

Musical Connections newsletter

Helping people to live happier and healthier lives



Joy to the World, a Christmas Big Sing!



It's been such a joy to return to a full programme of festive intergenerational activities, and in particular, reuniting with Millthorpe School for our (9th!) annual Christmas Big Sing. With around 30 students and 25 members involved, it was a fantastic afternoon featuring performances from both Millthorpe's Jazz Band and Choir, and lots of Christmas singalongs along the way. MC group members also had the opportunity to showcase their talents, with Glen Lodge's Katie teaching Rocking Around the Christmas Tree in sign language, Philip, of the same group, leading everyone in a rousing rendition of Elvis Presley's I Believe, and Tower Court's Stan playing Jingle Bells on the harmonica. At the end of the afternoon, and after an all-important game of Christmas bingo, both members and students coupled up to dance to Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas – a very special moment that captured the magic of events like these! A particular mention to Head of Music, Mr Jackson, and all of the students at Millthorpe School for being so welcoming – we're already looking forward to next year!



We're Carolling in the Rain...!

After our July busking success, we were delighted to perform at the opening of the York Christmas Markets – a special celebration marking the 30th anniversary of the St Nicholas Fair. It was a wet and miserable afternoon, but nothing could dampen our group members' festive spirits as around 30 of them channeled their best Gene Kelly impersonations and joined together to spread some much-needed Christmas cheer. With plenty of traditional carols, some classic Christmas hits, and even a visit from the York Town Crier himself, everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and we managed to raise a fantastic £136. A huge thank you to everyone that joined us in the pouring rain – member, York local or Christmas shopper – your enthusiasm made it all worth it!





Is there anywhere we haven't sung this Christmas?!

It's been a hectic month in the MC calendar as we've been making the most of a Christmas without any restrictions. From carol singing at local shopping stores – Tesco, Morrisons and Asda – to visiting some of York's sheltered housing schemes to sing with tenants that don't attend our regular music groups – it's all been fantastic! Tesco was a particular highlight for many as we joined with some of the children from St Aelred's School – singing for almost 5 hours and raising an incredible £521.95 in the process! We received lots of lovely comments, including from Jo, the Tesco Community Champion:

Thank you for putting lots of smiles on our customers faces! I saw lots of customers singing, standing, and listening. A long time coming, especially after Covid. You were all absolutely amazing. Thank you so much.'

Following that, we're delighted to say that we're already booked in for next year!



"When you sing together, it is better than singing by yourself"

- A St Aelred's school child



As you can tell from the quote above, our most recent Little Sing was a wonderful opportunity for both younger and older singers to join together in song. Including pieces from Phantom of the Opera, The Lion King, and Skyfall, to name but a few, it was an afternoon filled with musical wonders, and everyone performed with confidence and enthusiasm - we even managed to include the audience in some musical workshop activities! In an effort to summarise the special nature of our intergenerational events, we asked MC members and the school children to describe their Little Sing experience in 3 words - happy, fun, and joyful - we couldn't agree more! Here's to Mrs Feehan, and all the St Aelred's children - we can't wait to see you again in the spring!



A graphical summary of our Little Sing feedback - the bigger the word, the more it was mentioned!

Not One, But Two Big Sings!

In the final weeks of term, Tower Court and Monkgate group members joined with students from the Vale of York Academy for the second of our Christmas Big Sings. Held at Tower Court's weekly venue, St Joseph's Church, it was a fantastically festive afternoon filled with shared music-making, lots of mince pies and a very exciting game of musical Christmas bingo! Everyone was in good spirits, and the students also very kindly contributed to our most recent digital recording of 'Sleigh Ride' – an ode to our free transport service which you can watch below:



With particular thanks to The Hobson Charity whose grant has been instrumental in enabling us to provide free transport over the last 12 months.

A few more festive favourites...

Including carolling at City Mills sheltered housing scheme, Charlotte and Rolling Tones member, Winnie, singing at Asda, and 3 of our sheltered housing scheme group members showing off their Christmas crafting creations made during [Arts Council National Lottery](#) funded art sessions - what a 'holly, jolly' month it has been!







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