a year or two. Until then, those of us at her show and the ensuing party will remember what a special night it was and what very special people they are. We were truly blessed by Helen Welch and SUPERSTAR!

With warmest regards

Diane Veale  
Executive Director  
LuCille Tack Center for the Arts

# Christopher Wilkins



Born in Boston, Christopher Wilkins earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard (1978), where he was music director of the Bach Society Orchestra. As an oboist, he performed with the Berkshire Music Center Orchestra at Tanglewood and with the Boston Philharmonic under Benjamin Zander. In 1979–80 he attended the Hochschule der Künste in West Berlin as a recipient of the John Knowles Paine Traveling Fellowship, awarded by the Harvard Music Department. He studied at Yale University

with Otto-Werner Mueller, receiving his Master of Music degree in 1981. He was assistant conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra from 1983 to 1986, and from 1986 to 1989 he served as associate conductor of the Utah Symphony, assisting his former teacher Joseph Silverstein. From 1989 to 1996 he was music director of the Colorado Springs Symphony, serving in later seasons as music advisor. He served for eleven years as music director of the San Antonio Symphony, and was named resident conductor of the Youth Orchestra of the Americas by Plácido Domingo during its inaugural season. As a guest conductor, Wilkins has appeared with many of the leading American orchestras, including those of Chicago, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Houston, Detroit, and Cincinnati. He has also appeared with orchestras throughout Latin America and in Germany, Russia, Spain, and New Zealand. In 1992 Wilkins won the Seaver/NEA Award, designed to identify exceptionally talented American conductors early in their careers. Currently, Wilkins is music director of the Akron Symphony, and also of the Orlando Philharmonic and Boston Landmarks Orchestra.

Dearest Helen,

It was fabulous. Thrilling and moving. And a huge success with our audience.

The accolades keep pouring in. Emails from patrons, raves from board, and lots and lots of enthusiasm from the orchestra.

Aside from your astonishing God-given talents—which alone are plenty enough for a fantastic show—you put a lot of care into every detail. Few guest stars have an inkling of what you manage so well: what to perform, what to say, how much to say, who's in your trio, how to pace the program, how to manage the library materials, and—so important—who should do the charts.

Your judgement is impeccable.

You also managed the interaction with Miller South to perfection. I know that it took a lot of your time. Thank you, thank you!! You were so smart not to give them too much. They adored working with you. 'Zat You Santa Claus' was spot on.

I'm left with total admiration, deepest appreciation, and a yearning to do more.

I hope Doug makes it up the "river bank" safe and sound.

Congratulations and HAPPY CHRISTMAS!!

xo

Christopher

