September – November 2026

Issue 111

Preston Arts News

www.prestonarts.com

Editor: Vincent Smith, vsmith3011@outlook.com
13 Woodford Copse, Chorley PR7 2ER
Tel: 01257 272929

PRESTON ARTS FESTIVAL 2026

The arts festival this year runs for 2 weeks, with a launch at St George's church on 20th September and a grand finale on 4th October. 2026 is an amazing year of anniversaries. St George's is celebrating its 300th anniversary, the Cecilian Choral Society and Lancashire's cathedral at Blackburn are both celebrating their 100th (see below for a talk about the cathedrals of the north-west). Furthermore, the Preston Arts Association has reached its 50th anniversary and the Arts Festival it stages every year will be celebrating its 25th. We have assembled a special programme of events to make the most of this celebratory year.

FESTIVAL LAUNCH CONCERT

The festival will be officially opened by the Mayor of Preston, Councillor Nweeda Khan. We then have an afternoon of music featuring South Ribble Strings and Gathered Voices Choir.

St George's Church: Sunday, 20th September: 2.00pm to 4.30pm. Free entry but a retiring collection will be taken in support of the festival.

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

One of several musical treats of the festival is a performance of Handel's MESSIAH to celebrate St George's 300th anniversary. Premiered in Dublin in 1742, it was thus within 15 years of the consecration of Preston's 'hidden gem'. This performance features four soloists and orchestra, conducted by St George's director of music, Peter Kwater. After an initially modest public reception, the oratorio gained in popularity, eventually becoming one of the best-known and most frequently performed choral works in western music.

Handel's reputation was enormous. Haydn, at a performance of the Messiah in Westminster Abbey in 1791 famously got to his feet and declared that Handel was "the master of us all" and Beethoven frequently lauded him as the greatest composer who was able to achieve remarkable effects with simple means.

St George's Church, Friday 25th September: 7:00pm: £20

PIANO RECITALS

There are two further musical treats in the form of Piano recitals from professional pianists.

Martin Roscoe

One of Britain's most distinguished concert pianists, Martin Roscoe, who appeared with the Preston Symphony Orchestra earlier in the year, returns for what promises to be another memorable evening of outstanding music-making. A firm favourite with audiences in our area, his recitals are renowned for their warmth, artistry and exceptional musicianship, making this a concert not to be missed. **St George's Church: Tuesday 29th September, 7.30pm, £20.00**

Madalina Rusu

Lunchtime Recital Presented by KTB Music Events

Enjoy an inspiring lunchtime piano recital featuring some of the most beloved works of the Romantic era, with music by Chopin, Schumann, Liszt and Rachmaninov. **St Andrew's Church, Longton: Thursday 1st October: 1.00 pm to 1.45 pm**

PRESTON ARTS NEWS

Produced by Preston Arts Association.

Copies are available free of charge from local libraries, local arts societies, at the Guildhall, Travel Information Office in the Bus Station, Waterstones Bookshop and other arts venues in the area.

Information and any news items should be sent to Vincent Smith
13 Woodford Copse Chorley PR7 2ER
Email: vsmith3011@outlook.com

The next issue will cover the period Next issue Dec 2026 – Feb 2027
Deadline for submissions 31st Oct 2026

MEMBERS

Broughton Players
https://www.broughtonplayers.co.uk
Company of Voyces
https://www.facebook.com/Companyofvoyces
Damson Poets
https://damsonpoets.wordpress.com
Dean Taylor
https://deantaylortheatre.co.uk
Fired 4 U
https://fired4u.co.uk
Hall Players
https://www.hallplayers.org.uk
Joyce Tindsley
https://joycetindsley.com
KTB Music
https://www.ktbmusic.com
Longton Players
https://www.facebook.com/TheLongtonPlayers
New Longton Artists
https://newlongtonartists.com
One Voice Community Choir
https://www.onevoice.org.uk
Preston & District U3A
https://u3asites.org.uk/preston/welcome
Preston Art Society
https://prestonartsociety.weebly.com
Preston Card Makers Club
Preston Cecilian Choral Society
https://www.cecilians.org.uk
Preston Circle Dance Group
https://www.facebook.com/prestoncircledancing
Preston Drama Club
https://www.prestonplayhouse.co.uk/preston-drama-club
Preston Flute Group
https://prestonflutegroup.co.uk
Preston Folk Dance Club
https://www.prestonfolkdanceclub.org.uk
Preston Gilbert & Sullivan Society
https://prestongass.co.uk
Preston Historical Society
http://www.prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk
Preston Lacemaking Group
Preston Movie Makers
https://www.facebook.com/p/Preston-Moviemakers
Preston Opera Company
http://www.prestonopera.org.uk
Preston Orpheus Choir
https://www.prestonorpheuschoir.org
Preston Photographic Society
https://www.prestonphotographicsociety.org
Preston Poets
https://prestonpoetssociety.wordpress.com
Preston Recorded Music Society
Preston Symphony Orchestra
https://prestonsymphonyorchestra.co.uk
Rawstorne Singers
https://www.rawstornesingers.co.uk
Royal Preston Morris Dancers
https://royalpreston.weebly.com
South Ribble Strings
https://southribblestrings.weebly.com
SATA.
https://www.satatheatre.org
St Leonard's G&S Society
https://www.facebook.com/groups/Utopia1
UCLAN Confucius Institute
https://www.uclan.ac.uk/centres/confucius-institute

FILM: PRESTON BUS STATION

The bus station was designed by members of the Building Design Partnership (BDP) and was a great favourite with the people of Preston. Less so with the council and it came close to being demolished. Eventually, it survived and when the new public concourse was added during the refurbishment of about 7 years ago, it became truly iconic. The film is by Gloria Regonesi and is introduced by Michael Akers who will share insights into this remarkable landmark. **St George's Church: Monday Sept 21: 2.00pm to 3.30pm: £5**

WALK

Exits and Entrances: A Celebration of Preston's Theatrical History

Join guide Mickael Akers for a walk exploring Preston's rich theatrical past. **Preston Guild Hall (outside the venue): Wednesday 23rd September: 6:15pm: £5**

ARCHIVE CREATING WRITING PROJECT

This latest Preston Arts creative writing project examines the many and diverse archives that relate to the process of ageing throughout history; the changes in attitude to the elderly and examples of how to grow old disgracefully. But it also includes people who were denied the chance to grow old. It is an homage to those, young and old who have lived a life and whose stories deserve to be told. **Harris Reading Room: Friday 25th September: 2.00-4.00pm. Free event**

TALKS

Anne Brontë: The Forgotten Sister

A talk by Martin Domleo of Preston Poets' Society.

Martin discusses the rawness and relevance of Anne Brontë's novels, her life and death, her relationship with her sisters Charlotte and Emily, and the tragedies that all too soon overwhelmed this most talented of families. **St George's church: Thurs 24th Sept: 2.00-3.00pm: £5**

Cathedrals of the North-West

An illustrated talk by Vince Smith on the history and architecture of the Anglican and Catholic cathedrals of Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cumbria. These include Preston's own Anglican cathedral at Blackburn, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary. **St George's church: Monday 28th Sept: 2.00-4.00pm with a refreshment interval: £5**

DAMSON OPEN MIC

Open mic slots of 5 minutes are bookable on the night. The event coincides with National Poetry Day, which this year has the theme ***Wonder.*** The open Mic theme will be the same. **Continental: Wed 30th Sept: 7.30-9.30: Free event**

PORTRAIT CHALLENGE

First prize – £500. Second prize – £100. Third prize – £50. Artist entry fee: £25 Venue: The Studio at The Harris, Market Square, Preston

Saturday 19th September Time: 11am – 4pm.

Presentation & Exhibition Opening

Chews Yard: 24th Sept: 7.30pm Free event

FRAMING PRESTON

Exploring the city's history through the artwork at the Harris.

Harris Foyer: 22nd Sept: 1.30pm: £5

PRESTON CECILIAN CHORAL SOCIETY

We celebrate the launch of the Cecilians' Centenary Year with a performance featuring three contemporary choral works by Eleanor Daley, Sarah Quartel, and Cecilia McDowall, alongside traditional madrigal-style pieces by Edward Elgar, R.J.S. Stevens, and Benjamin Cooke. Musical Director: Marc Murray.

Harris Ground Floor: Thursday 24th September: 18:30 to 19:00pm: Free event

OTHER CONCERTS

TWO-CHOIRS CONCERT

Join us for an afternoon of wonderful choral music featuring the Company of Voyces and Preston Gilbert and Sullivan Society (with St Leonard's Gilbert and Sullivan Society). **St George's Church: Sunday 27th September: 2:00 pm: £10**

FIVE-CHOIRS CONCERT

Featuring Rawstorne Singers, KTB Chamber Choir, Preston Opera, St George Occasional Singers, One Voice Community Choir.

Harris Museum ground floor: Thursday 1st October: 6.00-8.30pm: Free with retiring collection.

AN EVENING WITH KATY BRADLEY & FRIENDS

Celebrating the composers who shaped the world of musical theatre.

Leyland Methodist Church: Friday 2nd October: £10

FINALE CONCERT

PRESTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious

Join Preston Symphony Orchestra for an unforgettable evening celebrating some of the greatest music from the world of musical theatre. Featuring favourites from Mary Poppins, Cats, Chicago, and Jesus Christ Superstar, this concert promises an evening of memorable melodies, dazzling orchestral colour, and musical magic. We are also especially proud to present the world premiere of a brand new work by our good friend Bill Connor, who will conduct the orchestra for this special occasion. Whether you're a lifelong musical theatre enthusiast or simply looking for a wonderful evening of live music, this is a concert not to be missed!

St Michael and All Angel's Church: Sunday 4th Oct: 7.00pm: Adults: £15 Under 18s: £8

OTHER NEWS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

PRESTON OPERA: MANON

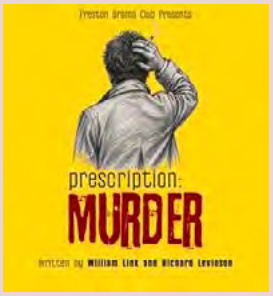
Preston Opera performed Massenet's Manon earlier in the year. There was a very good turnout at the Saturday performance, when I was there. The whole show was very impressive, with great performances from the principles, excellent support from the chorus, and of course, first class backup from the orchestra. Also, I noticed that the sets were colourful and well thought out. Everything came together to create a wonderful visual and musical experience.

The role of Manon was taken by Faye Bowness who was seen last year as Violetta in La Traviata. Manon is a demanding role in which the singer seems to be on stage most of the time. The second major role of the Chevalier des Grieux was taken by Joshua Baxter who is a very experienced performer in both opera and oratorio.

Manon is a classic good time girl who tries to follow her dreams, but it all proves a bit too much and newcomers to the opera might not have been expecting the sad ending.

Congratulations to all who were involved.

PRESTON PLAYHOUSE



by W Link & R Levinson Directed by Mark Howard

Murder, manipulation and one very persistent detective arrive in a thrilling stage classic that introduced the world to Columbo long before the famous raincoat became a television icon. Prescription: Murder is the gripping original story that launched one of crime fiction's most beloved investigators. Stylish, sharp and packed with tension, it draws audiences into a dangerous battle of wits where appearances are carefully constructed and every conversation hides another layer of deceit.

23-26 September: 19.30-22.00

Based on the best-selling novel by *Paula Hawkins*

Rachel Watson longs for a different life. Her only escape is the prefect couple she watches through the train window every day, happy and in love. Or so it appears. When Rachel learns that the woman she's been secretly watching has suddenly disappeared, she finds herself as a witness and even a suspect in a thrilling mystery in which she will face bigger revelations than she could ever have anticipated. **7-10 October: 19.30-22.00**

Jim Cartwright's homage to a traditional northern pub TWO originally premiered 1989.

The Hall Players have the privilege of presenting the follow-up: TWO 2. The first play showed how the couple's marriage had hit the skids; now the pub itself is in trouble, out of touch, out of beer and struggling to attract a clientele who would rather queue up outside the theme bar along the road. **21- 24 October: 19.30-22.00**

ALSO SCHEDULED 31 October: QWEEN UK – The Live Experience **7 November: CILLA & THE SWINGING 60s** – The Tour **18 – 21 November: 2.22 A GHOST STORY**

THE RAWSTORNE SINGERS

Come and join the Rawstorne Singers for one of our special open rehearsals to find out all about singing with our choir! Everyone is welcome, it's FREE and we'd love to meet you. It's at St Leonard's Church, Marshalls Brow, Penwortham on Wednesday September 9th from 7:30-9:30pm

We've had a very enjoyable year so far, including visiting Durham Cathedral in August and we're looking forward to spending a weekend at Beverley Minster in October. We'll be singing during a short concert in the Harris Museum during the Preston Arts Festival on Thursday October 1st from 6-7pm and will join the Cecilian Choral Society for a joint performance of Handel's 'Messiah' at St Mary's RC Church in Bamber Bridge on November 28th. If you would like to start singing with us regularly or simply join us for a friendly evening of beautiful music on September 9th, please come to the Open Rehearsal or visit our website on www.rawstornesingers.co.uk for further information. **Alison King**

PRESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Monday 14 September *Chaplin, Cowboys and Cotton: Preston Film Service and Early Lancashire Cinema* **Speaker: Emma Heslewood**

Monday 12 October *The Black British Experience in Britain: focusing on Preston in the 1950's to the Present Day* **Speaker: Adrian Murrell**

Monday 9 November *Creating a County: the Emergence of Lancashire 700- 1200* **Speaker: Dr. Alan Crosby**

PRESTON ART SOCIETY

Our evening meetings take place from 7.30 until 9.30pm, on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from September until May at St Margarets Parish Centre, 1A St Margarets Cl, Ingol, Preston PR2 3ZU

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 16th September Pop Up Exhibition Bring something you've been working on recently, finished or not. Its a chance to share techniques and for us to all to see what each other makes. **7th October Visiting Speaker** Well known local artist Norman Long demonstrates how he approaches still life painting. **21st October Work Night Plus** Still life - Bring two or three small objects as well as your materials **4th November Figure Drawing** A chance to draw from the clothed figure **18th November Work Night Plus** Sales Table - Bring your unwanted art related items and books

Printed by Henry Christopher Commercial Printers Ltd T. 01254 774444 E. sales@henrychristopher.com