

## ANDY SUMMERS

Pro-Chancellor,

Andy Summers has achieved an international reputation as a musician, songwriter and producer, in the genres of rock, pop and jazz. A rock and jazz guitarist of wide experience and versatility, he co-founded The Police and enjoyed huge worldwide success with the band in the 1980s, and again in its recent reunion tour. He is also a published author and photographer.

Andy Summers was born in Lancashire but grew up in the Bournemouth area. He was a self-taught guitarist (though later he studied classical guitar at California State University, Northridge) and he played in a variety of bands and styles in local clubs and hotels in the later 1950s. This early experience gave him a versatility and resourcefulness which have marked his whole career and which enabled him, even in his earlier years, to play and record with a very diverse range of well-known bands and solo artists including Zoot Money's Big Roll Band, the Animals and the Soft Machine. His innovative guitar style has made dynamic use of electronic effects and synthesiser technology. In the 1980s and later his music has increasingly reflected his love of modern jazz.

However, Andy Summers' period of greatest popular success began in 1977 when he joined with Gordon Sumner (better known as Sting) and Stewart Copeland to found The Police. With their distinctive and innovative blend of rock, jazz and reggae styles, The Police became one of the most successful bands of all time, with world-wide chart-topping hits such as *Every Breath You Take*, *Message in a Bottle* and *Walking on the Moon*, not to mention 80 million album sales. Their international tours broke new ground when they visited countries such as Mexico, India and Egypt which were then unfamiliar territory for rock bands. They received Six Grammys and two Brit Awards, including one for Outstanding Contribution to Music. As well as sharing in the collective successes of the band as guitarist, backing singer and songwriter, Andy took particular credit for the 1981 Grammy as writer of *Behind My Camel* which was voted Best Rock Instrumental. The Fender, Gibson and Martin guitar companies have all made signature guitars in his honour, and Gibson's awarded him their lifetime achievement award in 1997.

The Police reunited in 2007, first at the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles and then for a world tour which confirmed their continuing popularity and made them the 'highest grossing' performing artists in that year, with over 1.2 million ticket sales. By August 2008 the band had played to three and a half million people during the tour, which became the second biggest in musical history. In October 2007 the French Ministry of Culture awarded each member of the group the honour of Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres.

After 1984 the three members of The Police followed their separate and increasingly divergent musical directions, though they came together briefly at intervals, most notably in 2003 at their induction to The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. As a solo artist Andy has produced 11 albums, and has performed

consistently around the world for the last twenty years. He has continued to work in the studio with many other musicians as an instrumentalist and producer, and has written a number of film scores, including *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* and *Weekend at Bernie's*.

Andy is also an accomplished writer and photographer. His autobiography *One Train Later* was widely acclaimed, and a volume of his own photographs, entitled *I'll be watching you: Inside The Police 1980-83*, was also well received. More recently, with Ralph Gibson, he wrote *Light Strings: Impressions of the Guitar*. He has mounted successful photographic exhibitions in Europe, North America and Australasia, and a new book of his photography will shortly be published. A feature film based on his book *One Train Later* will be released later this year.

Andy Summers is a highly gifted and widely influential creative artist who has deservedly met with critical and popular acclaim. Whilst he has made his home in California, he retains close ties with Bournemouth and it is highly appropriate that the University of his home town should now honour his immense achievements.

Pro-Chancellor, it is my privilege to present to you Andy Summers, and ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Arts, *honoris causa*.