

**STELLA JOCKEL YOUNG COMPOSER  
COMPETITION 2024-25**

organised by

**SHEFFIELD PHILHARMONIC CHORUS**

as part of the

**CLASSICAL SHEFFIELD  
WEEKEND FESTIVAL 2025**

**COMPETITION ENTRY PACK**

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus seeks submissions from composers in the early stages of their careers for the Stella Jockel Young Composers Competition, part of Classical Sheffield Festival Weekend 2025.

The competition is named for Stella Jockel, a former Sheffield teacher and vicar's wife who sang alto with Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus for many years. Part of Stella's generous legacy to the Chorus is being used to fund the competition. The aim is to support the creation and performance of new choral repertoire and to encourage and support young people from Sheffield who are studying seriously for, or starting out on, a career in music composition and/or performance.

The competition is open to young people aged 18 to 35, who currently live or study in Sheffield, or who lived, were born, or were educated there. The requirement is for a short choral work for a mixed choir, to be sung unaccompanied in at least four parts - soprano, alto, tenor, bass.

Applicants have a choice of two texts, both commissioned from award-winning local poets who are or were members of the Chorus. Katharine Towers won the Seamus Heaney Centre Prize for *The Floating Man* and was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize for *The Remedies*. Susie Wilson won the Disabled Poet's Award for her anthology *Nowhere Near As Safe As A Snake In Bed*.

The winning work will be performed at a special prize-winning event on the final evening of the Classical Sheffield Weekend Festival on Sunday 23 March 2025 in the beautiful acoustic of St Marie's cathedral, which many consider to be just about perfect for the performance of *a capella* works. Also on the programme will be Faure's gorgeous *Requiem* and two new works by composer Stephen Johnson who is generously sponsoring the concert.

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus Music Director Darius Battiwalla will lead the panel of judges, which will also include Philip Wilby and Ellie Slorach. The winning entries will be announced in January 2025.

The closing date is 31 December 2023.

## Eligibility

The competition is open to young musicians aged between 18 and 35 inclusive, who were born in Sheffield or who study, live or work, or who used to study, live or work in Sheffield.

## Deadline

Midnight on 31 December 2024

## Composition brief

- An original choral work for a large (120 singers) symphonic mixed choir to sing, unaccompanied, in at least 4 parts (SATB).
- Duration at least 4 minutes and under 10 minutes.
- Text to be used is either '*City of Sound*' by ©2024Susie Wilson, or '*for music like the sea*' by ©2024Katharine Towers. The poems are provided on the website in two forms - as a written document (pdf file) and a recording (mp3 file) of Susie and Kathy reciting their works.
- Works must be original, not premiered and not previously awarded before at any other competition.
- Arranged or adapted versions of previous works by the same composer and which have been already released or published won't be accepted.

The works will be judged on the basis of their response to the poem, practicality / vocal writing, presentation, and originality (ie, freshness of conception and approach, not necessarily whether the work is technically or aesthetically ground-breaking). Submissions that do not meet the composition brief listed above will not be considered.

## Judges

Darius Battiwalla, conductor, organist, Music Director Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus

Philip Wilby, composer, organist and choral director

Ellie Slorach, conductor and choral director

## Prizes

### 1st prize

- £1,500.
- Performance of the winning work by Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus at the Classical Sheffield Festival Weekend finale concert at St Marie's cathedral at 7pm on Sunday 23 March 2025.
- Four free tickets for the concert.

### 2nd prize

- £1,000
- Four free tickets for the concert.

### 3rd prize

- £500
- Two free tickets for the concert

## Application requirements

Applicants must submit **all four** of the following items, using the email address below:

- Original choral score, to be sent as a pdf file. Each composition must be submitted with numbered pages. They must be legible, clear, without mistakes or amendments. The score must not be marked with the composer's name, or in any way that would enable the composer to be identified. A piano reduction may be included and would be useful, but is not requirement and won't affect the judging.
- Completed application form - download [www.sheffieldphil.org/youngcomposer](http://www.sheffieldphil.org/youngcomposer)
- 250-word maximum biography in DOC or PDF format
- Photograph (jpeg or tif file)

## Electronic submissions

[youngcomposer@sheffieldphil.org](mailto:youngcomposer@sheffieldphil.org)

## Link to Poems

<https://sheffieldphil.org/city-of-sound-by-susie-wilson-2024/>

<https://sheffieldphil.org/for-music-like-the-sea-k-towers-2024/>

## Notification

Prize-winners will be announced to the public on 23 March 2025. Shortlisted candidates will be publicised in the new year, and prize-winners notified by the end of January 2025. All applicants, including those who are unsuccessful, will be provided with brief feedback.

## Competition rules

1. Submissions must meet the listed Composition Brief and Application Requirements.
2. Materials will not be returned.
3. The composition will be the property of the composer; however, first performance rights are granted to Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus.
4. Applicants waive all rights for publication, broadcasting, and recording of the premiere performance.
5. The decisions of the judges are final.
6. The judges reserve the right not to award one or more prizes if the standard is not sufficiently high, commensurate with the value of the prizes.
7. Applicants may submit up to two applications if they wish.
8. For each submission applicants must only use one of the texts '*City of Sound*' by ©2024Susie Wilson or '*for music like the sea*' by ©2024Katharine Towers; both poems are copyright and may not be used for any other purpose.
9. A condition of entry is that submitted biographies and photographs may be used in the publication of shortlisted applicants.
10. The judges, Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus, Classical Sheffield and St Marie's cathedral cannot be held responsible for any damages, claims, liabilities, and costs, or losses of any kind or nature whatsoever, which may in any way arise from the rehearsals, performance and recording of the competition entries.
11. Applicants accept the above rules unconditionally and without reservation.

## FAQs

### 1. When is the competition deadline?

Entries must be submitted by midnight on 31 December 2024.

### 2. Is there an age limit?

Entrants must be between 18 and 35 years of age inclusive at the time of the deadline.

### 3. Can I submit more than one entry?

You may submit up to two entries, using either or both of the texts. Each must be submitted separately accompanied by a fresh application form.

### 4. Can I send you my music at other times of the year?

No. Compositions can only be considered in the context of the competition; competition email contacts will be disabled following the finale concert on 23 March 2025.

### 5. What type/genre of music can I submit?

The competition is part of the Classical Sheffield Festival, which showcases classical music, and choral compositions should be in keeping with the aim for an excellent choir of around 120 singers to perform the winning work at the festival finale, alongside Faure's *Requiem* and three new compositions by established composer Stephen Johnston. We recommend that you submit your best work.

### 6. Will the scores be anonymised before being shared with judges?

Yes. For this reason, submitted compositions must not include the name of the composer, nor any other marking that could reveal their identity.

### 7. Can I submit my entry by post?

Unfortunately, we are unable to accept postal submissions. Please send all requirements electronically, to [youngcomposer@sheffieldphil.org](mailto:youngcomposer@sheffieldphil.org)

### 8. How many prize-winners will be selected?

There will be three prize-winners, winning £1,500, £1,000, and £500.

**9. Who will perform the winning work on 23 March 2025?**

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus has organised the competition in conjunction with Classical Sheffield and will perform the winning composition at the finale of Classical Weekend Festival in March 2025. There are likely to be around 120 singers performing the winning work. Read more about the Chorus below, and at [www.sheffieldphil.org](http://www.sheffieldphil.org)

**10. I am not a UK citizen, can I apply?**

Yes, as long as you have lived, studied or worked in Sheffield.

**11. How much does it cost to apply?**

Competition entry is free.

**12. Can I claim travel expenses to attend the performance?**

The competition organisers do not pay expenses, whether for travel to attend performances or for any other purpose.

**13. When will applicants be notified?**

Applicants will be notified by the end of January 2025.

**14. Can I ask for feedback about my submission?**

All entries will receive feedback from the judges as part of the notification procedure. Judges are unable to respond to requests for additional feedback.

For further enquiries please contact [youngcomposer@sheffieldphil.org](mailto:youngcomposer@sheffieldphil.org)

## Stella Jockel



Stella was born in Sheffield in 1932. She grew up and lived in the Hillsborough and Wadsley Bridge areas until her late 40s and worked as a primary school teacher in the city until taking early retirement. She sang in her local church choir, first at Wadsley Bridge, then, after marrying Alan Jockel, at All Saints Totley where he was the vicar. Stella became the church choir mistress and really enjoyed working with young voices as well as encouraging young organists. In her later years she

also helped with music at Beauchief Abbey.

Singing was her main passion, but she also loved travelling, birdwatching, walking and the countryside, and she lent her support to organisations concerned with protecting nature into the future.

Stella sang as an alto with the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus for over 60 years, joining up in 1952 aged just 20. One of her first concerts was Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, with Kathleen Ferrier and the Hallé orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli at the new Festival Hall in London. This work became her favourite piece of music, and she sang it with the Chorus in 1964, on the highly-acclaimed Warner Classics recording with Dame Janet Baker and the Hallé orchestra and choir, conducted by Sir John Barbirolli.

More latterly Stella was involved in several trips made by the Chorus to Bochum, which was twinned with Sheffield after the Second World War. She welcomed and helped with hosting choirs from Bochum on their return visit to Sheffield. The relationship with Bochum meant a lot in those post-war years, and has continued ever since, with joint performances as recently as 2021 when the Bochum choir sang *Messiah* with the Chorus in Sheffield City Hall.

Stella retired from the Chorus in 2013 due to health issues affecting her balance and died in 2020, aged 88. It is entirely fitting that part of her generous bequest to her beloved Chorus will be used to support young composers via this competition. She would have been thrilled.



### **Darius Battiwalla**

Darius is music director of Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus. He prepares the choir for visiting orchestras and conductors, and has conducted performances with the Halle, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Northern Sinfonia and Manchester Camerata. Since he took over, the choir has performed from memory for the first time and has appeared at the Proms and on Chandos recordings with the BBC Philharmonic. He recently directed the Chorus with Black Dyke Band in premiere recordings of the brass arrangement of Rutter's *Gloria*, Paul Mealor's new work *Paradise*, and in a CD of Christmas music which included several of his own arrangements.



He is a regular guest chorusmaster or conductor with choirs such as the Northern Sinfonia Chorus, Leeds Philharmonic Chorus, Huddersfield Choral Society, CBSO chorus and Netherlands Radio Choir.

As Leeds City Organist, Darius gives regular recitals in the Town Hall. He has appeared as organ soloist with the Halle and London Philharmonic Orchestra, is a regular orchestral organist and pianist for the BBC Philharmonic and Halle orchestras and gives organ recitals across the country.



### **Philip Wilby**

Encouraged to take up composition by Herbert Howells, Philip Wilby graduated from Keble College, Oxford, in 1970. After a year as a professional violinist, he was invited by Alexander Goehr, then professor of music at Leeds University, to join his staff. He was senior tutor in composition there from 1984. More recently he was awarded a Doctorate in Composition (DMus) and made Professor in 2002. Until recently, he lived in Bristol where his wife Wendy has been serving as Canon Precentor at the cathedral.

In 2008, he was granted a Dutch Government BUMA award for his innovative works for brass band, and in 2009 an honorary fellowship by the Royal School of Church Music. His most recent recording '*The Pilgrim's Progress*' was awarded 'Brass Band CD of the year' in 2019, and he is proud to have served as the musical associate at the Black Dyke Band for 34 years. Recent performances with the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus have included '*A Bronte Mass*', and '*The Holy Face*' performed in conjunction with the Halifax Choral Society.

### Ellie Slorach



Conductor Ellie Slorach is the Founder and Artistic Director of Kantos Chamber Choir and Engagement Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. She specialises in large scale multi-media and educational projects across all genres including orchestras, operatic, choral, and dance performances, and devises unique, innovative, sell-out performances in venues ranging from concert halls to nightclubs.

Ellie studied conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music and was awarded Associate Membership in 2023.

She previously studied Music at the University of Manchester. She is Associate Choral Director with Huddersfield Choral Society and will lead the Dunedin Consort Choral Weekend.

Ellie recently performed at the BBC Proms at The Glasshouse Gateshead with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, with Matthew Bourne's ballet production of *Edward Scissorhands* at Sadler's Wells, and the filming of a multi-media concert with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. She has been selected to film with the BBC Concert Orchestra and BBC Singers for the new season of the acclaimed *BBC 10 Pieces*. Ellie has worked with Northern Opera Group and at the Leeds Opera Festival, the Royal Opera House, and was Assistant Conductor of the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège France in 2021/22.

### Katharine Towers



Katharine Towers is a poet who was born in London and has lived in the Peak District for over 30 years. Her work reflects her interest in the natural world and her love of music and has been read on BBC Radios 3 and 4.

She has published three full collections with Picador and a pamphlet *The Violin Forest* with HappenStance Press in 2019. Her first collection *The Floating Man* (2010) won the Seamus Heaney Centre Prize and her second *The Remedies* (2016) was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize. Her most recent 2021 collection *Oak* (about the life of an oak tree) was longlisted for The Laurel Prize for nature

poetry and was a Poetry Book of the Month in The Guardian. She also writes a blog about Virginia Woolf. Her sequence of poems about the composer Gerald Finzi was published last year. Katharine grew up singing in amateur choirs and has sung with the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus for several years.

### Susie Wilson

Half poet, half tutor, half clown, Susie Wilson is a Scottish auDHD writer who lives in Sheffield. Her debut pamphlet, *Nowhere Near As Safe As A Snake In Bed*, a surprisingly funny book which deals with living with an advanced illness and won the Disabled Poet Prize 2024, is out with Verve Poetry Press this November. A micro-chapbook, *Skin The Rabbit*, about growing up in Scotland, on the outside looking in, will be published by The Braag in Spring 2025.



Susie's poetry has been widely anthologised and commended, with work out now in Carmen et Error, Propel, Ink Sweat & Tears, Northern Gravy and Black Bough, some of which you

can read at [www.susiewilsonpoet.com](http://www.susiewilsonpoet.com). She holds an MA in Poetry (with Distinction) from The Writing School at Manchester Metropolitan University, and she is currently facilitating workshops for the Manchester Poetry Library. She is a former member of the Sheffield Philharmonic Choir, has collaborated with composers at the Royal Northern College of Music and for her latest musical escapade is learning to play jazz piano.

### Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus



Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus is South Yorkshire's foremost large mixed-voice chorus, performing regularly with leading orchestras including the Hallé, the BBC Philharmonic, the Northern Sinfonia and Manchester Camerata, as well as with internationally renowned conductors such as Gianandrea

Nosedà, Markus Poschner, Nicholas Kraemer, Sophie Jeannin and David Hill.

The Chorus performs with Orchestra in Residence the Hallé and acclaimed soloists as part of the Sheffield International Concert Season at Sheffield City Hall and at other venues around the United Kingdom. It has participated in The Proms on a number of occasions and has developed touring and performance links with the Philharmonischer Chor based in Bochum, one of Sheffield's twin towns in Germany, and with the Ensemble Vocal Perigueux based in Perigueux, France.

The Chorus presents a challenging and exciting programme under the joint patronage of BBC Radio 3's Petroc Trelawny and acclaimed actor Samuel West, and the vibrant and inspiring leadership of its Music Director, Darius Battiwalla.

Recent performances include Verdi *Requiem*, Durufle *Requiem* and Mahler Symphony Number 2. A mini-tour of Mozart's *Requiem* with the Flemish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Kristiina Posker in London, Edinburgh and Sheffield attracted rave reviews; see <https://sheffieldphil.org/stunning-reviews-for-mozart-requiem-mini-tour>. The 2024-25

season will feature Lili Boulanger's magnificent *Psalm 130* and Haydn's rousing *Creation*, both with The Hallé.

The Chorus is always keen to welcome new members in all voice parts, but especially tenors. If you love singing and would like to perform on stage with a large symphonic choir, you are welcome to try the Chorus out any Tuesday evening. Visit [www.sheffieldphil.org](http://www.sheffieldphil.org) for further details, and contact [newmembership2018@sheffieldphil.org](mailto:newmembership2018@sheffieldphil.org)

### Classical Sheffield

Classical Sheffield is a local charity committed to championing classical music-making and connecting music-makers across the city of Sheffield. With a vision of making '*more music in more places with more people*' its strategic goals are to strengthen and develop classical music-making in Sheffield and to enrich Sheffield's cultural vibrancy by shaping a high-quality classical music offer.



Members can advertise their events on a high-quality website that is a 'one-stop shop' that enables anyone who is curious about classical music to find out more about what is on in the city and how to experience it. As well as promoting their own concerts, all members are able to participate in festivals and events organized by Classical Sheffield.

The organisation encourages voluntary and young music-making groups across Sheffield to collaborate with one another and with a range of musicians, performing a diverse repertoire of classical works, old and new, conventional and innovative. It is delighted to support the second run of this competition for young composers, and that the winning entry will be performed as part of the 2025 Festival Weekend. This three-day festival of classical music in venues across the city aims to attract over 10,000 audience members and promises to be as successful as the previous four festivals. Check out the Classical Sheffield website at <https://classicalsheffield.org.uk> and go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INWjefjIqQg&t=1s> to see a film about the previous festival.