

**Neil Tennant**

**Doctor of Letters**

**Durham Cathedral, 31 March 2022**

As singer, musician and main lyricist in Pet Shop Boys, Neil Tennant has made an indelible mark on British and world culture in an entertainment career of more than 40 years. Since 1984 Pet Shop Boys have released 14 studio albums, 4 remix albums, 2 live albums and 7 compilation albums. With his co-writer Chris Lowe, Tennant has brought art to pop and pop to art, producing music that has endeared itself to new generations of listeners. In addition, Pet Shop Boys have starred in a movie, have written a musical, a ballet score, a soundtrack for the 1925 silent movie *Battleship Potemkin* and an oratorio, *A Man From the Future*, based on the life and death of Alan Turing. They have worked with a plethora of other artists, including Dusty Springfield and Liza Minnelli in music, Derek Jarman in film and Jonathan Harvey in theatre. In March 2016, Edinburgh University held a two-day academic conference on the work of Pet Shop Boys.

Raised in Newcastle, he left with a haversack and some trepidation for student life in London, started a career with Marvel Comics and then became deputy editor of music magazine Smash Hits. His chance meeting with Chris Lowe in 1981 was a turning point for his life and for British music. As a team, they survived their early chart success, able to adapt as

cultivated and retained new audiences. Full of literary, political and historical allusions, songs that can be read lightly and

missing refugee or our lost compassion? In 2018, Faber & Faber published a collection  
: *One Hundred Lyrics and a Poem*.

-centric yet, in many senses, Pet Shop Boys are a Northern band, bringing a wry Northern perspective to their commentary on British, European and Global life. The 2002 album *Release* was recorded here in County Durham evokes the County

landscape.