



Patron: Samuel West
Music Director: Darius Battiwalla

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It's a fact - Singing is good for you

There are many scientific journals and articles that will tell you singing is good for you, but Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus have proof.

Bill Smyllie, who joined the Chorus when he was 21 years old, is now entering his 10th decade and celebrating his longevity by – how else – singing!

Now a father, a grandfather 6 times over and a Doctor of Metallurgy, Bill has generously offered to celebrate this remarkable musical milestone by sponsoring the Chorus's next concert, Handel's *Messiah*, to be performed at the Victoria Hall, Sheffield on 25 March 2017.

Born in Scotland in 1925, Bill moved to London with his Mum at just 9 months old to join his Dad who was already working there. His love of singing grew from being in the choir of Bancrofts boarding school in Essex from 1936-43, and he came to Sheffield to work in September 1946. It was at Abbeydale Park Sports Club where he played cricket and 'rugger' that he met Granville Carr. He suggested Bill 'joined the Phil', which he did just one year later. He sung weekly, joined in the Chorus's international tours and even succeeded Granville as Chairman of the Chorus from 1980-90.

Bill's passion for the *Messiah* comes from a close association with the work for over 7 decades. Unbelievable as it seems now, between the 1940s and 1970s Sheffield

Philharmonic Chorus sang the Messiah up to 3 times each season - with audiences in the thousands on many occasions.

With this *Messiah* being so near to Easter, conductor Darius Battiwalla will take the opportunity to include movements not often heard when the work is performed in its more usual slot near Christmas. The 18th Century Sinfonia will join the Chorus on period instruments. The strings will be gut and produce a rich sound, particularly effective in concert halls made predominantly of wood and stone – so the Victoria Hall is the perfect concert hall of choice.

So, do come and celebrate with Bill, the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus and the 18th Century Sinfonia on Saturday 25 March for a spring evening of glorious music that should be a delight for Messiah devotees and newbies alike. Tickets are priced at £12 for adults and are available from <http://sivtickets.com/event/handelsmessiah>

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS

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Links & social media

www.sheffieldphil.org
<https://www.facebook.com/SheffieldPhilChorus>
Twitter - @SheffPhilChorus

The 18th Century Sinfonia, is the non-costumed arm of the 18th Century Orchestra
<http://www.18thcentury.co.uk/page2.html>

Images available for use with this article

- 1 – Concert image
- 2 – Dr Bill Smyllie, 03.01.2017
- 3 – Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus in the Oval Hall, Sheffield City Hall, c. 1955
- 4 – Recent photo of Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus in the Oval Hall (now minus the famous lions)

About Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus

Founded in 1935 as the resident chorus for the new Philharmonic Society's series of concerts in Sheffield City Hall, Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus was formed from two Sheffield choirs whose origins date back to the 1860s. The modern day Chorus continues to sing with leading conductors and orchestras and fulfils a challenging and exciting programme under the vibrant and inspiring leadership of its Music Director, Darius Battiwalla.

Following Handel's *Messiah*, Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus will join forces with The Hallé and The Hallé Choir at the City Hall, Sheffield on Saturday 6 May to perform Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth. Tickets available from <http://www.sheffieldcityhall.co.uk/events/The-Halle-Sheffield-Philharmonic-Chorus-and-Halle-Choir>