

York Chamber Music Festival 2025

Annual General Meeting 20th November 2025

Present:

Agenda

Apologies for absence

Chair's Report/discussion

Artistic Achievement

Audiences and Ticket Sales

Website and Publicity (Posts)

Players and their fees

Summary

Dates of next festival 11 – 13 September 2026

FESTIVAL REPORT

Artistic achievement

Once again Tim mustered some of the best string players around and pianist Katya Apekisheva. I had a stream of people after the concerts thanking us all for putting on a wonderful festival. And I have had several thank you messages by email, not least the Professors of English (Charles Martindale and David Hopkins) wrote again. For me what they say sums up my own feeling about the festival and what it is for; even though as they admit it is a bit gushing:

Dear Stuart,

We simply had to write again to thank and congratulate you on another glorious York Chamber Music Festival. For us this has become quite simply the musical highlight of our year: a weekend of the finest music, inspired and inspiring, for which simple gratitude is the only appropriate response. Last year we called the performances 'stellar'; this year was quite as good, and maybe even better. Of course all the players are, as individuals, among the most accomplished around. But it is the way they interact that is truly the thing. What spontaneity, what passion, what delight in collective music-making, what beauty! They listen and respond to each other, play for, and to, and with their friends (as they so obviously are), sharing their pleasure with us - and we are privileged to overhear that love for and engagement with the music, true chamber-music playing. Tim as Director of the Festival was not there in person, but certainly was in spirit, with his generosity and commitment to collaboration. The result is life-enhancing in a very special and particular way, restoring one's faith, at least for the moment, in the beauty and goodness of the world.

Apologies for gushing so. But do pass this message on to Tim and the others.

All best wishes

Charles and David (Hopkins)

Audiences/ticket sales

Appendix Two contains the figures which are accurate as far as I can tell. The basic message is that this year we had the best overall audience numbers since we started and the revenue consequently went up (but so did costs). So we had 565 in the audiences which included free entry to YCMF volunteers, the journalist and a few guests (eg Jonathan Aasgaard's wife). It also assumes that people who bought the Festival Pass came to everything. And a few people who 'invited themselves'.

Ticket sales were £8,580 which is over £500 more than last year. The Festival Pass proved again to be popular(30) and generated £2,250 which is 26% of sales. This was a good outcome despite wet weather Saturday and also the clash with the concert of the Academy of St Olave's on Saturday evening.

We sold 30 'Passes (lower than last year) but a quick count of names shows another 30 who came to four events. So there is a core of people - about 60 - who bought a significant share of the seats and tracing back we can see they are a consistent bunch of followers over recent years. We also had quite a few children popping up (15 under 18s) and that's good because they bring 'young' parents. Few signs of university students which is a shame in Freshers' Weekend. We collected less cash at the door this year and may be due to the wet weather on Saturday?

Website and Publicity

The website continues to be managed technically by Ashley McGovern (Red Bonsai). He also designs the flyer and deals with printing. He designs the posts. He does a limited amount of social media outreach. Many thanks to him. The website also is a gateway to individual concert programme notes and this was also successful. The 'two sides of A4' sheets handed out at the concert is proving to be popular. All the text on the website, the posts and all the programme notes are written by me on a voluntary basis.

We experimented with a QR code to take people to the sign-up page of the website. We had 24 responses and was certainly worth doing. This puts our email list at 505 active participants. So little by little we have added over 100 names to the list (managed by Wix) in the last three years.

We might consider ticketing through '*Ticket Source*' because it would be cheaper than using NCEM Box Office and mean we had access to all the email addresses of our ticket purchasers. But we benefit from support from NCEM now that Effie Millar has taken over managing the box office. To be discussed.

Blog posts

The occasional posts, connected to the music and composers in the programme, are also popular. Wix analytics is very useful identifying website activity. It shows, for example, big upticks in people lingering on the website after these are published and a definite impact on ticket sales nearer the festival. For example, the post about Shostakovich was opened by 123 people, the average reading time was over 5 minutes,

which for a web post apparently is very good...some people of course spending longer than that. There was a significant spike in ticket sales after the posts because we point to the concert performances and the Box Office. The posts also inform website materials and periodically reminds people what is coming up in the programme. Maybe has some educational benefit and shows the web browsers we are serious about our mission to introduce core chamber music to a wide audience.

Posts sent out:

Schoenberg *Transfigured Nights*

Haydn String Quartets *The unfolding story of a genius*

The Viola *The Heart of Chamber Music*

Shostakovich *in York*

'Two Weeks to Go'

'Starts on Friday'

The website also acts as a gateway to the detailed programme notes which aim to pick key points from the posts. Some people do make connections; for example the post on Schoenberg discusses the influence of late Brahms on his early music, specifically here *Verklärte Nacht*. (ref performances of the Brahms Second Cello sonata (F Major) and the G Major String Quintet.)

Other publicity

I took executive decision to pay £320 for a full page advert in the Ryedale Festival brochure which has a circulation in North Yorkshire and York of 20,000. Ashley charged £120 to design the advert – he works for the Ryedale Festival so it was easy to produce compatible materials. I suspect it is money well spent. It only needs 22 new full fee customers to cover its costs. I suspect we get more than that from it.

Our flyers were taken to Ryedale events, North York Moors festival and were distributed around town and at the Unitarian Chapel, St Olave's etc. We were circulated on the Chapel's lunchtime concerts email list and the 'Late Music' list (over 2,000 subscribers) and round the Central York Churches newsletter. We were mentioned in the NCEM newsletters. We were belatedly mentioned in York Minster pew sheet. Alison organised press and radio outlets. She also distributed many flyers round town and university campus.

We should discuss our outreach strategy. Several people commented that for the standard of music being produced why weren't the halls full up? This is a good question. I have met with Stewart Cambell who runs York Music Department MA in Music, Management and Marketing for music industry management, and the MA in Management in the Creative Industries. There is a possibility of a student placement with YCMF.

Players and their fees

In the absence of Tim away on paternity leave we welcomed Ren Ford to take over Tim's playing. Jonathan Aasgaard took over the Cello Recital with Katya Apekisheva. Many thanks to both of them. Many thanks to volunteers, notably Alison Gammon for

feeding the players, also to Alison and Robert for accommodating Katya; thanks to Jill Shepherd for hosting Charlie Scott and Helene Clement; thanks to Judy and Tony Ridge for hosting Gary and Jonnie. Jonathan Aasgaard and Ren Ford stayed with Sue and Stuart.

We paid the players a base fee of £1,300 each which includes rehearsing in London, two days rehearsing in York and rehearsals on performance days and includes travelling. This means for most of the performers being committed for five days. We do look after them as best we can while not paying them a fortune.

DATE OF NEXT FESTIVAL: 11 – 13 September 2026

(venues have been booked and confirmed. NB these dates avoid the clash with St Olave's Academy concert which is the following Saturday 19th.)

Summary

In 2025 we increased our audience sizes to 565 over the festival which was a record (despite very wet Saturday and clash with Academy of St Olave's concert). This is reflected in ticket income which was over £500 more than last year. Above all the artistic level continues to very high by national and international standards and as the English professors and their friends told us in an unsolicited message . "...the result is life-enhancing in a very special and particular way."

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Ticket sales 2022 - 2025

	2022	2023	2024	2025
	£	£	£	£
Tickets	5,765	7,800	7,395	8,230
Cash sales	840	575	635	350
Total	6,605	8,375	8,030	8,580

Audience (n=)

Single tickets	248	335
Festival passes	35	30* (=150 seats)
Cash	47	30
Volunteers/journalist/visitors	50	50
Total Audience	520*	565*

*assumes Festival Pass audience go to everything

Ticket Price Revenue Booked Tickets Booked

2025 - YCMF Festival Pass - Festival Pass	£75.00	£2,250.00	30
2025 - YCMF £15.00 - Standard	£15.00	£1,260.00	84

2025 - YCMF Â£20.00 - Standard £20.00	£4,720.00	236
2025 - YCMF Â£20.00 - Under 18 £0.00	£0.00	15
2025 – YCMF total booked tickets		365

After last payment for 2025 festival there is £14,269.12 in the bank to carry forward to 2026 as a reserve.

Appendix 2 **PROGRAMME**

EVENT ONE

Friday 19 September – 1:00 – 2:00pm £15
Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate

Cello recital

Jonathan Aasgaard (cello) and Katya Apekisheva (piano)

Schumann *Adagio and Allegro* Op. 70
Glasunov *-Chant du menestrel*
Brahms Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 2 in F major, Op. 99 m

EVENT TWO

Friday 19 September – 7:30pm £20
National Centre for Early Music, St Margaret's Church

Concert by Festival Artists

Charlotte Scott, Jonathan Stone (violins)

Hélène Clément, Gary Pomeroy (violas)

Jonathan Aasgaard, Ren Ford (cellos)

Haydn String Quartet Op. 76 No.5 '*Largo*'
Shostakovich String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, opus 110
Schoenberg String Sextet *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night) Op. 4

EVENT THREE

Saturday 20 September 1:00 – 2:00pm £15
Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate

Viola recital

Hélène Clément (viola) and Katya Apekisheva (piano)

Rebecca Clarke *Lullaby*
Shostakovich Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 147
Rebecca Clarke Sonata for Viola and Piano

EVENT FOUR

Saturday 20 September 7:30pm £20

Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York

Concert by Festival Artists

Charlotte Scott, Jonathan Stone (violins)

Hélène Clément, Gary Pomeroy (violas)

Jonathan Aasgaard, Ren Ford (cellos)

Katya Apekisheva (piano)

Schubert Notturmo in E Flat, Op. 148, D. 897

Schumann Piano Quartet in E flat major, Op. 47

Tchaikovsky Piano Trio in A minor, Op. 50

EVENT FIVE

Sunday 21 September 3.00pm £20

St Olave's Church, Marygate Lane

Concert by Festival Artists

Charlotte Scott, Jonathan Stone (violins)

Hélène Clément, Gary Pomeroy (violas)

Jonathan Aasgaard, Ren Ford (cellos)

Mozart String Quintet No. 1 in C major K174

Brahms String Quintet in G major, No. 2 Op. 111

York Chamber Music Festival 2025

Account

EXPENDITURE

Red Bonsai (PR and Website etc)

Website design/links to NCEM box office etc

3,000 flyers/100 posters /design/printing

Blog posts on website and via Wix

Some Social Media/FaceBook/Twitter

Sub-total **1,856.03 (inc VAT)**

Miscellaneous

Piano tuner 240

Public Liability Insurance 301

Betty's token for Ridge 50

Double-side programme copying 71.10

Alison catering 100.00

Meals out (Old Siam 303.24) (Prezzo £380.50) 599.49

Nice to See You 65.74

Derramore 58.75

Parking 125.40

Sub-total **1,611.48**

Venues

Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall 500

NCEM (concert hire) 420 (inc VAT)

Unitarian Chapel 400

(2xdays rehearsal; 2x lunchtime recitals

St Olave's Church 120

St Bede's (rehearsal space) 134.50

NCEM Box Office @10% of ticket sales 987.60 (inc VAT)

Sub-total **2,562.10**

Players fees

Charlotte Scott 1,300.00

Jonathan Stone 1,300.00

Gary Pomeroy 1,365.19

Hélène Clément 1,331.02

Ren Ford 1,411.40

Jonathan Aasgaard 1,641.08

Katya Apekisheva 1,320.00

Sub-total **9,668.69**

Total spend **£15,698.30**

INCOME

<u>Ticket Sales</u>	£
Tickets via NCEM	8,230
Tickets Cash at the door	350
 Total ticket sales	 8,580
The Harriet Trust	10,000
 Donations	 50
 Total Income	 £18,630
 Balance of income less expenditure	 2,931.70

State of Bank Account

There was £15,301.85 in the bank to carry forward from the last 2025 payment.

Notes:

Ticket income increased by 7%.

Income from tickets was 55% of expenditure;

We sold 30 'All concert passes' for £2,250 (26% of sales)

Ticket income changes 2022 - 2025

	2022	2023	2024	2025
	£	£	£	£
Tickets	5,765	7,800	7,395	8,230
Cash sales	840	575	635	350
Total	6,605	8,375	8,030	8,580