

Newsletter 13, November 2023

# HALIFAX

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## Choral Society

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

HCS launched its **Choral Scholar scheme** last year with the aim of enabling and enriching the developing careers of those talented young musicians who will be at the forefront of choral music in the future.

Introducing our newest choral scholar

We are delighted to welcome Niki Zohdi to Halifax Choral Society as our tenor choral scholar.



We interviewed Niki to find out a bit more about him.

***Where did you grow up, and where do you live now?***

I grew up in Blackburn, Lancashire and lived there until 2016 when I moved down to London to study for a bachelor's degree in music, and following that, a master's in music composition at Goldsmiths. I currently live in Leeds where, in 2020, I moved to begin my PhD research in music composition.

***Do you come from a musical family?***

I don't! Nobody in my family is musical at all.



***Do you play any musical instruments?***

I play a little bit of piano – just enough to get through. My main practice as a musician is composition and some musicological research. My research concerns relationships between contemporary music and early Renaissance music through lenses of distance, proximity, remoteness, and re-contextualisation. I have always found the links between 14th and 15th century and various forms of contemporary really intriguing. My research is practice research meaning that I look at these research questions through my own compositions.

***What kind of music do you like singing and listening to most?***

I love singing in one-to-a-part ensembles singing music before 1650 – anything from Johannes Ockeghem and John Dunstable to Claudio Monteverdi and everything in between. I find the adrenaline of small ensemble singing exhilarating as there is nowhere to hide! I like listening to either very early music or very recent contemporary music. I must confess that I don't listen to much 18th and 19th century music. I listen to lots of current European music, composers such as Franck Bedrossian, Chaya Czernowin, Turgut Erçetin as well as music by Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy and James Dillon (composers usually bracketed under the so-called 'new complexity' descriptor).

***What is your ambition for the future?***

My ambition is to continue composing and researching and get as many performances of my music around the world as I can! It is also my aim to get a full-time and permanent lecturing post in a university. Regarding singing, I plan on continuing my freelance singing career as a soloist and a choral singer.

You can read more about Niki on his website [here](#).

Niki is not our only choral scholar ....

**Emily Costigan** joined us a year ago as our soprano choral scholar, and we thought it was time to catch up with what she's been doing - here's what she told us:

Hello Halifax Choral Society!

I finished my masters course at the Royal Northern College of Music in the summer and have continued lessons with my teacher Linda Richardson since leaving. I took some time off over the summer to move back to Leeds with my husband, Andy, redecorate and sort

out our house before the autumn season sets in. Performance-wise my main focus at the moment is to build up my Oratorio repertoire and seek opportunities with Choirs and Choral Societies. I have been able to get several gigs singing the Rutter *Requiem* and am really excited to sing my first *Messiah* with you all this December. I have a few fixtures in the diary next year in spring, but building this work up fresh out of college is slow going. I'm planning to keep singing as much as possible whilst getting a part time job to fill the weeks where I have less work.

**Emily will be the soprano soloist for our *Messiah* by *Candlelight* on Friday 15 December in Halifax Minster - get your tickets for this special evening [here](#).**

We are grateful for the generous grants from **VCEP Ltd.** (Commercial Properties in West Yorkshire) in support of our Choral Scholars scheme.



Our ever-popular annual **Carols and Brass** concert with Black Dyke Band at the Victoria Theatre is on Saturday 2 December. Tickets are selling fast, so get yours [here](#)!

## Dates for your diary:

2 December Carols and Brass with Black Dyke Band at the Victoria Theatre

15 December *Messiah* by Candlelight at Halifax Minster

17 December Carols in the Spiegeltent, Piece Hall, Halifax. Note that this event starts at 12.00 noon. Get your tickets [here](#).

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

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