

# THE GRAND ORGAN

*Composers' Competition*

YORKMINSTER.ORG



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CATHEDRAL  
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OPHICLEIDE

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*York Minster, in partnership with the Cathedral Music Trust and choral and organ specialists Banks Music Publications, has announced a composition competition to celebrate the completion of the once-in-a-century refurbishment of the cathedral's Grand Organ.*

## INTRODUCTION

DOUBLE  
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Composers are asked to write a piece for solo organ to be played at the conclusion of one of York Minster's carol services. The piece must be playable on an instrument of at least two manuals and must include the use of pedals. The score may contain performance instructions specific to the organ, but this is not obligatory. Composers who are not experienced in writing for the organ are encouraged to apply, and can refer to information in the Appendix for further advice. Specific information about the Grand Organ can also be found in the Appendix.

Entries are invited in two age categories. The winning entries will be performed by one of York Minster's organists at the corresponding occasions at York Minster in 2021, which are currently planned to be live-streamed on YouTube via the Minster's website.

# CATEGORIES

## CATEGORY 1

19 and over\*

## CATEGORY 2

18 and under\*

\*Ages as at midnight on  
1 September 2021

## CATEGORY 1

Composers are asked to write a piece to follow directly on from J S Bach's *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, BWV 645, at the conclusion of York Minster's 2021 Advent Carol Service on Sunday 28 November. The piece does not need to be thematically or stylistically related to the preceding piece, but could draw on this or on other relevant thematic material if wished. Composers should consider the key relationship between the two pieces and the mood of the occasion (the Advent Carol Service concludes in a mood of hopeful expectation).<sup>†</sup> Compositions must be between 4 and 7 minutes in duration.

## CATEGORY 2

Composers are asked to write a piece to follow directly on from J S Bach's *In dulci jubilo*, BWV 729, at the conclusion of York Minster's 2021 Carol Services on Wednesday 22 and Friday 24 December. The piece does not need to be thematically or stylistically related to the preceding piece, but could draw on this or on other relevant thematic material if wished. Composers should consider the key relationship between the two pieces and the mood of the occasion.<sup>†</sup> Compositions must be between 4 and 7 minutes in duration.

<sup>†</sup>Please refer to the Appendix for further information.

# JUDGES



*Entries will be judged by a panel of judges in two stages. A preliminary round will be assessed by a sub-panel to produce a shortlist for each Category. The final round will assess the shortlisted entries for each Category to decide the prize-winners and highly commended entries.*

The judges' decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into.

In addition to their compositional merit and originality, compositions will be assessed for their appropriateness and effectiveness for the occasion (as described in the brief) and their creativity and appropriateness for the instrument.

## THE JUDGES ARE:

### **Sarah MacDonald**

Fellow and Director of Music, Selwyn College Cambridge, Director of the Girl Choristers at Ely Cathedral, and composer.

### **Philip Moore**

Organist Emeritus of York Minster, and composer.

### **Ben Morris**

Assistant Director of Music at York Minster.

### **Nico Muhly**

New York-based composer and collaborator.

### **Roxanna Panufnik**

London-based composer.

# PRIZES

## CATEGORY 1

- **Winner/First prize:** performance at 2021 York Minster Advent Carol Service on Sunday 28 November†, £1500, publication by Banks Music Publications
- **Second prize:** £1000
- **Third prize:** £500

## CATEGORY 2

- **Winner/First prize:** performance at 2021 York Minster Carol Services on Wednesday 22 and Friday 24 December†, £500, masterclass on organ composition with Philip Moore and Ben Morris, publication by Banks Music Publications
- **Second prize:** £250, masterclass on organ composition with Philip Moore and Ben Morris
- **Highly commended:** masterclass on organ composition with Philip Moore and Ben Morris

† Those services on Sunday 28th November and Friday 24 December are currently planned to be live-streamed on YouTube. York Minster reserves the right to alter the time and/or title of any of these services.

# HOW TO APPLY

**Scores must be sent as a pdf to [composition@yorkminster.org](mailto:composition@yorkminster.org) by 17.00 BST on Monday 13 September 2021.**

Submissions must be clearly labelled with the Category of the entrant and the title of the piece. The competition will be blind judged, so the entrant's name must not appear on the score; you may include a pseudonym. A completed Declaration Form must be included by email.



# RULES OF ENTRY

There is no charge for entry.

Entrants aged under 18 on the date when they send a score to the competition entry email address must provide proof of their parent's or guardian's consent to enter in order for their entry to be valid.

Only one application per entrant will be accepted.

Submitted compositions must adhere to the requirements given above for their respective Category.

A submitted composition must be entirely the work of the named entrant, must not have been performed or published before, and must not be performed or published before the results of the competition have been announced.

Publishing rights in all winning entries shall be irrevocably assigned in perpetuity to Goodwin Publications Limited (Company registration no. 08766895) trading as 'Banks Music Publications', Registered Office: 2 Sherbrooke Close, Kirkbymoorside, York, YO62 6LJ, unless the prize-winner has entered into an exclusive arrangement with another publisher before submitting their entry.

The Chapter of York shall have exclusive rights to the first performance of all winning entries.

Shortlisted entrants shall grant the Chapter of York the irrevocable right in perpetuity to future performances of their submission.

Winning entrants will be contacted directly in advance of the results being published. Results will be announced online in early November.

Proof of age and identity of entrant in the form of a scanned copy of the photo page of the entrant's passport will be requested of winning entrants.

If the Chapter of York is unable after reasonable attempts to contact a prize-winner, the prize may be awarded instead to a highly commended entry.

Prize-winners must participate in York Minster, Cathedral Music Trust and Banks Music Publications publicity as reasonably requested.

The masterclass in organ composition will take place in York Minster or another venue organised by the Chapter of York. Prize-winners aged under 18 on the date of their masterclass must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Those entrants eligible for the masterclass will be contacted separately about arrangements.

Cash prizes will be paid by York Minster on receipt of the relevant details, and after the results have been announced.

The Chapter of York reserves the right to cancel or adapt the competition.

A Privacy Notice can be found in the Declaration Form.



# APPENDIX

## THE CAROL SERVICES

Each of the carol services has their own particular mood, but in both cases, the organ voluntaries at the end conclude a major service and should be fitting for the occasion. As above, the organ is at some distance from the congregation (which would usually be substantial) seated in the Nave, so it would not be effective for the composition or any part of it to rely on especially soft sounds. Each service concludes with a short piece by J. S. Bach, each based on a seasonally appropriate melody. Compositions written for the competition will directly follow the respective piece. Free scores of both pieces can be found at [https://imslp.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://imslp.org/wiki/Main_Page).

**Category 1 (Advent Carol Service):** *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645*, which is in E-flat major. This would sometimes be played at a moderate dynamic level, but after the Advent Carol Service it is played at a more commanding volume, to match the scale of the building and the occasion.

**Category 2 (Christmas Carol Services):**  
In *dulci júbilo, BWV 729*, which is in A major.

## YORK MINSTER'S GRAND ORGAN

The first performance of the winning compositions will be given on York Minster's Grand Organ, the specification for which can be found [here](#). The Grand Organ is a substantial instrument in a high romantic style, with a broad range of symphonic colours available. Major services in the Minster, including the Advent and Christmas Carol services at which the first performances will be given, take place in the Nave which has a vast acoustic and is some distance from the instrument. Compositions should take account of this, but you may equally wish your compositions to be playable on a smaller instrument.

You can hear the Grand Organ in live-streamed Sunday services on the Minster's [YouTube channel](#).

## GUIDE TO WRITING FOR THE ORGAN

Entries are encouraged both from composers experienced at writing for the organ and those who are not. It is important that compositions are idiomatic and playable; this guide is primarily designed for those who are less familiar with how the organ works.

If you do not play the organ and have not written for organ before, it is recommended that you find an opportunity to sit at an organ console to help familiarise yourself with how the instrument works.

### Pitch

When writing for the organ it is worth thinking carefully about pitch, because not all stops sound at the written pitch. Typically, music played on the manual keyboards would be based on 8' pitch (the same pitch at which the music is written) and the pedals based on 16' pitch (one octave below written – much like a double bass in an orchestral score); stops sounding at higher or sometimes lower pitches would be added as necessary to create the appropriate colour and volume.

In instances when the sounding pitch is intended to differ from this typical basis (most often when the pedals are not intended to sound at 16' pitch), you can specify so in the score simply by stating, for example, 8' (note that this would not usually preclude stops of a higher pitch being included, but indicates the lowest pitch).

In many cases, it is not necessary to specify anything, and performers will use their own judgement as to what is suitable for the music.

# APPENDIX

## Range

The range of the pedal and manual keyboards of the Grand Organ are shown in the following image:



Note that these ranges indicate the playable notes on the respective keyboards; pitches higher and lower than those indicated are achievable through the use of stops which sound higher or lower than written pitch (see above).

## Playability

Consider the playability of your composition, especially the pedal part. You might find it helpful to imagine playing a large xylophone with your feet!

The organ is capable of producing large chords, but it is equally effective at producing music in a small number of parts.

## Registration

Scores are not required to include registration markings (indications of which stops to use), though they may if you wish. An effective and helpful alternative would be to include descriptions of the sort of sounds and colours you intend (e.g. bright, heavy, dark, clear, reedy, flutes). It is helpful to specify any parts or lines which are intended to be a 'solo' sound (typically an individual stop of a particular colour).

