

Music at Beverley Minster

January 2019

Director of Music – Robert Poyser
Assistant Director of Music - vacant
Organ Scholar – Dominic Joyce (jointly with the University of Hull)
Junior Organ Scholar – Harry Hainsworth-Staples
Director of the Junior Choir – Rachel Jerome

Choirs

There are currently nearly 80 people involved in music on a weekly basis as part of the Minster's choirs, over 60 of them are under 18. The choir are essentially voluntary although they receive a small honorarium on a quarterly basis. There are usually three choral services a week although at certain times in the year the choir are considerably busier. During choir holidays we welcome visiting choirs and also run a voluntary group of singers from within the congregation to help lead worship.

There are separate Boys' and Girls' choirs, strengthened by two adult sopranos and a 'back row' comprising former choristers and adults. In January 2017 we started a Junior Choir (aged 4 to 8) and this has had an encouraging start with a good membership.

The choir rehearse in a dedicated Song Room in the Parish Hall. We have benefited from a new piano funded by the Friends of the Minster. Regular recruiting events are held, specifically to attract new boys to the choir.

Current choir numbers:

Boys 13 Girls 25 Sopranos 2 Altos 4 Tenors 6 Basses 13

Highlights include;

Tour to Germany October 2016 and 2018

Choir tour to Bristol and Gloucester Cathedral in 2014, Coventry Cathedral

October 2017 and Liverpool for 2019

Regular CD recording

Appearances on TV as part of ITV's Victoria and BBC's King Charles III

Participation in Area Choral Festivals and Chorister Award Scheme

The music department and youth ministry have, over the past few years introduced regular Sunday morning sessions for the choristers during worship and this has led to a regular flow of confirmation candidates from within the choir and their families.

We have ongoing funding schemes to assist with the provision of music at the Minster. We received endowment grants totalling £20,000 from the Friends of Cathedral Music and the Ouseley Trust in 2015 to help us fund the post of assistant Organist. Sponsorship, fundraising concerts and donations continue to increase this fund but there is further work needed to develop this.

In September 2017 we started a scheme to provide free music lessons to choristers aged 8-14. This has proved a great success and a challenge will be to continue this once the initial funding from the Friends of Beverley Minster finishes in August 2020.

Music Group

The Music Group lead the songs at All-Age and Worship Teaching and Ministry (Sunday at Seven) services. The group are a combination of voices and instruments, and managed by jointly managed by group member Pippa Milner and the Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music. The group currently lead two services a month and we are currently reviewing our capacity to expand and develop this area of worship.

The Minster Organ

The Organ is a fusion of 1769 Snetzler, 1885 Hill and 1995 Wood of Huddersfield (who maintain the instrument). It has recently undergone extensive maintenance and some tonal adjustment. It has four manuals, over 4000 pipes and is considered to be one of the finest. There is a separate and healthy organ fund. A new CD recorded by the Director of Music of the newly restored organ was released by Priory Records in 2017. A specification can be found in the organ section of the website.

A Steinway Grand piano was bought by the Friends of Beverley Minster and this is used in worship and for concerts. There is scope to use this more. We also have a Yamaha keyboard at our disposal.

Concerts

The Minster is a very busy place with concerts throughout the year. We host festivals (Beverley Early Music Festival, New Paths), local choirs, schools and ensembles (East Riding County Choir, and Beverley Chamber Choir), individual performers and celebrity events. We are gradually appearing on a circuit of Cathedral tours and have hosted performances of the Snowman, Russell Watson, Aled Jones and G4 amongst others. We expect a new Assistant Director of Music will help us with the best way forward to manage and grow our concerts and events strategy recognising that they not only bring people in to the Minster who might otherwise not visit us, but also provide a significant revenue stream.

A service list is compiled published each month on the Minster's website and shows details of the music played and sung. 'Hymns Old and New' (New Anglican Edition) is the standard hymn book, used at almost all the services although it is our intention to replace this with Common Praise in the near future. Service sheets are produced for All-Age services, when contemporary worship songs will be included, and special occasions. A sheet containing the hymns, responsorial psalm and collect is produced each Sunday. At present, the Director of Music chooses the hymns and a team of those involved the hymns and songs for All Age and Sunday at Seven more informal services.