

Rochdale's weekly Midday Music Toad Lane Concerts at St Mary in the Baum Church in April 2026

Another richly varied month in this eclectic weekly music series. Mixed voice choir, self-accompanied soprano and impressive duos.

April 08: HARMONY mixed voice choir - 'supercalifragilisticexpialidocious' from their Mary Poppins medley said it all. The latest science states that singing in choirs is good for your health and wellbeing, and the audience. This local mixed voice choir, formerly known as Rochdale Retirement Choir, now meets every week (in school term time) at St Aidan's church, on Mondays between 1.00 and 3.00 pm. They welcome anyone who has an interest in singing. Conducted by Freda Farnworth and accompanied by Graham Chamberlain they sang light music arrangements by Gershwin, Caesar and Gershwin, some serious Stanford, then Brahms, Flanders & Swann and Humperdinck. Excellent.



April 15: Lucy Farimond – a rare treat to see an accomplished, self-accompanied classical singer. This British lyric soprano who first appeared at St Mary in the Baum as an RNCM student in 2020 is clearly fulfilling the considerable promise she showed then. It is great that Rochdale's generous audiences at Toad Lane Concerts are helping such talent hone their performing skills. What is more, Lucy's latest album was to be presented the following day in Manchester.

She gave an excellent recital of twentieth century British song settings, Samuel Barber, and lighter songs, plus gave herself a break in the middle with a lovely piano solo.

April 22: Johanna Leung clarinet & ChiChi Li piano (both RNCM Master's graduates) gave a truly well-matched duo recital that demanded and got equal skills and musicianship from each with the added dimensions of rapport and mutual understanding and interpretation. Sonata in Re for Clarinet and Piano by Nina Rota and the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano Opus 120 No.2 by Brahms were splendidly delivered by the duo. They finished off with a delightful arrangement of Chopin's Etude Op.10 No.3.



April 29: Sinead D'Abreu-Hayling soprano & Aaron le Maistre piano - another dynamic duo of RNCM rising stars, Sinead is a versatile singer with a rich and resonant voice and bubbling personality that owned the stage. Aaron stood in at very short notice with great success. A theme of love and romance in various styles: sophisticated lieder by Richard Strauss; song settings by black composers, Florence Price, Samuel Coleridge Taylor and William Grant Still; and operatic excerpts from Mozart and Puccini. They met the great technical and emotional challenges of these works with aplomb and intelligence. Three relaxed jazz standards allowed the audience to come down to earth gently. The Queen's Award-winning Toad Lane Concerts are every Wednesday at 12.30 pm at St Mary in the Baum, Toad Lane, Rochdale, OL16 1DZ. Entrance fee is £6. Contact 01706 648872 for further information.

Dr Joe Dawson