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# Sing Viva 22-23

Highlights, feedback and statistics from 2022-23

Report compiled by Hattie Coupe  
Creative Projects Producer, Sinfonia Viva

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*"Singing is very powerful and therapeutic.  
For me, it has not only lowered my anxiety,  
it also gives me a great sense of well-being."*

*-- Sharron (Choir Member)*

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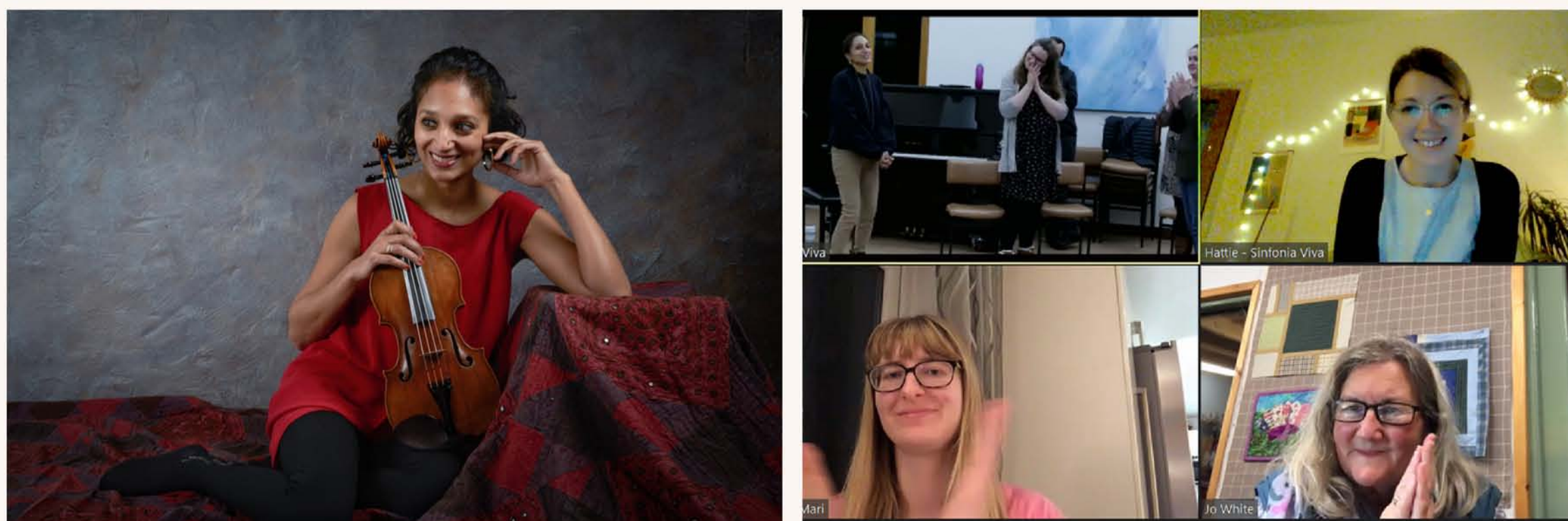
# Song Writing and Composing

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As well as performing seasonal favourites and learning thoughtfully-selected repertoire by our choir leaders, Sing Viva also have the opportunity to write and compose new music of their own.

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## Preetha Narayanan



This year, the choir worked with violinist, composer and educator, Preetha Narayanan to write a new piece which was named "Becoming One". Preetha joined our choir practice sessions and facilitated song writing workshops, inspiring the choir and the song by exploring the melodic framework of an indian raga "Charukeshi" - a musical scale in South Indian classical music.

# Becoming One

Pause

Space and silence

Darkness and light

Morning and night

Becoming one

Pause

Connection

Grounded and light

Floating at night

Becoming one

Gasp

Seperation

Clash

Ebb and flow

Breathing together

Singing together

Becoming One

A whistle from the wind

Nature's breath

Gusts

Whispers in your ear

Creeping tension

Rustling leaves

Howling in the distance

Swirling in the sky

Closing our eyes to

Focus on breath

Calm after storm

Everything still

Hearing silence

Breathing silence

Inner turbulence

An outer facade

Quieting inside

Losing the mask

Focus and flow

Released

To focus on breath

Calm after storm

Everything still

Hearing silence

Breathing silence

Focus on breath

Calm after storm

Everything still

Hearing silence

Breathing silence

Breathing together

Singing together

Becoming One

Written in collaboration with Sing Viva, 'Becoming One' takes breath in all its meanings as the starting point for both the lyrics and the music. Loosely drawing on the Indian raga Charukeshi, the piece is a ultimately a reflection and celebration of the relationship between individual and the collective.

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# Performances

Sing Viva has the unique opportunity to perform alongside the Sinfonia Viva orchestra. Though we are not a performance-focussed choir, the opportunities when we do perform are special and spectacular thanks to the connection to the orchestra.

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## Derby Cathedral - May 2022



# Barley Park Concert - August 2022



# Erewash Sound Concert - October 2022



# Choir Promotion

Our focus this year was to spread the word to carers across Derbyshire, with the aim of boosting attendance to our live sessions in Chesterfield.



We attended many networking events including:

- Umbrella SEN Provider Marketplace, Derby
- Carers Networking, Chesterfield
- Derbyshire Carers Networking, Normanton
- Voluntary Sector Marketplace, University of Derby
- Derbyshire Voluntary Action AGM and Networking Event, Chesterfield

# Chesterfield Choir - Outcome

Since 2019, we have expanded our offer across Derbyshire, targeting carers based in and around Chesterfield. Though we trialled different venues and approaches to marketing, and remove as many barriers as possible, we were not able to establish a consistent membership in this area.

Our expansion in Chesterfield started with sessions at Chesterfield Library. Participants fed back that the distance from the parking and unlit walking routes meant access was uncomfortable. When we returned to in-person sessions after the pandemic lockdowns had forced all choir activity online throughout 2020-21, we trialled a new venue: Wingerworth Church Centre. A leafy, village church centre with excellent facilities and well-lit parking next to the venue. We still found that our membership wasn't growing, and many sessions we had more participants joining online than in-person.

At the end of 2021, Project Manager, Hattie, developed a partnership with Derbyshire Voluntary Action, who offered their venue in-kind as part of their warm spaces programme. We moved the sessions there from January 2023, alongside a targeted marketing campaign; attending events and other local carer groups, in hope that this in-person invitation would encourage participants to engage.

We allocated our human resources to ensure there was a session every week in-person in Chesterfield. The hope was this increased regularity would have more success in bringing in people willing to give it a go. Hattie hosted every session, further establishing a continuity and a familiar face for new participants. Though responses were enthusiastic, numbers failed to turn out for the sessions, despite the venue being central to the city centre and offering regular weekly sessions. Out of the handful of participants who joined the sessions, a couple soon dropped out, as they felt the choir was a higher standard than they were expecting. Despite reassurance, they sadly didn't feel it was for them.

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By the end of February, there was one dependable member attending weekly, with others dropping in and out. We had to accept that despite our efforts to change venue, marketing approach and the frequency of sessions, we were still not attaining or retaining members.

We therefore concluded that our resources were not best spent on weekly sessions in Chesterfield. We would certainly be open to looking at different models of engagement in a carer's choir in Chesterfield in the future – but having explored different venues and given a great deal of energy to the promotion of the choir, we had to sadly recognise that currently there isn't a strong appetite for our choir in Chesterfield at the moment.

The positive outcome out of our efforts in Chesterfield is our connection to the Derbyshire Voluntary Action, the participant who whole-heartedly joined us and continues to engage with the choir online, and our unwavering membership of participants in Derby.

A highlight of these sessions in Chesterfield was when Sinfonia Viva's trumpet player, Ant Thompson, joined the session. Showcasing the beauty of the trumpet and showcasing our unique selling points as a choir: the quality of our musicians, the care and love from our choir leaders and management team, and the fun and creativity we have to offer our participants.

*Hattie Coupe, Creative Projects Producer*



# Choir Feedback

*Thank you for being such a friendly welcoming group. I have enjoyed all the sessions I have been to. Here's to 2023!*

*Singing at the Darley Park concert, the buzz of the crowd and the moment when everyone turned their torches and swayed along as we were singing.*

*I was so thrilled that Sing Viva were able to perform Belonging Together at Derby Cathedral with the orchestra... we've wanted to bring the singers together with the fuller orchestra since we started - and it felt so wonderful to be able to do that this year.*

*Knowing that no matter how long its been since I last came the welcome is always warm and kind*

*Looking forward to singing and performing together in 2023. Thank you for the warm welcome last week , my first session!*

*Writing our own song was lots of fun and then being able to perform it with a full in the cathedral orchestra was very special.*

# Choir Feedback

*My first time at Sing Viva was in January 22 on Preetha's first session and I felt I hadn't laughed and enjoyed myself that much in such a long time! Thank you for making me feel so welcome that first session and ever since.*

*The concerts were great, singing at Darley Park was AMAZING, the cathedral concert was beautiful, and the Erewash concert was so funny.*

*Singing in Derby Cathedral with the orchestra under the Peace Birds with a performance that you could hear and feel the input of this wonderful choir*

*I LOVED being in the Darley Park concert!! Such a positive experience.*

*Singing Makes Me Happy, I Look Forward to Meeting up and Singing with you all Together*

*It was really fun to sing on stage at the Duchess Theatre, it would be great to do more performances at venues like that and raise money for charity.*

# Case Study: Janet

*One memory which I shall treasure is performing with Sinfonia Viva at their 40th Anniversary celebrations at Derby Cathedral.*

*We sang Becoming One which we had worked on and co-written with professional musician Preetha Narayanan. The whole experience was fantastic, but the performance at the Cathedral was truly magical and spine tingling. Everyone felt the same. Such a great opportunity for us all and we appreciated it.*

*Singing at Darley Park at the Picnic in the Park at the end of the summer was a little bit mind blowing. When does a small amateur choir have the chance to sing in front of 11,000 people? We knew our pieces really well so we could relax and enjoy the event and we went down very well. We were so excited by it all and it gave everyone a new energy. Priceless!*

-- Janet (Choir Member)



**Left:** Sing Viva members performing at Derby Cathedral, May 2022

**Right:** Sing Viva performing at Darley Park, August 2022

# Case Study: Sharron

*At home to autistic children teenagers my daughter has Asperger's syndrome and severe anxiety, my son has autism sensory processing, and also a very rare Syndrome called Tullio syndrome'. My daughter's Asperger's stops her from going out the house. Some days she can freeze at school not be able to move or speak she can also collapse when her brain decide it's had enough. My son has complex needs, he processes information differently to the way we do. It can be very difficult to work with. The Tullio syndrome is so rare he is the only boy in the UK with it. Basically, the sound of live music can make him collapse the sound waves enter his ear and gives him the feeling of being on his boat swaying and he collapses, so music is difficult at home. I play the violin but only when he is out.*

*Also living in my house as my 77-year-old mother who has heart failure. For the past 10 years I've given my Saturdays to volunteer as a boxing coach to 35 children under 12 years old in the community getting them off the streets and doing something positive. Also, in the afternoons I trained 15 people with Parkinson's disease boxing skills! So life is hectic particularly at home with the children and they do do not cope going to school so sometimes it can be quite isolating and it can feel very lonely.*

*I went to the Darley Park Concert, that particular day my daughter had collapsed at school I didn't really want to come to the concert. I was at my lowest but my sister encouraged me to go I sat there really just wanted to go home which is really sad but anxiety for me at rocketed that day.*

*The beginning of the program started and on came Sing Viva! I hadn't heard of them before. When they sang Fix You (by Coldplay) the words really hit home I needed fixing quite quickly. I knew I was going to contact Sing Viva and I did so the next day.*

*I felt like I had nothing else to give, I felt quite empty and I felt like I needed something back to give me a sense of well-being again to get my anxiety under control.*

*I was actually quite scared to walk through the doors of Sing Viva the first day, like I said I had a very bad day that day with the children at home not coping very well. I was greeted with the warmest of welcomes by Pete and Hattie and during the session I could feel my anxiety dropping to an all time low, feeling relaxed and happy the session was fun and easy to do . Even my shoulders and body started to relax haven't felt this for a long time.*

*I came out feeling amazing and I knew this is what I needed to do to give something back to myself. I threw myself in at the deep end I decided to do the show at Long Eaton Theatre two weeks after joining Sing Viva! I couldn't believe I was doing it but it was amazing and I really enjoyed it.*

*I didn't anticipate when I got off stage, the stage manager was blowing his nose wiping his eyes and he stopped choir members and said he'd had a really bad day that day and when we sang Fix You by Coldplay this really hit home and it gave him something back that he really needed. He thanked everybody for helping him feel so much better.*

*So here I was joining Sing Viva because I thought I had nothing else to give. My life was hectic, plus stress and anxiety and Sing Viva had given me so much just in those two weeks.*

*It was incredible to realise that I could still give something back and that will stay with me a long time: when you feel that you're empty and have nothing else to give just simply by singing you can give so much more.*

*Singing is very powerful and therapeutic, and for me it has lowered not only my anxiety also give me a great sense of well-being.*

*My energy levels have risen and I feel so much more positive I cannot express how much Sing Viva has helped me in just a few weeks since I've joined.*

*It's been the best decision I ever made to walk through the doors even though I didn't think I could do it by myself. Most days I'm quite isolated at home with the stresses and anxieties of home life and I will be grateful forever for all the work Sing Viva do.*

*I'm happy to help spread the word on how wonderful Sing Viva is.*

-- Sharron (Sing Viva Member)



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**Left:** Sing Viva members networking and promoting the choir  
**Right:** Sharron speaking publicly at the DVA networking event - December 2022

# Attendance

## **Spring - Summer 2022**

135 Attendances over 12 sessions  
Averaging 11 members per session

## **Summer - Autumn 2022**

107 attendances over 9 sessions  
Averaging 12 members per session

## **Autumn - Winter 2022**

181 attendances over 16 sessions  
Averaging 12 members per session

## **Winter - Spring 2023**

164 attendances over 12 sessions  
Averaging 13 members per session

## **YEAR TOTAL:**

587 attendances over 49 sessions  
Averaging 12 members per session