



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

It's 2022!

And after all the excitement of getting back to the Victoria Theatre after a two year break, we have now begun seriously rehearsing for our March concert.

The famous *Nelson Mass* by Haydn is well known to many, the choir last performing it in 2015. Less well known is the piece for the first half which is *A Great and Glorious Victory*, by living composer Jonathan Willcocks.

In this edition we explain more about the background to these two pieces and why Philip has decided to programme them together. This will be a great chance to hear this wonderful music in the glorious setting of [Halifax Minster](#), with a professional orchestra and soloists. Don't miss it - and bring your friends!

Buy tickets [here](#)

Carols and Brass with Black Dyke Band returned in 2021 after its 2020 absence, and was very successful, despite a heavy snowfall on the day of performance! We are proud to have supported the St Augustine's Centre at this performance and thanks to our generous audience who dug deep into their pockets, the magnificent sum of £1,179 was raised.

In the week before Christmas we made a festive appearance in Piece Hall's Spiegel tent, ably accompanied by the Black Dyke trombone sextet, so the festive season went with a swing.



Carols and Brass at Victoria Theatre, Halifax



Carols in the Spiegeltent, Piece Hall, Halifax. As one enthusiastic audience member, Oscar (2) commented, 'Trombones!! Father Christmas!!! Jingle Bells!!! Grandma!!!' Who could ask for more?

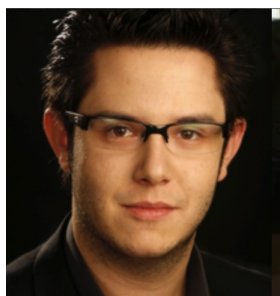
Long service awards

Halifax Choral Society is proud of its long traditions, and the loyalty of its members. Celebrating 25, and in one case 40 years of service to the choir, several members (including two married couples) were presented with certificates recognising this. From left to right: David Lord, Denise Crossley, Ken Abson, Neil Crossley, Carol Coleman, Susan Stevens, Jean Abson (MD Philip Collin at the back).



Of course, we are also delighted to welcome new members, so if you are interested in joining us, please contact coordinator@halifaxchoralsociety.co.uk for more details.

Congratulations to our accompanist, Jenny Martins, who got married in December and is now Mrs. Hobbins. We wish her and Ash all the best for the future, especially as they start their own family.



We are lucky to have **Philip Voldman** covering for Jenny during her maternity leave. Philip is a native New Yorker, and studied at the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts, better known to some as the 'Fame' school. His training continued at the Royal College of Music, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the National Opera Studio, and he has worked throughout the UK and abroad as an accompanist, repetiteur and conductor with opera companies and professional soloists.

Coming from a Ukranian family and fluent in Russian, he is in particular demand as a vocal coach for works in that language, although he can also prepare singers for roles in Italian, French and German.

Coming up ...

Haydn: *Mass in D Minor, Missa in Angustiis* ('Nelson Mass')
Jonathan Willcocks: *A Great and Glorious Victory*

Halifax Minster
Saturday 19th March 2022

6.30pm

General Admission (Centre) £15, General Admission (Side) £12

Special Offer for Under 16s - Only £5!

(£5 tickets for under 16s available on the door only)

Did you know ...?

Haydn originally entitled his work 'Mass for Troubled Times', reflecting both political and personal circumstances at the time. Having just won four major battles and crossed the Alps, threatening Vienna itself, Napoleon must have seemed an unstoppable force, but at the very time of the debut of the *Missa in Angustiis*, in 1798, news came of a stunning victory by the British Navy under the leadership of Nelson which destroyed most of Napoleon's fleet. Napoleon continued to have successes on land, and even bombarded Vienna in 1809 where the aging Haydn shouted 'Don't be afraid, children, where Haydn is, no harm can reach you!' However, The Battle of the Nile smashed Napoleon's control of the Mediterranean, and Nelson was hailed as 'the saviour of Europe'. Nelson visited the Esterházy court, where Haydn was Kapellmeister, in 1800 and may have attended a performance of the mass, thus cementing the now more familiar title of the *Nelson Mass* which was already in circulation.



Plaque of The Battle of the Nile, at the base of Nelson's Column, London, cast in bronze from French cannon taken at the Battle of Waterloo.



Davenort Plate commemorating the Battle of Trafalgar.

Napoleon's rapid advance across Europe had threatened political and financial stability, and Haydn's employer, Prince Esterházy, had been forced to cut back on expenses by reducing the size of his in-house orchestra. Haydn had to cut his cloth accordingly, and the *Nelson Mass* is unusually scored for strings, three trumpets, organ and timpani. This reduced orchestration has sometimes made programming difficult for concerts, so Jonathan Willcocks composed *A Great and Glorious Victory* as a companion piece. It was commissioned to mark the bicentenary of Nelson's even more famous victory at Trafalgar, and the title comes from an entry in Nelson's diary on the eve of the battle:

May the Great God, whom I worship, grant to my Country and for the benefit of Europe in general a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in anyone tarnish it; and may humanity after Victory be the predominant feature of the British fleet.

Willcocks has incorporated contemporary accounts of the battle with words from the Latin Requiem Mass and the Book of Common Prayer. The first two movements, 'Preparation' and 'Conflict', reflect the battle itself and include Nelson's dying words 'Thank God I have done my duty'. The third movement depicts the terrible storm which followed the battle. Nelson's second-in-command, Collinwood, successfully brought the fleet through this, without loss of life. The final movement features a beautiful setting of the hymn 'The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended' and conveys the importance of reconciliation leading to peace.

Please support us

We are grateful as always to our wonderful supporters and patrons, who help so much to keep the choir going.

Our members' subscriptions cover the running costs of the choir, but to put on concerts we need money from ticket sales and donations. Please consider making a donation. Every little helps.

[Visit our localgiving page](#)

Or even better, become a patron and benefit from complimentary tickets and other opportunities to support the choir - details from coordinator@halifaxchoralsociety.co.uk

Dates for your diary

30th October: Bach: *Mass in B minor*
27th November *Carols and Brass*

And ... we would not be the Halifax Choral Society without an Annual *Messiah!* Date and venue will be announced soon.

We very much hope to bring you a summer concert and are currently exploring possibilities - so watch out for our next newsletter!

We hope you have enjoyed this Newsletter. We really appreciate feedback. 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

[Visit our website here](#)

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