

HALIFAX

Choral Society

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



We start with the news that Philip Collin, our Artistic Director and Conductor is leaving us in the summer to take up a new role in Sheffield, where he lives.

The society appointed Philip in March 2020 after he conducted our performance of *Messiah*. What unlucky timing - we were plunged straight into Covid restrictions and we were unable to rehearse and

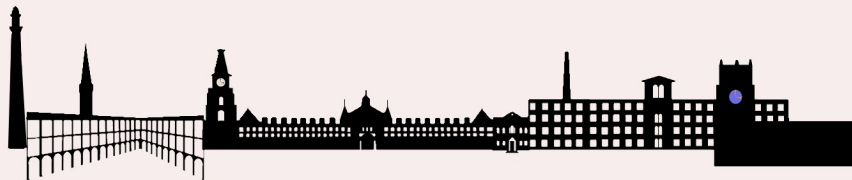
perform normally again until 18 months later. But that didn't stop us singing! With Philip's support we shifted on line, then later, as restrictions eased, we began socially distanced rehearsals. Outdoors became the new indoors for rehearsals and performances and we even made our own contribution to the repertoire of lockdown choir videos with our recording of 'The Heavens are Telling'. We could not have done any of that without Philip.

Since September 2021, the choir has performed the *Messiah* twice more, and has staged 5 more major concerts including the magnificent (and very tricky) Bach's *Mass in B minor*. We have learned some intriguing new works and revisited some we were familiar with such as Haydn's *Nelson Mass*. The annual Carols and Brass has continued under Philip's baton, and to this we have added a new Christmas tradition - *Carols in the Piece Hall Speigeltent*.

Audience numbers and choir membership numbers are a challenge for everyone but are holding up, the choir remains viable and we are confident in our future. We have a great deal to thank Philip for.

Philip says 'I have so much enjoyed working with you all; some of my very happiest musical memories have been in my relatively short time with HCS. I wish you every success in the future and hope we can keep in touch'.

Summer Concert, 24th June 2023



Halifax Choral Society is returning to Halifax Minster on Saturday 24th June with a programme of melodious choral music from a range of composers. The programme includes George Shearing's jazzy *Songs and Sonnets of William Shakespeare*, Halifax-born composer George Dyson's uplifting *Songs of Courage* and Philip Wilby's vivacious arrangement of *North Country Folksongs*. We will also be performing the world premiere of young composer Ben Ponniah's *Begin* - more about this below. On what we hope will be a glorious mid-summer evening we will be accompanied by Philip Voldman on piano, and string players from the Royal Northern College of Music. The concert will be conducted by Philip Collin.



The performance, at Halifax Minster, starts at 6.30 p.m. and if you book your tickets on line [here](#), the cost is £16.50 for adults and £11 for under 18s (booking fee included). This will **save you money**, as tickets on the door are priced at £20 for adults and £12 for under 18s!

Begin by Ben Ponniah

Begin was written to provide energy for anyone starting to rebuild their life after experiencing significant loss. This could be the loss of a friendship, relationship, job, home, one's health or a family member. After a traumatic event, it can be very hard to hear the quiet voice from within. After Ben's divorce, he found the natural world and meditation to be very restorative. While exploring meditation, he happened upon quotations of Rumi, the thirteenth-century Persian poet and mystic, and connected with his powerful, concise, and mindful writing, which contains beautiful imagery from nature. Setting Rumi's evocative words to music was a deeply cathartic experience. *Begin* was written to help anyone to take the first steps on their journey of self-discovery.

Begin takes inspiration from the soundscape of film scores. It has five sections:

1. Journey: When will you being that long journey into yourself?
2. Stars: Let the waters settle and you will see the moon and the stars mirrored in your own being.
3. Silence: Silence is the language of God. When I am silent, I fall into the place where everything is music.
4. Fire: Set your life on fire. Seek those who fan your flames.

Read more about *Begin* and Ben Ponniah on [his website](#)

Dates for your diary:

Our next concert is on 5 November, 2023 Autumn Concert at the Victoria Theatre. This will be a special event! Full details in our next newsletter.

For lovers of Beethoven, our friends at [Huddersfield Choral Society](#) have asked us to mention that they will be performing Beethoven's titanic *Missa Solemnis* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, at Huddersfield Town Hall on 26th May. More information [here](#)

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

coordinator@halifaxchoral.org.

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