

Henry Timms

Doctor of Letters

Durham Cathedral, 28 June 2022

As a child, Henry was raised in a world of ideas and stories, one that imbued him with high levels of confidence, energy and drive. A growing interest in the arts was subsequently fostered as an undergraduate here in Durham where he formed a long-lasting friendship and dynamic partnership in college and university music and theatre with Jon Boden, the world-famous folk musician - also a recent recipient of an honorary doctorate from Durham University.

As President and CEO of the Lincoln Center in New York, Henry is leader of the world's pre-eminent arts centre hosting eleven resident organizations: including The Metropolitan Opera, the New York City Ballet, the Julliard School and the New York Philharmonic. In addition to managing and presenting artistic programming, the Lincoln Center acts as a national leader in arts and education and community engagement and is committed to helping promote participation in the arts in disadvantaged communities. Under Henry's leadership, the Lincoln Center has recently completed a fundraising campaign raising \$550M to create one of the world's greatest concert halls.

Henry was offered the leadership of the Lincoln Center in the light of multiple prior achievements. Particularly influential was his success as President of the 92nd Street Y. Here, he revolutionized a 144-year-old institution, creating programmes and movements designed to foster learning, civic responsibility, culture and innovation, both in New York City and around the world.

Henry is the creator and co-founder of "*Giving Tuesday*", a global philanthropic movement engaging people in close to 100 countries. Designed as a counterpoint to the consumerism of Black Friday, it is the largest and most diverse philanthropic movement in history having generated over \$7 billion for good causes in the US alone.

An influential social commentator, Henry has won multiple accolades for a co-authored international bestselling and award-winning book “*New Power*” This explains how traditional modes of power and influence are being replaced by open, social, peer-driven, participatory forces. It is an invaluable source for anyone who wants to truly understand the reasons why some social movements and enterprises (Uber, Me Too, the Arab Spring) take off while others fail.

A common thread running throughout Henry’s career is his ability to build and foster strong supportive communities. At the Lincoln Center, Henry has overseen the development of a diverse and inclusive arts community that draws upon the skills and enthusiasms of all sectors of society. *Giving Tuesday’s* success goes beyond cultivating a philanthropy of the affluent; it has become a worldwide grassroots movement. *New Power* is concerned with how collaborative social networks of ordinary people can gain the power to effect massive social, economic and political change, for both good and ill.

As someone who exemplifies Durham University’s commitment to personal development and social commitment, who demonstrates daily what can be achieved by creativity, drive, and exemplary leadership, who pursues big ideas undaunted by any fear of failure, who steps back and encourages others to receive acclamation for his organisation’s successes, Henry is a truly outstanding role model for our students, alumni and staff and a wonderful ambassador for this university.

Chancellor, I present Henry Timms to receive the degree of Doctor of Letters honoris causa.