

PRESS RELEASE

Wentworth Church Music Festival 2011

The historic village of Wentworth is a tranquil rural oasis in South Yorkshire and is the focal centre of the Wentworth Estates which belong to the Fitzwilliam family. The impressive large church was built by the children of the 5th Earl Fitzwilliam in memory of their parents and its splendid acoustics provide an ideal setting for our music festival. We hope that all our music loving friends will join us in celebrating 12 years of our annual festival. This year is also special because we have almost raised the funds necessary to achieve the basic £40,000 costs for the restoration and maintenance of the magnificent Father Willis organ and our target may well be reached this year: this is the first time that major work has been undertaken since the consecration of the church in 1877. However, work will have to continue around the organ and additional costs are being incurred in restoring the fabric of the building in the area of the organ, such as the gable end.

Wentworth Church was erected in memory of Charles William, 6th Earl Fitzwilliam, KG (1786 – 1857) and his wife, by their children. It was designed by J.L. Pearson, a protagonist in the 19th Century revival of Gothic Architecture, who also designed Truro Cathedral. It was consecrated on 31st July 1877, when the old church, Late Norman, ceased to be used for regular worship. It measures in excess of 120 feet in length and has a prominent spire rising to 200 feet. The acoustics of the church are highly acclaimed by professional artists who have performed and regularly record in the church.

The original festival in 1999 was organised as part of the Millennium celebrations. It was so successful that the series of concerts have now become an annual event. The 2011 festival consists of several events over the period from Wednesday 21st September to Saturday 24th September, with an additional concert on October 15th. The opening concert on 21st September will take place in the Mechanics Institute: all other events are being held in Holy Trinity Church, Church Drive, Wentworth, South Yorkshire.

The events are :

Wednesday 21st September at 7.30 p.m.

Rockingham Brass Band

The Rockingham Band has a long history dating back to 1850, when it was founded as a local colliery band. After the pit closed in the 1970s it gained a new sponsor and a new group of musicians, and went from strength to strength. It won National championships alongside other awards in 1982, and the Pontins Championship in 1987, and performed in the Albert Hall. Following a lean period it was fully reformed in Hoyland in 2003 and has now regained its high standard and a considerable reputation under the very capable direction of Roland Spencer, and has a long list of current engagements. The Band recently played at Milton Hall, Peterborough on the occasion of a large event to celebrate the marriage of the son and daughter-in-law of Sir Philip Naylor-Leyland.

Thursday 22nd September at 7.00 p.m.
The Thurnscoe Harmonic Male Voice Choir

The Choir was formed in 1924 and is now recognised as one of the premier male voice choirs in the country. Over the last ten years their reputation has gone from strength to strength. The choir has won over 100 awards in major competitions, including a second place in the International Eisteddfod in Llangollen and 5th place among the finalists of UK choirs in "1997 Male Voice Choir Champions of Great Britain". In 2003 they entered the first Cornwall International Male Voice Choir Festival and were the highest placed British Choir.

The choir has made highly successful visits to Wentworth and showed that they can present music suitable for all tastes. The popularity of their concerts increases every year and we are delighted that they will be performing once again this year in Wentworth. (Please note early start time).

Friday 23rd September at 7.30 p.m.
Emperor String Quartet

Formed in 1992, the Emperor String Quartet became the first British winners of the prestigious Evian International String Quartet Competition in 1995. Since then they have established themselves as one of the leading ensembles in the UK and have rapidly secured a wide range of international appearances.

They play at leading festivals around the world, including Edinburgh, Reims, Prague, and Monte Carlo and broadcast regularly on Radio 3. After giving outstanding concerts in Wentworth in 2009 and 2010, we are delighted that they have accepted our invitation to perform again this year. Their programme will include Chacony by Purcell, Quartet No 2 in C Major Op 36 by Benjamin Britten, and the Schubert G Major Quartet D887.

The quartet will be giving a concert and workshop in Wentworth Village School for pupils and staff during Friday afternoon.

Saturday 24th September at 1.00 pm.
Darius Battiwalla – Organ Recital

2010 saw the restoration of the magnificent Father Willis organ in Wentworth Church. This concert continues the celebration of the completion of the refurbishment of this wonderful instrument.

Darius Battiwalla works as a freelance pianist and organist and is musical director of the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus. He has played with the Hallé, BBC Philharmonic, the Orchestra of Opera North and the Northern Sinfonia. He plays in chamber groups with

members of the BBC Philharmonic, Opera North and the Goldberg Ensemble, with whom he has appeared in the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival.

Darius has given organ recitals at cathedrals and concert halls including Leeds Town Hall, Westminster Abbey, York Minster and Bath Abbey. and his recital from the St Magnus Festival, Orkney was broadcast on radio 3. He has given the recital at Royal College of Organists' presentation ceremony, and has given recitals and lectures for the Incorporated Association of Organists' annual congress. He has appeared as soloist with the Halle and London Philharmonic Orchestras, and is a regular organist for the BBC Philharmonic orchestra. Most recently he is organist on the recording of Stainer's *Crucifixion* with Huddersfield Choral Society just released on Signum Records. As a pianist, he gives regular chamber concerts with members of the Manchester orchestras, and Goldberg ensemble, including BBC broadcasts.

Saturday 24th September at 7.30 p.m.

Margaret Duckworth Singers

The choir was founded thirty years ago as a mixed group whose aim was to raise money for charity. Over the years they became a ladies choir and are now again a mixed choir. They now take the name of their musical director who is well known as a tutor to many professional singers, including those with Opera North and English National Opera.

Margaret Duckworth is a professional soloist of international reputation in her own right, having won the Kathleen Ferrier award at the S'Hertogenbosch International Competition in Holland and having sung with the Berlin Philharmonic.

They will be joined by soloist **Angela Hartley**, who has wide experience in oratorio and recital, having performed with orchestras, such as the Halle, and who has recently performed "Messiah" in Huddersfield Town Hall.

After a highly successful event in 2010, we look forward to welcoming the Margaret Duckworth singers again to Wentworth.

Saturday 15th October at 7.30 pm

Renaissance Voices

This Early Music Chamber Choir was formed in 1989 in Buxton to perform English and Italian Madrigals, French Chansons, Tudor Anthems, Latin motets, masses and psalm settings, mostly performed *a cappella*. These have included a viol consort, cornett and sackbutt ensemble, and a baroque ensemble of recorders, harpsichord and bass viol. The choir has performed major baroque choral works with orchestra, including Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* using period instruments.

Concert venues cover the North of England and beyond, including Derby Cathedral, Lincoln Cathedral, Selby Abbey, Fountains Abbey, Pershore Abbey, Tewkesbury Abbey and St Pancras Church, London as well as churches in Derbyshire and South Yorkshire

The acoustic in Wentworth Church is particularly suited to voice and music played on acoustic instruments. These concerts will showcase this aspect of our wonderful Church at its best.

Booking Arrangements

Tickets for all events can be booked through the Box Office, Telephone/Fax 01709 527713 or by written application to : Wentworth Church Music Festival Box Office, "Lynwood", Hooper, Wentworth, Rotherham S62 7SA. Unsold tickets will also be on sale on the door immediately prior to each event.

Ticket prices are as follows :

	Normal	Concessions
Concert Series Ticket for all concerts	£27	£23
Rockingham Band	£6	£5
Thurnscoe Male Voice Choir	£6	£5
Emperor String Quartet	£12	£10
Darius Battiwalla Organ Recital	£6	£5
Margaret Duckworth Singers	£6	£5
Renaissance Voices	£7	£6

Light refreshments will be served in the intervals and are included in the price of each ticket.