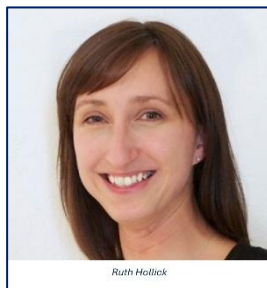


## Rochdale's weekly Midday Music Toad Lane Concerts at St Mary in the Baum Church in May 2026

Another richly varied month in this eclectic weekly music series. Mixed voice choir, Gold medallist pianists and a masterclass in both soprano and bass clarinet

**May 06: Madeleine Brown piano** - After graduating in music from Cambridge, she is now at the RNCM, where in 2025 she won the prestigious Gold Medal. She was recently awarded the Silver Medal by the Worshipful Company of Musicians, adding her to the acclaimed Young Artist Programme. All this complements her 1st prizes in both the RNCM and Cambridge University Concerto Competitions. She immediately stamped her authority with a dramatic Polonaise-Fantaisie, Op.61 by Chopin followed by refreshing and charming excerpts from Rameau's Suite in G major. The atmospheric contemporary piano piece Black Earth, by Turkish pianist-composer Fazil Say requires that to achieve maximum effect the player reaches into the strings and touches and mutes them along with conventional virtuoso keyboard playing to achieve a symbolic empty space, the unearthly harmonics creating a twilight zone. The piece de resistance was Prokofiev's Sonata No.7. Through Madeleine's mastery and incisive interpretation, we fully appreciated its rhythmic complexity, striking discords and emotional depths ... sensational!



**May 13 Students from Chetham's School of Music:** led by staff pianist and RNCM graduate, Ruth Hollick. First up was James who played Gregson's Tuba Concerto of 1976 with verve and confidence. Soprano Madeleine sang Quilter's Five Shakespeare Songs, Op. 23, and three of Britten's Folksong Arrangements, Little Sir William, The Ash Grove, and the short and delightfully savage Oliver Cromwell. Her pure lyrical tone was like a refreshing English rose sandwiched between thorny but amazing concertos.

Finally, violinist Filip delivered two movements of Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 77. The Passacaglia was powerful and dazzling with a staggering cadenza culminating in a fiendish Burlesque final movement. This was fine playing with panache and passionate virtuosity beyond his years.

**May 20 Eccles Community Choir** is a delightful true mixed community choir with open policy of no auditions, low subscriptions and effective social support system. Hugely enjoyable repertoire from Purcell, Strauss and Offenbach to popular song arrangements and medleys of James Bond themes and ABBA. Accompanied by John Stott and directed by soprano and adjudicator Angela Rowley ARCM (who led by example with an accomplished rendition of Mozart's aria Deh Vieni).



**May 27 Elliot Gresty clarinets & Kanako Mizuno piano:** Elliot is the Principal Bass Clarinetist of the BBC Philharmonic after associations with several top orchestras. First appeared here 2011-16 as a student at Chetham's before a scholarship to the Royal College of Music in London. Played soprano clarinet for Poulenc's Sonata, Burgmüller's Duo Op 15, and dazzling finale of Lovreglio's Concert Fantasy on La Traviata; in the middle he demonstrated bass clarinet adaptation Bach's unaccompanied Cello suite No 3 in C, and Bozza's Ballade. Japanese-born **Kanako**



**Mizuno** (Tokyo Conservatoire, RNCM Gold Medallist and RAM) collaborated on piano superbly. 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**