



Patron: Samuel West
Music Director: Darius Battiwalla

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Stairs? No problem!

A joint venture between Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus and The Montgomery is solving the problem that stairs can cause to both audience members and performers with mobility impairments.

Due to the style and age of The Montgomery and the Chorus's home venue of the City Hall, both venues have some tricky steps to negotiate that can't be solved by adding lifts or ramps.

"We have been successfully using our stair-climber backstage at the City Hall to reach the choir risers since 2012 when we were thrilled to receive Big Lottery funding for our *Singclude* project" explained Anne Adams, Administrator of the Chorus, "And, in keeping with the project's aim to improve accessibility to performance spaces, we are even happier to announce that we are now in a position to share the use of the climber with The Montgomery. With 35 steps to reach the auditorium, the climber will be a welcomed addition to the facilities of the theatre."

The climber will next be put through its paces on Saturday 6th May, smoothly aiding singers up to the performance level of the City Hall when over 270 singers from both the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus and the Hallé Choir will be performing Tippett's *A Child of our Time*. "This powerful work is large and dramatic so we need a huge number of voices, hence the welcome collaboration with the Hallé Choir. And we

certainly wouldn't want any of our less mobile singers to have to sit out for the sake of not being able to negotiate a few flights of stairs," said Chorus Chairman Paul Henstridge.

Dawn Reynolds, Managing Director of The Montgomery is equally keen that audience members to The Montgomery's shows benefit from the stair-climber sharing arrangement. "We realise that the steps can be daunting for some people so we are thrilled to be able to provide this new facility to help more theatre goers enjoy our performances".

If you'd like to join the Chorus for *A Child of Our Time*, call 0114 2 789 789 or visit www.sheffieldcityhall.co.uk for ticket details. And if you'd like to attend a performance at The Montgomery using the stair-climber, give them a call on 0114 272 0455 prior to booking your ticket.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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Links & social media

www.sheffieldphil.org
<https://www.facebook.com/SheffieldPhilChorus>
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Photos attached for use with this article

Photos 1 & 2 – Suggested caption - *The Montgomery's Caretaker & Technical Manager Nick Clayton showing Marketing Manager Rachel Jack how easily the stair-climber works.*

About Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus

A Child of our Time, a secular oratorio, was written and composed by the British composer Michael Tippett (1905 - 98). Tippett was a conscience objector, jailed for two months during WW2, while composing his oratorio, which was inspired by the assassination in 1938 of a German diplomat by a young Jewish refugee, and the Nazi government's reaction in the form of a violent persecution against its Jewish population - the Kristallnacht.

Tippett used a traditional three-part oratorio format, structured in the manner of Bach's Passions, but with the poignant spirituals "Steal Away"; "Nobody Knows the Trouble I See, Lord"; "Go Down, Moses"; "O, By and By"; and "Deep River" carrying out the role allocated by Bach to chorales. The cries for help of refugees are matched by the selfish calls for rejection, but Tippett then used "Deep River" as the finale in order to express the hope of a fresh spring after a long, dark winter.

Sheffield's own Ryan Wigglesworth (a former student at King Edward VII School) will conduct the Hallé orchestra, the Hallé Choir and the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus with soloists Elizabeth Llewellyn (soprano), Madeleine Shaw (mezzo-soprano), Joshua Ellicott (tenor) and James Platt (bass). Tickets are subject to booking fees and are priced at £21, £19 and £16, £5 for students & under 18s.

About The Montgomery

The Montgomery is a theatre and arts centre based in the heart of Sheffield. It specialises in children's and family programming, promoting professional touring performances and workshops, whilst also being the performing home of many community theatre companies, dance schools and schools. The gallery space is used to exhibit works by local community artists.

The historic venue boasts a 420-seat theatre, a flexible studio space, and rehearsal/exhibition/workshop spaces.

Use of the stair-climber is limited to 2 audience members per performance and must be booked at least 7 days in advance of the visit.