

HALIFAX

Choral Society

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



Come and Sing *Messiah*

One year, six months, two weeks and three days after we last performed an indoor concert with a live audience, here we are doing it again! And with the same work – Handel's *Messiah*. The “come and sing” event attracted some 40 visiting singers, and everybody had a great time at the morning workshop and afternoon rehearsal

The evening performance, with four excellent soloists, was ably accompanied by Skipton Camerata and the appreciative audience included the Mayor of Calderdale and his wife, and the High Sheriff of West Yorkshire, and received a standing ovation.

As one of our visitors commented 'I enjoyed the whole day from start to finish'.



OUR NEXT CONCERT

6th November at 6.30pm, in Halifax Minster

Requiem by Maurice Duruflé
Schicksalslied by Johannes Brahms
Lord, Thou hast been our refuge by Ralph Vaughan Williams

Online tickets (£10.45) available [here](#) or £10 on the door.

Maurice Duruflé's *Requiem* is built around the Gregorian plainsong melodies of the Mass of the dead and, rather than using them as the jumping off point for some complex composition, Duruflé lets them speak for themselves, with

the organ supporting and illuminating. We felt this would be a wonderful work around which to build a choir and organ programme, highlighting the beautiful Harrison and Harrison organ in Halifax Minster and taking the opportunity to work with longstanding friend of HCS, the organist Darius Battiwalla. Darius will be playing Mendelssohn's 5th Organ Sonata as a solo item in the concert.

Also in the programme is Vaughan Williams' *Lord, Thou hast been our refuge* which, given that it is built around the hymn 'O God, our help in ages past', seemed particularly appropriate for a concert so close to Armistice Day. Completing the programme is Brahms' *Schicksalslied* (Song of Destiny) in which the poet (Hölderlin) contrasts the happiness of souls in heaven with the pain and misery of those living below. In Brahms' hands, it becomes a message of hope for those who are suffering and one of the most perfect short choral pieces in the repertoire.

Philip Collin, Musical Director, Halifax Choral Society

The trouble with composing ...



Did you know ...?

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Vaughan Williams was the son of a vicar but he had a liberal upbringing. perhaps not surprisingly as his mother was Charles Darwin's niece. When as a boy, he asked her about the controversial *On the Origin of Species*, she answered, 'The Bible says that God made the world in six days. Great Uncle Charles thinks it took longer: but we need not worry about it, for it is equally wonderful either way'.

RVW briefly became an atheist, but he eventually settled into what he called 'a cheerful agnosticism'. However he retained a life-long love of the King James text of the Bible, and *Lord, Thou hast been our refuge* combines a setting of Psalm 60 with Isaac Watts' hymn, 'O God, our help in ages past' and uses the tune *St. Anne* to which Watts' hymn is often sung. Vaughan Williams had an intimate knowledge of hymns dating back to his 'first and last organ post' in Lambeth in 1895 where he experienced both the best and, (as he wryly commented), the worst of hymn writing. In 1904, he began work on what was to become *The English Hymnal*. Following in his great uncle's footsteps, this publication was highly controversial, as it did include hymns to the Virgin Mary and minor saints. It caused such outrage that it was banned by the Diocese of Bristol and censured by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Despite this, it was eventually widely adopted. Its eclectic mix of tunes drawn from as far apart as Lutheran chorales, folk songs, and American gospel, with appearances by Bach and Orlando Gibbons, showcases Vaughan Williams interest in a wide range of musical sources.

More Dates for your diary

6.30 p.m., 28 November: *Carols and Brass*, with Black Dyke Band at the Victoria Theatre. Tickets (£12-£25 plus concessions) available online from the [Victoria Theatre](#) or from the Theatre box office: 01422 351158.

7.00 p.m., 22 December: Carol concert with Black Dyke Trombone Ensemble in the Spiegeltent, the Piece Hall, Halifax. Tickets available from Piece Hall.

Have you considered becoming an HCS patron?

We are enormously grateful to our patrons, who loyally support us each season. If you would like to join this select band, we have four levels of patronage:

- **Bronze: £100 p.a.**
- **Silver: £250 p.a.**
- **Gold: £500 p.a.**
- **Platinum: £1000 p.a.**

Patrons benefit from complimentary tickets to concerts dependent on level of patronage, as well as other opportunities to support the choral society.

For more information, contact coordinator@halifaxchoralsociety.co.uk

What next for Halifax Choral Society?

2022 looks like being a really exciting year for HCS.

We are planning a Spring Concert of Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and Jonathan Willcocks' 'A Great and Glorious Victory' in Halifax Minster with Skipton Camerata in March.

Date and venue for our annual *Messiah* is still to be finalised, but will probably be shortly after Easter.

We are hoping to run a Summer Festival, involving other Halifax-based choirs, perhaps at the Piece Hall.

Of course, *Carols and Brass* will take place as usual - pencil in the 27 November 2022 for this!

Most exciting of all, due to an extremely generous offer of sponsorship from an anonymous donor, we will be performing Bach's *Mass in B minor* at the Victoria Theatre, with a proposed date of 30th October 2022. This is certainly one to put in your diary.

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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