

Ryedale Festival

Friday 12 – Sunday 28 July 2024



15th April 2024

North Yorkshire

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The Ryedale Festival aims to make North Yorkshire one of the best places in Europe to enjoy and encounter classical music, and to do it with a sense of vision and adventure.

This year's summer festival takes place between **Friday 12th – Sunday 28th July** and features 58 performances in 35 beautiful and historic locations across the county.

From the inspirational **Felix Klieser** – a leading international horn player, despite the fact he was born without any arms – to the trail-blazing guitarist **Xuefei Yang**, whose fascinating journey began at a time when her instrument was banned in China, the **Festival's Artists in Residence** form the backbone of this fantastically varied programme. Other major residences feature the singer and 'knockout performer' **Fleur Barron**, violinist and *Gramophone Young Artist of the Year* **Stella Chen**, as well as the critically acclaimed **Van Baerle Piano Trio** and a resident 'troubadour', **Rachel Podger**, who tours a solo programme to intimate and beautiful venues across the region.

Royal wedding cellist **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** joins friends for a programme that ranges from Brahms to Bob Marley in Malton and York - just one of many concerts bringing together music across genres and time and celebrating the fearless and eclectic programming of a new generation of classical musicians.

As usual, the festival is also a place to spot stars of tomorrow, such as Georgian pianist **Giorgi Gigashvili** (who started as a child pop singer and even won *The Voice*), conductor and 'spark to watch' **Tom Featherstonehaugh**, Brazilian guitar pioneer **Plinio Fernandes**, and an array of others including the festival's own Ryedale Festival Young Artists.

Great choral groups bring their magic - The **Marian Consort** visit Selby Abbey with Allegri's masterpiece *Miserere* and celebrate the architecture of **Castle Howard** with a new piece by Sarah Frances Jenkins. And one of Europe's most famous choirs, **Tenebrae**, will sound stunning in the long-echoing spaces of Ampleforth Abbey.

This year's programme also includes **seven World and UK premieres**, including a newly commissioned string quartet by **Julian Anderson**, piano trios by **Gabriel Prokofiev** and **Rob Zuidam**, and a song cycle by **Kian Ravaei** exploring his Iranian heritage. The festival also presents the first performance of *Spring Snow*, a ground-breaking project conceived by **Fleur Barron**, that intertwines the narratives of **Schubert's Winterreise** and the Japanese Kabuki play *Yasuna*, with dancer **Suleiman Suleiman**, and shamisen player **Hibiki Ichikawa**.

The settings - beautiful hills and vales, stunning churches, spectacular stately homes and welcoming local arts centres - form part of the pleasure of a trip to Ryedale Festival. Audiences can hear one of the world's greatest pianists, **Angela Hewitt**, play Bach and Beethoven in **Pickering's beautifully-frescoed church**, or join **Royal Northern Sinfonia** for an all-Mozart evening in a stunning **pre-Raphaelite church in Scarborough**. There is also the option to promenade through a **Triple Concert at Castle Howard**, picnic in the interval of a **Double Concert at Sledmere**, enjoy the **Orchestra of Opera North** in **Hovingham Hall**, or explore new festival venues, such as **Selby Abbey** and stunning locations on the Yorkshire Wolds, Moors and Coast.

Dame Sheila Hancock joins the festival to talk about her love for classical music and introduces live performances of some of her favourite pieces. "Classical music thrills, comforts and amazes me," she says. "When I begin to lose faith in the human species, it reminds me what the best of us can do."

Beyond classical music, **Claire Martin** celebrates the 100th anniversary of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with an all-star line-up, while acclaimed folk group **The Unthanks** visit Malton's Milton Rooms. Musician, broadcaster and writer **Katy Hamilton** joins the line-up with a series of 30-minute pre-concert talks exploring the music to be performed and chatting with the artists.

BBC Radio 3 broadcasts five concerts from the festival, including **BBC New Generation Artists** such as pianist **Giorgi Gigashvili** playing Prokofiev's epic 7th Sonata, accordionist **Ryan Corbett** exploring the theme of solitude, and the much-praised **Leonkoro Quartet** playing Mozart, Schubert and Mendelssohn.

Praised by the **Royal Philharmonic Society Awards** for the way 'it always wraps its arms round the local community', the festival welcomes all who would like to **Come and Sing Fauré's Requiem** in Thirsk. It also presents the world premiere of *Across the Whinny Moor* - a Community Song Cycle based on local legends of magic and witchcraft, **co-created by over 100 local children and amateur singers** with John Barber and Hazel Gould, and presented in collaboration with the Ryedale Folk Museum and the Richard Shephard Music Foundation.

Also in the festival mix: family and baby-friendly events, talks, masterclasses, late-night candlelit concerts, choral evensong, a garden party and Kirkbymoorside's outstanding and **award-winning brass band**.

The festival continues to demonstrate a **deep commitment to reaching wider audiences**, with thousands of discounted tickets available through the **Ryedale Rush** scheme, while those under 25 can come to any event for £5 or less.

Festival Director Christopher Glynn said: "*Our aim at the Ryedale Festival is simple: to make North Yorkshire one of the best places in Europe to enjoy and encounter classical music, and to do it with a sense of vision and adventure. I look forward to welcoming audiences from near and far to enjoy internationally renowned performers this summer, from Angela Hewitt performing Bach to Sheku Kanneh-Mason playing Bob Marley – and all in beautiful Yorkshire locations. Just as importantly, the festival offers opportunities to hundreds of local young people and a platform for emerging talent, as well as breaking new ground with seven world/UK premieres. Above all, it's a team effort involving thousands of people who all believe in the important and life-enhancing role that music can play in our communities.*"