



# Becoming A Chorister

Spring 2022



Music has been pivotal to the life of Halifax Minster for hundreds of years. A musical education for any child can set them up for life, as they learn many important skills beyond music and gain huge confidence in their own ability to succeed in their ambitions. We aim to give young people a rounded musical experience with many opportunities to perform and develop as musicians in a structured environment.



## Who are we looking for?

The Minster Choir is currently looking for 5 boys and 5 girls in Year 3 or above who are good at reading and enjoy singing. It would be an advantage if they already sing in their school choir having found their voice. Parents need to be fully supportive of the commitment and educational opportunities that belonging to the Choir will provide.

To express your interest, in the first instance please contact Andy Barber, the Minster's Operations Manager, either by phone 01422 355436 or by email at [admin@halifaxminster.org.uk](mailto:admin@halifaxminster.org.uk). He will be able to answer any questions you have and send you an application form. Once this has been returned, a member of the Music Department will be in touch to invite you to visit the Minster to hear the Choir sing, and then to attend a Tuesday rehearsal for a taster to see if you would like to be part of the Choir.

## The Minster Choir

The Minster Choir is currently made up of 20 children and adults. Under 18s are called Choristers, and we aim to have 10 boys and 10 girls that make up the Choir's top part. They are supported by adults who sing alto, tenor and bass. Mostly they perform together, but sometimes they give each other a day off! Choristers come from schools across Calderdale and Bradford.



All members of the Choir contribute to a team effort, which is underpinned by pastoral care and safeguarding. The Minster's Safeguarding Policy is monitored by the Minster Council Safeguarding Group.

Ned Smith, who began singing at the Minster as a chorister aged 7, is currently Acting Director of Music, assisted by Hilary Barber, who is also the Vicar and was a professional musician before ordination. We have three organists who accompany the Choir, alongside a number of volunteers in supporting roles – including the Secretary to the Leeds branch of the Royal School of Church Music.



### When does the Choir sing?

Tuesday after school is when the Choir comes together to rehearse: Probationers from 5pm – 6.30pm; Full Choristers from 5.30pm – 7.30pm; and Senior Choristers and adults from 7pm – 8.30pm.

The Minster Choir performs twice every Sunday during term time. The main service is at 10.30am – 12noon, with Evensong at 4pm – 5pm. The Choir also sings for special services and concerts, both across the country and abroad, and regularly broadcasts on both television and radio. Choristers do sing on Christmas Day and Easter Day, and are then rewarded with holidays alongside normal school holidays, including the summer and at half terms.

The Choir has travelled to sing at cathedrals across the UK and to Germany, visiting Halifax's twin town of Aachen. This year the Choir is heading to the North East, singing over the August bank holiday weekend at Hexham Abbey and Newcastle Cathedral. The Choir will be staying at an outdoor pursuit centre with lots of opportunities for adventure and team building activities.



## What do Choristers learn?

Choristers gain skills for life through singing together, including:

- How to read music and understand music theory
- What it means to belong to a team and make lifelong friends
- Personal confidence in public performance
- Work ethic to develop new skills and reach their goals and achievements
- Applying progress in singing to another musical instrument
- Singing in different languages.

Recently Choristers have moved on from the Choir to study at Chetham's School of Music, The Royal Academy of Music and The Guildhall School of Music, and have become professional musicians – including a Director of Music in a Cathedral. Current and former choristers have been members of local youth bands, the Halle Youth Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra.

## What does it mean to be a parent of a Chorister?

Parents are crucial to the success of their child as a Minster Chorister. They need to ensure that they arrive on time for rehearsals, services and concerts, to come and hear them sing regularly and to encourage them in their musical development. Fostering this commitment to the Choir enables children to reach the high standards that are expected from each Chorister. Families are welcomed into the Minster community and many become involved in the life of the Minster, helping with services, concerts and many other aspects of the Minster's life. All Choristers are encouraged to play at least one additional instrument and financial help is available to support this.

The Minster Music Department is funded by the Minster and as such makes no charge to parents for the education each Chorister receives in exchange for the commitment they bring to the Choir. All families are encouraged to give their time towards the running of the Choir and the Minster, which survives entirely through charitable giving and revenue from visitors and events. Rishworth Choral Scholarships

**Rishworth School** has been in partnership with the Minster for a number of years, and Choristers who belong to the Minster Choir are eligible to apply for a Choral Scholarship to Rishworth School. This provides a 10% bursary towards their school fees whilst they remain a Chorister. They are expected to belong to the School Choir and to sing at Chapel services when required.

[www.halifaxminster.org.uk](http://www.halifaxminster.org.uk) 01422  
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