

Toad Lane Concerts at St Mary in the Baum Church in April Baroque beauty, Harmony, young pianists from Chetham's, and RNCM talent

April 02: Telemann Baroque Ensemble – Today's line-up consisted of Peter Collier harpsichord, Alastair Roberts flute, Sarah Snape violin, John Goodstadt viola & Roger Bisby cello, bringing history off the page with: Telemann's Flute Quartet in d, Frederick the Great's Flute Sonata No 9 in e, Telemann's Trio in G for violin, viola and Basso Continuo and Mozart's Flute Quartet in D K 285.



April 09: Rochdale Harmony Choir originally Rochdale Retirement Choir before Covid, they reformed and developed under the baton of Freda Farnworth. Accompanied by Grahm Chamberlain the opening 'A Grand night for singing' established the rich sound of more than 40 mixed voices, (with a striking male contingent and noteworthy part singing), and filled the acoustic space. Stage songs followed, then a quick change to the sacred from Non Nobis Domine, to The Lord Is My Shepherd (a la Vicar of Dibley) and Make a Joyful Noise ... and joyful it was, too. The closing set consisted of a selection from Show Boat, The Music's always there, and the somewhat surprising but hilarious Chick, Chick, Chicken. Well, they do profess a variety of styles!



April 23: Piano students from Chetham's School of Music, Manchester ... performed completely from memory, their performances displayed stamina and musicality beyond their years.

Tamara (11), set a high bar with JS Bach's Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, 'The Lark' by Glinka-Balakirev and rounded her set off with seamless silvery threads in the right hand of Schubert's Impromptu in E flat. Magical. Artem (12) explored the musical contrasts in Mozart's C minor sonata, K. 457, Tchaikovsky's April from 'The Seasons' and Chopin's 'Raindrop Prelude'. Startling. Sixteen-year-old Mariia's clean lines in Scarlatti's Sonata in F minor, K.466 were skilfully controlled and refreshing. Then she let her hair down with Chopin's Polonaise in C sharp minor, Op.26 No.1. Wonderful. Sixth former Jack delivered Liszt's Transcendental Etude No.8, 'Wilde Jagd' with aplomb. One translation of the title is 'Wild Hunt' and this was definitely what unfolded. Stunning. [NB no picture due to safeguarding guidelines]

April 30: Sinead D'Abreu-Hayling soprano and Róisín Fleming piano ... two more of the RNCM's rising stars brought a varied programme of vocal delights. Four songs of Richard Strauss, opera from Bellini and twentieth century Ned Rorem, followed by stage and screen numbers from Wicked, West Side Story and My Fair Lady. Finally, popular standards by Mancini's Moon River, L-O-V-E by Nat 'King' Cole and Sinatra's famous hit, Fly me to the moon. Sinead proved herself more than competent in the range of styles, essential for today's professional singer. Her engaging personality and stage presence make her a winner with any audience.



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