

&Piano 2026 Festival Review





&Piano is an organisation based in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire that aims to promote the listening of, and participation in live classical music making, helping to support it's relevance and appeal amongst new and existing audiences across our region.

Founded in 2018, our main output is an annual music festival - a week of classical music events around April & May: showcasing professional musicians with a connection to the area, performance opportunities for local young musicians and amateur musicians to participate in.

Following our festival, we deliver an annual School Tour Recital in secondary schools across Huddersfield & Halifax, providing students with opportunities to experience live classical vocal and instrument music, and to engage and interact with professional musicians - all with the objective of ensuring classical music is enjoyed and appreciated across the region for years to come.

Cover image, 'Sanchita Mazumdar performing in our 'To The East' event
(Photo by Alex Beldea)

Image above, Imogen Davey & Christopher Pulleyn performing in our 'To The East' event.
(Photo by Alex Beldea)

2026 Festival Statistics

15 events

25 artists

39 participant performers

7 venues hosting festival events

90% artists based in Yorkshire/Greater Manchester/Lancashire

550 attendees across our events

57% average of first-time attendees at our 2026 events

9 schools visited around Huddersfield & Halifax

1300 students engaged with during our 2026 School Recital Tour

'Blown Away' - Family&Piano presented by Concertteenies

This year we were delighted to be able to welcome Concertteenies the Sheffield-based award-winning producer of musical events and activities for young children and their adults to deliver this year's family event. 'Blown Away' was a musical story based on the book of the same name by Rob Biddulph, featuring original music by Paul Rissmann, featuring music for flute, piano and voice. In a first for &Piano, we toured this performance to four different venues in Huddersfield, Holmfirth, Dewsbury & Halifax over the first weekend of the festival.

"Lovely event. Everyone was friendly & welcoming. The music and performance was fantastic. My little ones enjoyed it & so did we. Thank you."

Dewsbury performance feedback

"I loved the engagement with the children, the inclusive atmosphere and the amazing talent of the musicians was inspiring."

Halifax performance feedback





Event 1: A Night at the Light Opera

Featuring pianist Robin Humphreys together with a quartet of professional opera singers who between them have performed with Opera North, Scottish Opera, the evening presented an entertaining journey through Operetta into the modern age of musicals.

Brilliant evening with top quality musicians who established a great rapport with the audience. Everything was superb!

The evening was highly entertaining & I thoroughly enjoyed it

This was the first event I have been to since moving to Slaithwaite and it did not disappoint. I hope there are more events at St James, as it is a stunning building. After attending this event I have purchased tickets to attend two other &Piano events. Absolutely exceptional and well worth the price ticket. Extremely talented artists and thank you for sharing your gift!

Audience Feedback from A Night at the Light Opera

Event 2: The Last Post

Baritone Andrew Randall, Trumpeter Lewis Barton & Pianist Matthew Lam - three exciting young artists came together to deliver a powerful and eclectic programme of music reflecting on the tragedy and loss of war, featuring a performance of acclaimed composer Cheryl Frances-Hoad's song cycle 'Magic Lantern Tales', commissioned & first performed by Leeds Song in 2016.

"Wonderful programme of music, both familiar and challenging, played with passion and joy."

"Like the laid back and informative style"

Audience Feedback from The Last Post





Event 3: ((LISTEN)) @ Dark Woods

In a first for &Piano, we gave the piano a night off and welcomed Duo Cantelina, formed of guitarist Ravi Nathwani & mezzo-soprano Sophie Clarke, for a typically eclectic evening of music for a ((LISTEN)) night. From John Dowland to Antonio Carlos Jobim, Ravi & Sophie presented an informative and entertaining evening of music for voice and guitar.

"Beautiful & Uplifting evening"

"It was a sumptuous and splendid evening. Good for the soul! Thank you, more please!"

"Event 3 was just all round a wonderful evening"

Audience Feedback from ((LISTEN)) @ Dark Woods



Event 4: To The East

The closing event of the festival took our listeners on a journey starting from Slaithwaite with the song cycle 'Small Journeys', another piece by composer Cheryl Frances-Hoad composed in 2022 featuring poems by local poet Adam Strickson about locations in the Colne Valley before travelling east-ward to experience music by Robert Muzcynski, Otar Taktakishvili & Maurice Ravel. We were delighted to welcome two exceptional musicians who grew up around Huddersfield, international soprano Katherine Broderick & flautist Imogen Davey, accompanied by Artistic Director Christopher Pulleyn.

In another &Piano first, we were also delighted to invite Adam Strickson to perform some of his poetry, alongside his artist collaborator

"I loved the informality and lack of stuffiness of the concert and the audience were so respectful to the performers. A superb evening of the highest quality of music and dance."

"I really liked the way people talked about the music, why they picked it, why they thought it was exciting, picked out interesting things to listen for, combined new things with familiar things"

"Really enjoyed the breadth of the performance, including classical, contemporary, dance and poetry, and all beautifully curated and woven together."

Audience Feedback from To The East



Participation

Once again, &Piano aims to provide opportunities for local, amateur & young performers to be part of the festival and 2026 was no exception. This year, we offered a new event in addition to our Performance Pub and Young Musician Showcase.

Classical Café

Our very first Classical Café was aimed at young performers, to give them a relaxed & non-competitive opportunity to share their music-making. The afternoon featured 13 performers of all ages and abilities, supported by pianist Catherine Hall-Smith.



Young Musician Masterclasses

This year we also offered two masterclasses for selected Young Musicians around the region, offering a dedicated masterclass for Instrumentalists led by clarinetist Emily Worthington, and one for singers led by experienced opera singer Sarah Redgwick.



Young Musician Showcase

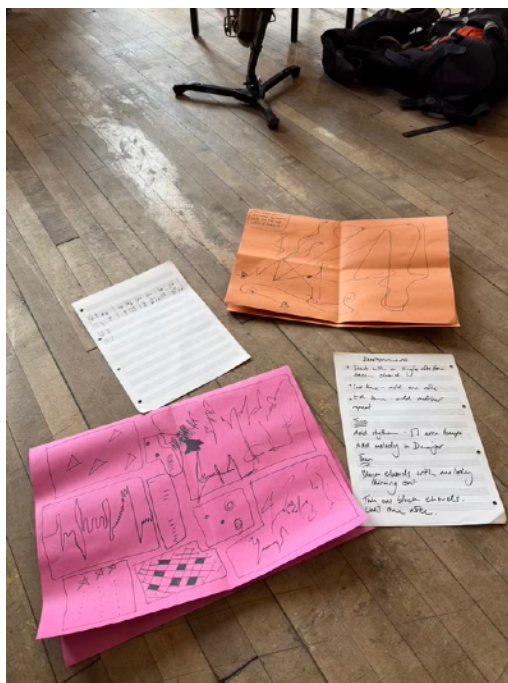
Once again we were delighted to support and showcase a fantastic group of talented musicians currently living and studying across the region. Instruments featured this year included the flute, violin, piano and a variety of singers. The Young Musicians this year were selected from Greenhead College, University of Huddersfield, CAPA College Wakefield, Heckmondwike Grammar School, Opera North's Young Performers Platform & Musica Kirklees. We are delighted to be building and developing so many connections with local education & performing arts organisations.



Composition & Improvisation workshop

This year we commissioned our second piece of new music - a work for flute, voice & piano by composer-performer Imogen Davey. Inspired by our final event's theme of embarking Eastwards, Imogen wrote 'Threshold' - a piece inspired by the anticipation of setting off on a journey.

Before the performance, we held a composition & improvisation workshop with Imogen, offering participants the opportunity to explore the practice of composition, understanding Imogen's composition process, exploring improvisation ideas and techniques, using different ideas and practices to create their own composition around Imogen's concepts and ideas.



"Small Journeys" Guided walk

Following our composition workshop, poet Adam Strickson led a guided walk around the Colne Valley, to locations that inspired the poems he wrote for Cheryl Frances-Hoad's song cycle "Small Journeys", providing some context and background prior to the performance later that evening by Katherine Broderick & Christopher Pulleyn. Adam talked about the inspiration and meaning behind the poems and the music, reading his poetry at various locations. It was a fascinating insight into the creative & collaborative process between author and composer.

School Tour 2026

Following our main festival week, thanks to support from the Sir George Martin Trust & Arts Council England we delivered our 5th school recital tour across Kirklees & Calderdale. Featuring Mezzo-Soprano Daisy Mitchell and Clarinetist Chris Hardy, we introduced students to a wide range of music by Georges Bizet, Richard Strauss, Takashi Yoshimatsu, Gerald Finzi & more. Students successfully unlocked the story and the meaning of Strauss' song 'Schlagende Herzen' (Longing Hearts) in German, and correctly guessed the animal that Yoshimatsu was depicting in one of his 'Four Pieces in Bird Shape'.

Schools visited this year were:

Spen Valley High School • Halifax Academy • Brooksbank School
Batley Grammar School • Colne Valley High School • Salendine Nook High School
Thornhill Community Academy • Trinity Academy Halifax • Newsome Academy

"I liked how Daisy could expand her voice without any microphones or amps or anything and I also really liked how unique all the pieces were and the story they gave"

"The range of both the clarinet and opera vocals surprised me. It was interesting to hear opera in person for the first time."

Student feedback from our School Tour Workshops

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you! I've had many kids come up to my room already asking about singing, piano and clarinet lessons, and picking up your playlist cards!"

Teacher feedback from Trinity Academy Halifax



Future plans for 2026

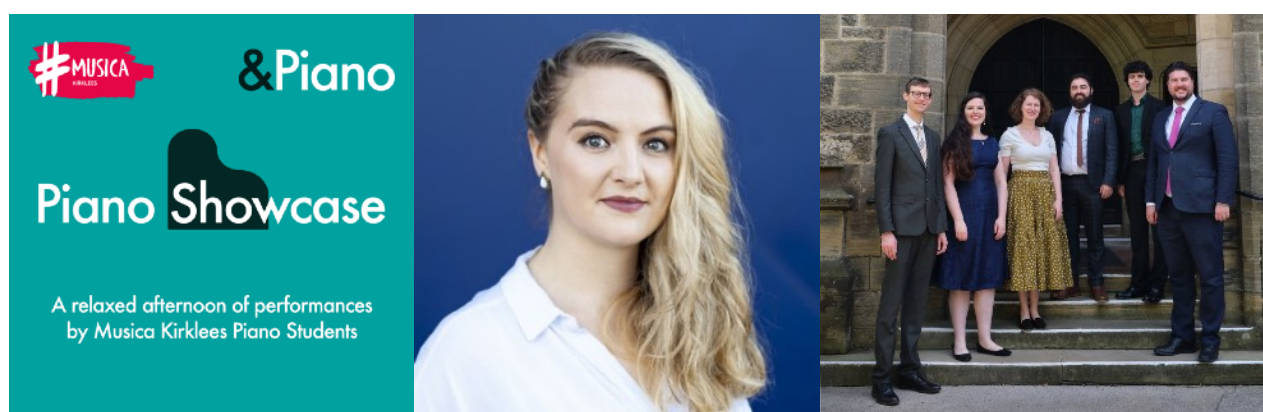
16-17th October - &Piano Autumn Weekend

After the success of last year's Autumn weekend, &Piano will return to present an exciting and eclectic series of musical events outside our main festival week.

We're delighted to once again be partnering with Musica Kirklees to present a relaxed afternoon of performances from their piano students.

We welcome the Leeds-based mezzo-soprano Beth Moxon, recent 2nd place finalist of the Rebecca Clarke Song Competition to give a recital focusing on female composers past and present with Artistic Director Chris Pulleyn.

We then present another &Piano first, as we welcome the Leeds-based Vivify Ensemble vocal consort, directed by Alexander Kyle, to present an atmospheric afternoon of choral music, in the atmospheric setting of Shred Chapel, to celebrate it's 180th anniversary.



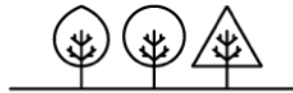
20th December - Christmas around the Piano

We'll be returning to the North of England Centre for Music & Arts on Sunday December 20th for another 'Christmas around the Piano' featuring lots of festive fun, showcasing more young talent, and celebrating the joy of singing!



Sponsors & 88 Keys Supporters

We are extremely grateful to our **Grand Piano Sponsors** for supporting this year's festival.



D A R K W O O D S
C O F F E E

We would also like to thank our 88 Keys supporters for their generous donations towards the work of &Piano.

&Piano 2026 Festival Artists

Sarah Carroll, Kathryn Williams, Catherine Hall-Smith, Robin Humphreys, Juliet Montgomery, Kamil Bień, Claire Pascoe, Jeremy Peaker, Emily Worthington, Sarah Redgwick, Matthew Lam, Lewis Burton, Andrew Randall, Jane Robertson, Sophie Clarke, Ravi Nathwani, Christopher Pulleyn, Imogen Davey, Katherine Broderick, Adam Strickson, Sanchita Mazumdar, Daisy Mitchell, Christopher Hardy, our Young Musicians - Damien Stirling, Aurelia Grundy, Lucy Hanson, Jack Gong, Charlie Pearse, Madeleine Hicks & everyone who performed in our Classical Café & Performance Pub.



Our thanks to

Funders

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Isabel Chadha

Contact Us

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Next & Piano Festival

April 24th - May 1st 2027



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