



York Minster to host 'Festival of the Passions'

9 – 24 March 2013

York Minster is set to host a major new series of concerts in preparation for Holy Week, featuring the city's top choirs performing classical works by JS Bach, Allegri, Jacob Handl and Pergolesi.

The *Festival of Passions* highlight will be a performance of the St John Passion by JS Bach on Saturday 23 March 2013, performed in German by the Minster Choir, under the directorship of Robert Sharpe. The St John Passion is a dramatic representation of the [events](#) leading up to Christ's crucifixion, as told in the [Gospel of John](#). Described as a 'musical tour de force', it will take full advantage of York Minster's superb acoustics to create a magnificent sound.

The Festival launches on 9 March with the St Matthew Passion by Bach performed by the York Musical Society, followed by the Chapter House Choir's *Passiontide Splendours* – including *Ecce Quomodo Moritur*, which Bach chose as an accompaniment to his St Matthew Passion.

As Holy Week draws closer, the Ebor Singers will perform a concert on Wednesday 20 March incorporating Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, and *Music for Holy Week* by Victoria.

"This is the first time that York Minster has staged such an elaborate collection of Passion music in the run-up to Holy Week, and indeed, it will be the first time that the Minster Choir has ever performed the St John Passion in German and accompanied by period instruments, so it will be a sublime and moving experience for everyone who attends," comments York Minster's Precentor, Peter Moger. "We hope that it will attract not only York residents, but also music connoisseurs from further afield who then stay in the city to watch the Palm Sunday procession, through the streets of York on Sunday 24 March, where the clergy, choir and congregation are led by a donkey from St Helen's Square in a special service to mark the start of Holy Week."

Tickets for the Festival of the Passions season are available from the York Minster Box Office online at www.yorkminster.org, on the telephone by calling 0844 939 0015, or for collection in person from York Minster's admission desk.

The Festival of the Passions is the first event in an extensive musical programme for York Minster in 2013, which will include performances by Aled Jones, the York Missal and culminating in a performance of Handel's *Messiah* by the Minster Choir in December. For more details, please visit www.yorkminster.org

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