



**The world's oldest choral society
Making music continuously since 1817**

Summer Concert: "If You Like That...You'll Love This!" On the 9th July at 6:30pm, Halifax Minster

This is the intriguing title of this year's Halifax Choral Society Summer Concert for which we will be joined by the musicians of Halifax Minster. Our Musical Director, Philip Collin explains: "This is a concert for everyone - including people who might think they don't like classical music! We will perform pieces that people will recognise as music they already know and love - but might not have realised it is classical music! And then, (and this is the clever bit) we will "pair" each piece with something linked - perhaps by the same composer or in a similar style - but less familiar." Philip has found that this can be a brilliant way of introducing people to music they might otherwise have thought was not for them.

This is an excellent opportunity to invite friends who might not normally attend classical concerts - there will be something for everybody!

Doors open at 6:00pm for a 6:30 start. Tickets will be available at the door. Come early for the best seats! Watch out for details of ticket prices and advance booking arrangements, coming soon.

Did you know ...? Spotlight on Halifax Minster

In September 2021, we put on our first performance since Covid restrictions were lifted. The music was Handel's *Messiah*, and the venue was Halifax Minster.

Since then, the Choral Society has performed twice more at the Minster, and we have two more performances there planned for this year.



We have had good feedback from audiences and musicians alike on the Minster as a venue for live choral music and we hope to use it regularly for future concerts

In this edition we wanted to tell you a little more about the history of the Minster. In a future edition we will focus more on features of the Minster that make it such a great choice for our concerts.

There has been a church on the site of Halifax Minster since the 11th century, and possible before that. The present church was largely built in the 15th century, with some restoration in the 19th, but there are a few fragments left of the earlier structure, including a medieval grave cover which shows a pair of cropper's shears, providing very early evidence of the textile industry that was to form the backbone of Halifax's prosperity. You can find it in the South Porch. The font and its elaborate cover are medieval, and the latter is one of the finest examples in England. Its purpose was to prevent the holy water being stolen for its "magical" curative powers. Like the interiors of all medieval churches, it was originally brightly painted and gilded.

The box pews might feel a bit uncomfortable to modern congregations, but Jacobean worshippers would have been glad to take the weight off their feet; originally everyone was expected to stand throughout the services and no seating was provided. The life-size wooden figure welcoming visitors to the Minster, and holding an alms-box is "Old Tristram", carved around 1710 by John Aked and thought to be based on a real person who begged in the church precincts. A more affluent parishioner was Anne Lister, 'Gentleman Jack' of Shibden Hall, who was baptised in the Minster and worshipped there.



Dedicated to the patron saint of Halifax, John the Baptist, the building was elevated from parish church to minster in 2009. If you are wondering what the difference is, 'Minster' is now an honorific title for a large or important church, although the term dates back to antiquity. Halifax is one of a number of churches that have been designated as minsters in the 21st century. If you want to explore more of the fascinating history of the building, the Minster has an excellent history page on its website [here](#).

Spring concert

When we first started rehearsing for our spring concert, back in January, we little thought how relevant the music would be to current events. Written as a 'Mass for Troubled Times' during Napoleon's aggressive expansion of his empire, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* took on a heart-breaking relevance to the situation in Ukraine, and the final movement of Willcocks' *A Great and Glorious Victory*, entitled 'Reconciliation' and ending with a moving arrangement of the hymn 'The day



'Thou gavest, Lord, is ended' had many of the audience in tears. It was decided to take up a retiring collection in aid of Ukraine, and this raised £530, to which was added a further £20 via a Facebook donation.

Dates for your diary in 2022

- Saturday, 9 July: 'If you like that, you'll love this!' at Halifax Minster
- Sunday, 30 October: Bach's *Mass in B Minor* at the Victoria Theatre
- Sunday, 27 November: Carols and Brass with Black Dyke Band at the Victoria Theatre
- Friday, 16 December: Candlelit *Messiah* at Halifax Minster
- Wednesday, 21 December: Carols in the Spiegeltent, Piece Hall

Whilst the members' subscriptions go a long way to covering the running costs of the choir, in order for us to put concerts on we rely on donations and the goodwill of our supporters as, in the current climate, ticket sales do not cover the costs of putting on concerts to the high standard we are keen to maintain. Our contribution to the cultural life of our area is significant and we are grateful to The Bearder Charity for their contribution towards enabling our musical activities to continue for many years into the future.

If you have any suggestions for what you would like your Newsletter to include, or any queries about HCS, please email

coordinator@halifaxchoralsociety.co.uk

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