



THE
PIECE
HALL

EST. 1779

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023-2024

THE

INTRODUCTION

The Piece Hall was built in 1779 for the trading of ‘pieces’ of cloth; the 30-yard lengths of woven woollen fabric were produced on handlooms in local homes as part of Yorkshire’s thriving cottage industry.

At the time it was the most ambitious and prestigious building of its type, and it is now the world’s only remaining Georgian cloth hall, Grade I listed and a building of historic global significance.

From its inception, The Piece Hall was a stunning combination of commerce and culture, an icon of hard business but also a broader statement about the lives, ambition and values of the surrounding community. This fascinating mix of purpose and idealism – business, arts and people – continues to influence and drive The Piece Hall’s role today.

Now under the care of registered charity The Piece Hall Trust, this unique building is a multi-award-winning retail, tourism and entertainment destination which exists to benefit the people of Calderdale.

The Trust’s key pillars of heritage, trade, culture and community are delivered via a premium retail offer of high-end boutique stores, cafés and bars; live music concerts from global artists, world class exhibitions and cultural events; an inclusive schools programme, an academy which supports and develops young creatives; plus, a diverse range of community celebrations.





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THE PIECE HALL TRUST'S VISION

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The Trust's mission is to protect, project, and promote The Piece Hall, ensuring this unique cultural asset is both preserved for future generations and continues to be the major driver of regional regeneration, enabling Calderdale to thrive in the present.

The Piece Hall will be sustained, optimised and celebrated as a world class visitor attraction which inspires inward investment and makes the borough a better place to live, work and visit.

It will be fully animated with a diverse and inclusive heritage, cultural and events programme, ensuring it remains a vibrant, relevant and contemporary 'must-see' destination which is free to enter for local, national and international visitors to experience and enjoy.

A PERIOD OF CHALLENGE, RECALIBRATION AND INNOVATION

The 18 months covered in this review from April 2023 - September 2024 saw a huge amount of activity and innovation at The Piece Hall: from Coronation celebrations to car rallies, music masterclasses to massive markets, art installations to an integration festival, dance days to roller discos, plus ‘trick or treat’ and tractor trails.

The biggest development at this stunning heritage site in recent years has been its evolution into a world class music venue; its global reputation was cemented in the seasons featured in this report.

The Live at The Piece Hall (LATPH) summer gigs in this period saw a jaw dropping 56 shows, featuring stars from across the globe, which were attended by more than 300,000 people. The Courtyard also hosted both classical music and comedy for the first time, as the team trailed an increased offer with the piloting of seated shows.

The impact of the events programme is far reaching, bringing economic social and reputational benefits not just to the town but to the wider Calderdale Borough. In the latest Calderdale Visitor Economy Strategy, Calderdale Council describes “the resounding success of The Piece Hall drawing audiences from near and far” as having “played a pivotal role in transforming our area.”

On top of the shows held in partnership with Cuffe and Taylor, The Piece Hall ran a number of its own events.

August 2023 saw almost 28,000 people pack into the Courtyard to celebrate diversity, difference and inclusion under the rainbow flag for the second Calderdale Pride to be held at the venue. Local heroes Dale Castell and Ellie Sax also returned for their biggest Piece Hall shows to date.



The second Piece Hall Mela brought the sights, sounds and spicy aromas of South Asia to this iconic venue. The music, dance, food, arts and crafts event was supported by the team behind the renowned Sandwell and Birmingham Mela, the biggest South Asian music and culture festival in Europe.

The firsts continued with two full scale classical concerts from The Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra broadening the musical offer, plus a free family festival “In The Yard”. This brought the opportunity for the local community to enjoy a low-cost day out with all the excitement of a big gig, while giving up-and-coming talent the chance to perform on the same stage graced by global stars on other days.

Other new and unique events included a classic car showcase with the displaying of dozens of vintage Triumph Stags. The Courtyard also welcomed “the nation’s PE teacher” Joe Wicks, AKA The Body Coach for two sell-out fitness sessions, and supported the local community’s mental health with a pop-up garden from Calderdale’s Healthy Minds charity as part of Mental Health Awareness Week.



To mark the coronation of the new king in May 2023, The Piece Hall, thanks to the generosity of DCMS (Department of Culture, Media & Sport), West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Community Foundation for Calderdale, brought in a big screen. This allowed the local community to come together to experience this historic occasion, with 32,000 people visiting over the weekend.

The Sunday saw an incredibly popular Emergency Services Day where vehicles and representatives from West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, West Yorkshire Police, Yorkshire Air Ambulance, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, Calder Valley Search and Rescue and Calderdale SmartMove filled The Courtyard. The big screen enabled another first, a Piece

Hall Eurovision Party. As it remained in situ after the Coronation, the 67th song contest being held in Liverpool on behalf of Ukraine, which was unable to host the competition due to the war, could be shown. This free event saw hundreds of people watch the iconic show together, alongside live music and DJ performances.

This period marked the 6th and 7th anniversaries of the building’s reopening post transformation and saw the 16 millionth visitor pass through the historic gates. A number of new tenants chose to open businesses in The Piece Hall.

A major innovation launched in this period was The Piece Hall Academy. As part of the Trust’s commitment to the future of arts and culture in the region, in February 2024 it confirmed it would be running schemes and courses to help train, educate, and develop the next generation of creatives. The first element was a two-week masterclass run by globally prolific multi-instrumentalist and producer Erik “Blu2th” Griggs (See p.22).

A free to enter art exhibition celebrated the town’s local boxing clubs. “Halifax Stars” was a photographic, film and oral history project which focused on the sport’s working-class roots in the many clubs which have proudly operated in and around the town for decades. Almost 2,200 people attended the exhibition during its month-long run.





April 2024 saw the launch of the highly anticipated CultureDale by CMBC, a year-long programme of creativity and activity celebrating Calderdale's 50th anniversary.

The Piece Hall was one of the major host locations for the opening which saw 26 free events taking place across Halifax town centre. The Courtyard came alive with social ballroom dancing for everyone to join in and entertainment from The Signing Choir, 'Bard of Calderdale' Roger Davies and Mr Wilson's Second Liners.

The Christmas programme included in this period kicked off with three long weekends of Christmas Markets, on November 10-12, 17-19 and 24-26, which saw a total footfall of almost 172,000.

The Piece Hall recorded its busiest day ever when The Halifax Christmas Parade chose The Courtyard for its finale. This stunning event run by Halifax Bid in conjunction with The Handmade Parade saw a procession of giant puppets, lanterns and artworks travel through the town, proving so popular, the Courtyard reached capacity for the first time in many years, with a total footfall of more than 30,000 throughout the day.

Christmas continued with the arrival of the magnificent Spiegel tent from The Netherlands. The lavishly decorated wooden structure hosted more than 30 performances from family shows to live music and DJ sets to standup comedy and cabaret. Highlights included internationally renowned musicians Julian and Jiaxin Lloyd Webber, global soul star PP Arnold and 80s' pop sensation Martin Kemp. Multiple workshops and craft sessions on top of this, made it the busiest festive period in terms of events for The Piece Hall to date.

During September 2024 we hosted celebrations for the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Long Service Awards Day. As well as rewarding loyal team members there was a public facing element to the day so families could enjoy the many different vehicles used by the WYFRS, watch demonstrations and take part in a fire engine trail along with free fun crafts in the Learning Studio with our volunteers.

The final event of this period saw almost 15,000 people attend the free to enter Yorkshire Integration Festival. This celebration of diversity and community, with music food and dance also saw a visit from giant puppet Little Amal. The manually operated, partly animatronic creation was the centrepiece of a performance art project called The Walk, highlighting the plight of young refugees.

Though a financially challenging period, it was incredibly rich in terms of culture, trade, events, activities, diversity, learning and the creation of opportunities, as The Piece Hall continued to deliver for all of Calderdale's communities.



**APRIL 2023
WE SEE YOU ROLLIN'**

The courtyard hosted adult and child roller disco sessions as we welcomed a roller-skating rink for the first time!

**JUNE 2023
A TRIUMPH OF A
CAR RALLY**

Hundreds of enthusiasts headed to The Courtyard to see a display of dozens of stunning classic cars.



**AUGUST 2023
MAKING
CALDERDALE
PROUD**

A record-breaking 28,000 people attended this performance packed event celebrating LGBTQ+ love, diversity, and inclusion.

2023-24



**MAY 2023
GOD SAVE THE KING**

The Courtyard turned red, white and blue as one of the nation's designated venues to host major public celebrations with a big screen to watch live coverage of this historic event alongside community workshops plus music and dance displays.



**JUNE-AUGUST
2023
22 LIVE AT THE
PIECE HALL
SHOWS**

120,000 people watched the longest run of summer shows to date - from global stars like Sting, Queens Of The Stoneage, Limp Bizkit.



**SEPTEMBER 2022
ANNE LISTER
FLOWING LAYING**

Speeches were given and floral tributes laid in memory of Halifax's trailblazing lesbian, businesswoman and diarist.

**OCTOBER 2023
THE PIECE HALL
ACADEMY**

As part of our commitment to the next generation of creatives, we launched free training and support programmes for young people aiming for careers in music and live events.



**DECEMBER 2023
CHRISTMAS
ENTERTAINMENT ALL
WRAPPED UP**

The Piece Hall's biggest Christmas programme to date saw the Spiegel tent host more than 50 shows, events and festive workshops.

**FEBRUARY 2024
BIG TRACTOR
TAKEOVER**

Families loved our first ever Tractor Takeover which saw dozens of vintage farm vehicles fill The Courtyard.



**APRIL 2024
WELCOME TO
CULTUREDALE**

The Piece Hall is a host location for the launch of CultureDale, the council's year of culture to mark 50 years of Calderdale.

**JUNE 2024
LIVE AT THE PIECE
HALL**

A record-breaking 34 shows from world-class artists, including stars as diverse as Bryan Adams, Grace Jones and Korn, and kicking off with the iconic Blondie!



**AUGUST 2024
HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TO US**

We celebrated 7 years of the beautifully transformed Piece Hall.

AN ACTION PACKED 18 MONTHS...

2023-24

**NOVEMBER 2023
MAGICAL CHRISTMAS
MARKETS**

The courtyard hosted three long weekends of Christmas Markets and had its busiest day of footfall since reopening for the finale of The Christmas Parade.



**JANUARY 2024
WHY ACCESS IS
EVERYTHING**

Live at The Piece Hall was recognised for its commitment to accessibility with the Attitude is Everything Silver Award.

**MARCH 2024
MAKING TRACKS
WITH A MASTER**

International super producer Erik 'Blu2th' Griggs teaches and inspires with a 2-week masterclass for future Calderdale creatives.



**MAY 2024
NEW STORE ON THE
MIDDLE FLOOR**

A treasure trove of collectables, Antiques by Rachel made their home at The Piece Hall. The shop specialises in sourcing and offering a premium selection of antiques.

**JULY 2024
COURTYARD
COMEDY**

We welcomed legendary funny man Bill Bailey as The Courtyard saw its first full size seated comedy show



**SEPTEMBER 2024
COME TOGETHER**

15,000 people watched music, shared food and celebrated community as we welcomed giant refugee puppet Little Amal, a global symbol of human rights to the Yorkshire Integration Festival.

CHAIR'S STATEMENT

ORPHEY ROBINSON MBE

It's a proud moment making my first statement as Chairman of this iconic landmark of global significance which West Yorkshire is so very lucky to have.

This unique slice of living history has a special place in people's hearts, and it is an immense honour to have been entrusted with overseeing its continued growth and development. This is a responsibility I accept with enthusiasm, humility, and a strong sense of purpose.

It's been wonderful to watch The Piece Hall grow into a multi-award-winning music and arts venue as well as a much-loved visitor attraction and to see the huge pride local people have in this very special place. The site is now lauded as a brilliant example of just what can be achieved when historic buildings are reimagined for contemporary life, and heritage is transformed into currency, but there is still more to be achieved.

The Piece Hall has weathered a number of storms during recent years, most significantly, the global pandemic of Covid-19 and a deleterious cost-of-living crisis. As well as the direct impact of these events we have also had to face the knock-on effects of the big changes in customer behaviour they have provoked.



Like many other establishments and venues dependant on hospitality, The Piece Hall has faced financial challenges, and we cannot shy away from that. The losses sustained in this period were not in line with our budget. It is important to remember that many other businesses and organisations sadly have not survived, but thanks to some incredibly strong leadership and some difficult decisions The Piece Hall has not only survived but is beginning to thrive once again, with a small surplus forecast for the next two financial years.

Piece Hall CEO Nicky Chance-Thompson MBE DL and her team have faced any troubles head on and I enter the organisation with The Trust moving in the right direction, with excellent governance which we are in the process of refreshing further, and leadership which is powerful and pragmatic, robust and resilient, but also, essentially, creative, agile and forward thinking.

The Piece Hall now has a strategic roadmap for how to keep moving forward and continuing to deliver on its promise to be the main catalyst for the regeneration of Calderdale while projecting, celebrating and sustaining The Piece Hall as a world class destination to be enjoyed by local people and global visitors alike.

It's vital that The Piece Hall is accessible to as many people as possible and as such I reaffirm the promise that it will remain free to enter. For this to continue an element of public funding may always be necessary but the team are working incredibly hard to find creative ways to minimise the pull on the public purse strings.

I am delighted to be working alongside Nicky Chance-Thompson, I have witnessed firsthand her tireless dedication as Chief Executive. I know she will continue to lead with skill, tenacity and flourish, never wavering from her commitment to this building or shying away from difficult decisions. Her ability, passion and creativity are second to none and I am already impressed by her foresight, solution driven leadership style and collaborative approach.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Sir Roger Marsh OBE DL, the previous Chair, for his leadership, guidance and vision. His work has been instrumental in shaping The Piece Hall into the world class venue we know today.

Looking ahead, the world is ever evolving, so we too must adapt to meet the needs of the times and the communities we serve. This venue is a symbol of creativity, collaboration, inspiration and hope for the local communities of Halifax, and it is our responsibility to ensure and enhance its continued success for generations to come.

Under my tenure, The Board of Trustees will embrace fresh perspectives and innovations which will resonate with today's audiences ensuring The Piece Hall continues to be a beacon for heritage, culture, trade and community for increasing audiences.

Together, we will enhance accessibility, expand our reach, and ensure that this venue continues to be a home to artistic expression and cultural exchange not just for Yorkshire but for the world.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S STATEMENT

NICKY CHANCE-THOMPSON MBE DL



This reporting period has been one of recalibration, challenge and change, but we have still seen elements of growth. We experienced our busiest month to date in August 2024 when we welcomed 417,350 people to The Piece Hall and the calendar year of 2024 was a record breaker overall, with a total of 2,741,990 visitors. The total footfall number since we opened in 2017 was heading towards 16.5 million at the end of September 2024 which marks the close of this accounting period.

Part of the reason for the jump in visitor numbers is the success of our continuing partnership with Cuffe and Taylor which reached new heights in this period with 56 shows featuring titans of the global music scene as part of TK Maxx presents Live at The Piece Hall and included our very first courtyard wide comedy show. It has been simply incredible to see artists like Sting, Limp Bizkit, boygenius, Blondie, Noel Gallagher, Grace Jones and McFly performing on stage in this former cloth hall.

Outside of the partnership The Piece Hall continued to deliver a diverse and inclusive programme supporting social cohesion and local wellbeing and remained free to enter, optimising our accessibility for everyone.

The inhouse team hosted a number of other large-scale events in The Courtyard including a Mela, Coronation celebrations, two Pride parties, classical music concerts and a free family festival supporting local talent.

On top of this there were more than 50 smaller gigs, shows, events and workshops in the Spiegel tent over Christmas 2024 and dozens of family trails and craft activities, both free and subsidised.

During this financial period The Piece Hall Trust incurred a loss of £700k. While commercial trading and donations increased, we saw a significant drop in grant funding which fell by £1.6million from the previous year.

Income from charitable activities increased significantly from £5million to £8.8million.

Even taking into account the extended time frame of the period in question this shows we are heading in the right direction and the changes we have already implemented are already taking effect. I look forward with belief and confidence.

The Piece Hall is committed to the future of arts and culture in the region and developing the next generation of creatives, and as such in March 2024 we launched The Piece Hall Academy. This is an umbrella project which offers a variety of training courses to upskill people and create opportunities in music production, the creative industries and live events.

In its first year we welcomed international producer Erik “Blu2th” Griggs to Halifax to teach two weeks of masterclasses to local young people, started Live Events Skills Bootcamps to kick start the careers of young people in sound engineering, lighting design and operation, rigging and stage design and event management and offered work experience placements at three high profile Live at The Piece Hall shows where students observed and experienced the many roles involved in staging a major event, show or production.

We continue to refine and develop our business model to best suit the current economic and social climate and are exploring some revolutionary funding options which will be the first of their kind in the heritage sector.

I want to pay thanks to Calderdale Council, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, The West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for their ongoing financial support of our unique and transformative asset.

I also want to pay special thanks to our volunteers who help guide school trips, support major events and welcome visitors so warmly, our amazing building and events would not be the same without them. I am full of praise for our hard-working tenants. The resilience of our long-term traders and the entrepreneurial spirit of our newcomers never fails to impress me.

The Trust and I are deeply indebted to Sir Roger Marsh who has been steadying the ship through some incredibly choppy financial waters which included the unprecedented hazards of a global pandemic and the more familiar but incredibly challenging consequences of a cost-of-living crisis. He leaves The Piece Hall Trust in a strong and stable position with a detailed plan on how we transition this glorious building into its next phase. I extend heartfelt thanks from myself, The Board and the wider team for his hard work and wisdom and wish him all the very best for what comes next.

So, what next for The Piece Hall? I couldn't be happier to welcome internationally acclaimed musician and creative leader Orphy Robinson MBE as our new chairman. Along with his immense talent and experience he brings with him a new vision. The refreshed Board with new skills and passions will see us adapt to a changing world, adjusting to new customer trends and behaviour, making the organisation agile, flexible and future proof so we can continue to celebrate the past and embrace the future while fully appreciating and immersing ourselves in the present.



**MORE THAN 300,000 PEOPLE
ATTENDED LIVE AT THE PIECE HALL**



**MORE THAN 2000
PEOPLE EXPERIENCED
A HERITAGE TOUR**



**16.3 MILLION VISITORS
SINCE REOPENING**



**9,000
CLUB 1779 MEMBERS**

TK MAXX PRESENTS LIVE AT THE PIECE HALL 2023 & 2024

The summer seasons of 2023 and 2024 saw a huge expansion of Live at The Piece Hall. From 11 shows in 2022, the programme increased to 22 in 2023 and then to 34 in 2024.

2023 saw the biggest build to date. The expanded programme necessitated a bespoke stage with increased production values and improved views, two main event bars, and a glitzy new VIP area called The Live at Lounge.

Around 120,000 tickets were sold for performances by global superstars like Sting, Limp Bizkit, Queens of The Stone Age and boygenius. The Courtyard welcomed 18 individual headline acts, with four proving so popular, second shows or “roll dates” were implemented.



Analysis of customer data for the season revealed 2023's audiences came from further afield than Calderdale with key locations including Leeds, Bradford, Manchester, Sheffield, Newcastle, Nottingham, Liverpool, Preston and Blackburn.

2024 saw The Piece Hall up the ante even further, welcoming 32 world renowned artists, including Blondie, Bryan Adams, Grace Jones, Rick Astley, Richard Ashcroft, Idles, Korn, McFly, PJ Harvey and Biffy Clyro. Blondie and McFly performed two shows taking the total number of events to 34.

This extended run of shows meant a new high for audience numbers which hit almost 190,000 for the season. There were many high profile shows during this run, notably Michael Kiwanuka who previewed his Glastonbury performance in Halifax before appearing on the iconic pyramid stage just days later and the Biffy Clyro gig, which marked a huge come back for the Scottish band as their first live performance in two years.

Local businesses continued to report huge boosts to their trade with most restaurants and hotels fully booked on and around gig nights.





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WHAT THE STARS SAID
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What an amazing place for a concert – I’ve been looking forward to this one for ages!

RICK ASTLEY

Beautiful – just one of the best venues

DEBBIE HARRY (BLONDIE)

I’ve not been to a place like this since I was in Verona. Such a beautiful place

RICHARD ASHCROFT

The Piece Hall is a crazy beautiful place!

SHERYL CROW

This is one of the most beautiful places – any time you want us back, just say the word!

TOM ODELL

An epic venue and crowd

NOEL GALLAGHER

It’s like being in an Italian plaza... in Halifax

TIM BOOTH (JAMES)

What an incredible vibe right here – this might just be my new favourite spot!

FRED DURST (LIMP BIZKIT)

THE PIECE HALL ACADEMY

As part of its commitment to the future of arts and culture in the region and developing the next generation of creatives, during this period The Piece Hall Academy was launched.

The umbrella project offers a variety of training courses to upskill people and create opportunities in music production, the creative industries and live events.

The first element in March 2024 saw multi-award-winning international producer from Dr Dre's Aftermath production house Erik "Blu2th" Griggs head to Halifax to teach two weeks of masterclasses to local young people in conjunction with Calderdale College and Calderdale Music.

This gave 40 young people world class training and real-world experience of the music industry, bringing potentially life changing outcomes and opportunities. The first music single to be produced as part of this course, City Lights, was later released on all the major global streaming platforms.

Another part of the Academy is training and upskilling for the live events industry which was run alongside The Academy of Live Technology at Production Park in Wakefield with financial support from Mayor Tracy Brabin and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

The Live Events Skills Bootcamps, train young people for a career in one of the fastest growing industries in the UK with introductions to sound engineering, lighting design and operation, rigging and stage

design and event safety and management. They then have potential opportunities for work or work experience on The Piece Halls live events.

The third Academy strand is Artist Development. This sees local artists, supported, coached and mentored through the early stages of their career. The first band taken on were The Caymans. They receive training on legal and contractual aspects of the music industry, as well as support with rehearsals, bookings, recording and marketing.

More elements are being planned for The Academy in future years.

Alongside more formal courses The Academy offers music industry taster days for students in Years 10-13 through its partnership with Calderdale Music and Roland UK.

In 2024 young people shadowed professionals during shows from comedian Bill Bailey, Jungle and Nile Rodgers & CHIC, learning about the many different roles involved in staging a major event.

Applications are actively encouraged from those groups currently underrepresented in live events production.



HERITAGE, COMMUNITY & THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

As well as preserving this unique heritage building, part of The Piece Hall Trust's role is to engage with the local community, supporting and encouraging learning.

During this period The Piece Hall welcomed around 900 pupils from local education settings to take part in various educational workshops, including the famous 'We're Going on a Cloth Hunt' where children learn about the cloth making process in 1779.

Our exceptional volunteer guides conducted Heritage Tours for more than 2000 visitors, helping them to learn more about The Piece Hall's history from 1779 until the present day.

Other key events included celebrations marking the birth of trailblazing lesbian icon Anne Lister, where The Courtyard welcomed visitors from across the globe for the bi-annual flower laying ceremony as well as bespoke heritage tours.

Spring 2023 saw a number of diverse arts and crafts sessions to mark both Easter and Eid, including an adult calligraphy workshop, family storytelling, sisters' circle and free Eid and Easter workshops.

More than 300 children took part in the annual egg hunt during the holidays, finding out about the building while searching for clues and enjoying a chocolate treat at the end.

As part of The Piece Hall's commitment to bring free art and culture to the public, from 29 April - 28 May 2023, the proud history of West Yorkshire's boxing clubs was celebrated in an exhibition in The Gallery. "Halifax Stars" explored the rich working-class roots of the sport within the local community, spanning over decades.



In early May 2023, the community and heritage team helped facilitate celebrations for the King's Coronation, with volunteers supporting an Emergency Services Community Day. The Courtyard was a hive of activity with children able to climb into the vehicles, try on uniforms and equipment and pose for photos.

The following day as part of The Big Help Out, The Piece Hall team hosted a programme of free workshops, all themed around volunteering. Each session was facilitated by a partner organisation and representing an element of their practice, beautifully showcasing the fantastic, varied and creative work by volunteers and voluntary organisations in Calderdale. The Piece Hall volunteers delivered creative activities, tours and spoke to visitors about the benefits of volunteering. The event was attended by The Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, who came to honour and recognise the huge contribution of The Piece Hall volunteer team.

To mark Mental Health Awareness Week in May 2023 The Courtyard welcomed a Mental Health Garden to promote wellbeing and mindfulness within the community. It displayed children's artwork from local schools, offered gardening opportunities plus arts and craft activities.

The 2023 winter and Christmas community programme saw multiple free, subsidised and paid-for workshops for schools, families and adults including glass decoration, wreath and candle making, woodblock painting, lino printing and educational Georgian Christmas themed storytelling and crafts. On top of this, volunteers helped support at the many live events and performances for the festive programme in the Spiegel tent.



February 2024 half-term brought a whole host of farming themed activities with The Piece Hall's very first Tractor Takeover, where vintage tractors and farm vehicles were showcased on The Courtyard.

This was supported by a tractor activity trail around the building which 200 children took part in before enjoying free arts and crafts. Children made a cotton wool picture of Woolley the sheep and free family lunchtime drawing sessions linked into the history of the building were also on offer.



During National Lottery Open Week in March anyone with a lottery ticket could book onto a Heritage Tour for free, with 103 visitors taking up the offer.

Easter 2024 saw a bumper year for the Easter trail with 886 children collecting letters for an Easter themed anagram and being rewarded with a chocolatey treat. Hundreds of children also took part in the free family Easter crafts designing easter eggs and making bunny headbands.

The rest of the month saw the ever-popular family craft drop-in sessions, focus on Ramadan related activities making colourful moon and star designed lanterns.

In April, the heritage and learning team supported the highly anticipated start of CultureDale when The Piece Hall hosted one of 26 free launch events taking place across Halifax town centre.

At the end of the month, The Piece Hall welcomed a host of community groups to perform for all visitors during a daylong celebration of dance.

July saw a starring role for one of The Piece Hall's heritage guides in the hit Channel 4 show, Susan Calman's Grand Day Out. The guide was seen by around a million viewers telling Susan all about the history of The Piece Hall.

Working around the summer shows, during the 2024 school holidays the team utilised some of infrastructure on The Courtyard for the gigs to hold free craft sessions on the accessibility viewing platform. Gajrai garlands, bangles and mehndi patterns were made as we welcomed local children to mark the final week of the South Asian Heritage Festival, and to compliment the summer's musical theme, children made their own instruments, and designed album covers at free drop-in craft sessions.

September saw a memorial event marking the passing of Anne Lister and the month ended with a volunteers' coffee morning, where the team was celebrated and thanked for everything they do at The Piece Hall, new members were introduced to the team and feedback and ideas for the future listened to and recorded.



SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE & PRESS COVERAGE

MEDIA PRESENCE

Media coverage during this period was extensive and positive. Monitoring via the Onclusive Reputation platform shows the sentiment breakdown of online and print media as 86.5% positive, 14% balanced or neutral and just 0.5% negative.

The largest online audiences hearing about The Piece Hall were via the Mail Online, Yahoo and MSN but there were significant articles on BBC Online, The Guardian and The Observer too. National print titles with the biggest reach were The Sun, Daily Mail and The Daily Telegraph.

Important and impactful national articles in this period included Rebecca Woods' much quoted piece for BBC online, headlined: "Is this hidden architectural gem UK's best gig venue?" This had an OTS value of almost 10 million, meaning millions of people had the opportunity to see it.

David Barnett wrote a piece for The Guardian titled 'Good evening, Halifax': how a Georgian cloth mill became one of the UK's biggest open-air music venues" which reached a potential 11.5 million people. This article was also circulated via MSN which meant another possible 22 million eyes on it.

Local and regional print continued to be strong with consistent coverage in The Yorkshire Post, Halifax Courier, Huddersfield Examiner and Telegraph & Argus, plus multiple magazine features including Living North and Beyond and our Christmas Markets were featured as a magical destination in the Liverpool Echo.

Important local coverage was received in June 2023 with an opinion piece by Nicky Chance-Thompson in the Yorkshire Post on the importance of funding arts as economic investment.

The launch of The Piece Hall Academy was previewed exclusively with a lengthy article and interview with Events and Programme Director Aaron Casserly-Stewart in the Yorkshire Post in November 2023. They featured a further significant piece on the launch of the first Academy Masterclass with Erik "Blu2th" Griggs and a then a high-profile opinion piece from Nicky in their flagship Saturday edition urging the incoming government to see the social and economic impact of investing in heritage and culture.

A huge amount of coverage was generated both locally and nationally by the TK Maxx presents Live at The Piece Hall summer series. This is no surprise with the increase to both the number of shows and the calibre

of global stars performing here. The stories came not only during the three-month gig season but from announcements, which were publicised from as early as September until as late as April, effectively facilitating year-round visibility. As well as general local and national media coverage mentions were increasingly achieved in specialist music press including NME, Metal Hammer and Kerrang! The appearance of in vogue supergroup boygenius in 2023 saw stories appear in GQ magazine and i.

The Marvel factor continued to bring positive coverage too, as the Disney production part filmed at The Piece Hall finally hit our screens in June 2023. The Mail online asked "Is Halifax the new TV and movie making mecca?" and a number of other articles focussing on the regional growth in film and TV production. A win for both The Piece Hall and the wider Calderdale Borough.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Over the 18-month period April 2023 - September 2024, our social media channels demonstrated strong and sustained growth, alongside above-average engagement performance.

We gained a total of 43,453 new followers across all platforms, including 22,339 on Facebook, 16,673 on Instagram and 4,441 on Twitter/X. This reflects continued audience growth and increased interest in our content across multiple channels.

Our average post engagement rates were 8.77% on Facebook and 2.85% on Instagram, with both figures performing above industry averages. This indicates a highly engaged audience and content that consistently resonates with users.

In terms of reach, we connected with a significant number of unique users, achieving 40.648 million on Facebook and 8.106 million on Instagram. These figures represent individual accounts reached rather than total views, highlighting the scale and breadth of our digital visibility.



3255
ARTICLES MENTIONING
THE PIECE HALL

43,453



NEW FOLLOWERS GAINED ACROSS
FACEBOOK, TWITTER & INSTAGRAM



40 MILLION
PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH
FACEBOOK POSTS ALONE

OUR VOLUNTEERS

The Piece Hall prides itself on an amazing team of volunteers who assist the Visitor Experience Team in many different areas.

Volunteer guides conducted Heritage Tours for more than 2000 visitors in this period, helping them to learn more about The Piece Hall's history from 1779 until the present day.

Week in and week out they act as ambassadors in The Courtyard and on The Piece Hall Story, welcoming visitors from all over the world. They also support school workshops, seasonal trails, and free children's crafting sessions.

And from June to August in both 2023 and 2024 when The Piece Hall transformed into a dynamic live music venue the volunteers helped with queue busting, wrist banding, escorting and other events related tasks, while other activities continued on a scaled down level.



SUE HOWLAND
VOLUNTEER & HERITAGE TOUR GUIDE

"The Piece Hall is a truly iconic building, and I love being a very small part of its function in Halifax. I really enjoy being a Heritage Tour Guide. I find the history of the building fascinating and telling people who come on the tours how and why it exists very satisfying.

"It's also fun to participate in other aspects, such as the summer gigs and children's activities. Long may I continue to be involved!"





—
OUR TENANTS
—

The Piece Hall team work hard to make sure all the beautifully refurbished stores around the courtyard and successfully let to thriving, independent local businesses.

Once 315 tiny individual units used for trading woollen fabric, they were adapted into larger spaces more suitable for contemporary needs.

The dedicated tenant community are a huge part of The Piece Hall's character and key element in the overall offer of this unique visitor attraction.

Hear from some of them next.



**RACHEL OLDROYD
ANTIQUES BY RACHEL**

I've been in the antiques and collectibles world for over 10 years now, previously running my business from a shop in Pontefract for eight years and also working at an auction house in Wakefield.

I love what I do. Buying and selling antiques takes me to so many different places and I get to meet people from all over the UK, but I was born and raised in Halifax and when I noticed a unit had come vacant at The Piece hall it was a dream come true to run my business from such a magnificent and historical building back in my home town.



We have been open since May 2024 and I have loved every minute of it, meeting friends old and new who have now become regular customers and being close to my family who help me run the shop.

The existing tenants and the management of The Piece Hall have been so supportive. My customers now come from all over the UK, and I love getting to know their stories. It's the best move I've ever made in business.



**MARK RICHARDSON
LOAFERS VINYL & COFFEE**

Our business concept and USP has always been to create a haven for music lovers. This was our goal back in 2017 when we set out on our journey as a brand-new business and there's been an amazing synergy for us with the growth of The Piece Hall's summer seasons.

We've built our community on sharing the love of great music while providing a unique experience for visitors with high quality coffee, beer and bakes, plus a great selection of records, artwork and merchandise, all wrapped up in excellent customer service.

During summer 2023 Loafers really grew organically in terms of reputation and brand. Live at The Piece Hall brings excellent footfall throughout the day and even better into the evenings on gig days. We strongly tap into this through social media, talking about and promoting the bands who are performing and helping to attract people not only to Loafers but to The Piece Hall itself. When

they get here, we pride ourselves on the welcome we give those excited to be visiting for the first time as well as the regulars who feel blessed to have such massive acts coming to their small town.

2024 saw further reputational growth plus enhanced relationships with The Piece Hall staff, promoters and crew. Building on this has been fantastic for us, welcoming more customers and with more music fans visiting the venue we have been able to expand our record selection and the limited-edition artwork that we design to celebrate the shows.

The Piece Hall offers a live music experience like no other; we are proud of our business here all year round, and it really feels special to be part of the amazing memories and legacy that The Piece Hall is creating for so many people in Halifax, Calderdale and beyond.

OUR IMPACT TOLD BY OTHERS



CLLR JANE SCULLION LEADER OF CALDERDALE COUNCIL

The Piece Hall remains a true symbol of Calderdale's culture, heritage and creativity. "With the independent traders and magnificent community space at its heart, its impressive events and live music programme gets bigger in scale and impact every year.

It has brought unforgettable experiences and a source of pride to local people and has sparked interest and visits from all over the world – a powerful testament to the value of culture.

The Piece Hall was a key venue throughout the successful Calderdale Year of Culture 2024. It will remain central to the CultureDale legacy and to the borough's 10-year aspiration, 'Vision 34', which has heritage as one of its themes.

The venue has helped cement Calderdale's status as a cultural powerhouse, showcasing how heritage and creativity can drive economic growth. As recognised in the Annual Review, The Piece Hall is on track to make a surplus in the current financial year.



PETER TAYLOR CO-FOUNDER OF CUFFE & TAYLOR

To say 'The Live at The Piece Hall' series has continued to go from strength to strength is perhaps one of the biggest understatements in the music industry!

Over the past two summers we have welcomed more than 50 headline artists and more than 250,000 music fans to this special venue in the heart of Halifax.

To put this into context, in 2024, outside of events in London and the south coast, only Glastonbury and Liverpool's Anfield stadium welcomed more gig goers to outdoor shows in the summer – confirming The Piece Hall as one of Europe's leading live music venues.

As well as welcoming such headline stars as Blondie, Sheryl Crow, Noel Gallagher, Korn and Biffy Clyro, we also joined forces, for the first time, with our headline presenting partner TK Maxx.

When we first set out on this journey with The Piece Hall Trust our joint aim was to make this incredible place one of the UK's premier music venues. I am delighted to say the dedicated teams involved in making that dream become



**EILISH MCGUINNESS
CEO, THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
HERITAGE FUND**

The Piece Hall has undergone an incredible transformation over the years, and we are really proud that The National Lottery Heritage Fund has supported its regeneration with over £9m of investment. This unique 18th century cloth hall has been pivotal in the regeneration of Halifax and is a striking focal point of the West Yorkshire town, providing a cultural and vibrant place for commerce and communities as well as acting as a critically acclaimed gig venue.

We understand that the context cultural and heritage organisations are working within continues to be challenging. Businesses are having to adapt swiftly to changes in audience trends, customer habits and wider economic context. We are committed to supporting organisations to ensure they are resilient and able to pivot to changing circumstances in order to ensure that heritage is protected and valued into the future. Our most recent grant to the Piece Hall supporting its resilience in its next chapter, is an important example of this. We commend the Trust on its activities during this period.



**CHRIS MEEHAN
GENERAL MANAGER, HOLDSWORTH
HOUSE**

The regeneration of The Piece Hall has transformed Halifax into one of the North's most exciting cultural destinations. Its sensitive redevelopment, thriving community of independent shops and its ambitious annual programme of live events draws visitors from far beyond the West Yorkshire region.

The heightened profile has had a positive effect for Holdsworth House as Halifax's premier four-star hotel, with an uplift in room, restaurant and spa bookings.

We're delighted to work closely with The Piece Hall to encourage longer visitor stays and to raise the profile of Calderdale further as Yorkshire's vibrant, must-visit jewel.



**CHRIS HAWKINS
BBC RADIO 6 MUSIC
& PIECE HALL PATRON**

The summer seasons of live shows have, beyond doubt, made The Piece Hall a world class music venue. Huge international stars playing to sellout crowds in West Yorkshire not only delivers incredible entertainment but also an ecosystem that provides local employment and an undisputed feel-good factor in the town and beyond.

Artists are increasingly keen to play here, gig goers travel from far and wide to attend, and the buzz created extends way beyond the summer. The calibre of artists at these shows helps shine a light on the splendour of The Piece Hall, supporting its ambition to be a global destination all year round.

OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Piece Hall Trust is overseen by an independent board of experienced trustees.



ORPHY ROBISON MBE (CHAIR)

Orphy is a multi-award-winning musician, composer, leader and educator with a distinguished career spanning over four decades and extensive experience in events and large-scale education projects.

One of the few UK artists to record for the iconic Blue Note Records, Robison is Deputy Chair of leading music industry organisation the Ivors Academy, where he chairs the prestigious Ivor Novello Awards Committee.

His composer work spans film, TV documentary and contemporary dance. He is a radio broadcaster, freelance journalist, has served as Artistic Director of the Gibraltar World Music Festival and is Chair of the Watford Jazz Junction Festival.



NICKY CHANCE-THOMPSON MBE DL (TRUSTEE & CEO)

Nicky has been CEO since 2017 helping to establish The Piece Hall as an internationally-recognised destination and making a significant contribution to Calderdale's regeneration.

Prior to this she had a multi-award-winning career in marketing, advertising and media and delivered Government programmes, specialising in regeneration.

In recognition of her services to culture, heritage and regeneration in Calderdale and the wider region Nicky was honoured with an MBE in 2023, she is a Deputy Lieutenant of West Yorkshire and has previously been crowned Yorkshire Businesswoman of the Year, and received an IOD Judges Special Prize.



NOOR ALI BME

A senior buying manager at PB Foods, Noor is a passionate mentor and diversity champion helping develop culture and inclusivity at the venue. She's been named the Asian Women of Achievement Awards Businesswoman of the Year and has a British Empire Medal for Services to Diversity in Retail.



SYIMA ASLAM MBE

Syima is the founder and director of Bradford Literature Festival, which welcomes 70,000 visitors annually and is celebrated as the most socio-economically and ethnically diverse literary festival in the UK. She is supporting the Trust to shape a diverse and successful future for the venue.



CLLR HOWARD BLAGBROUGH

Previously both Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Calderdale, Howard has served the people of Brighouse since 2008. He is currently the leader of the Conservative and Unionists Group and is a Director of the Brighouse BID and on the Brighouse Town Deal Board, which oversees the £19.1m investment for Brighouse.



CLLR TIM SWIFT MBE

A highly experienced local representative, Tim was Leader of the Council from May 2012-July 2015, and then from May 2015-May 2023. Tim started his working life in research engineering in the private sector. He then spent more than twenty years in non-profit roles, as chief executive of Age Concern Calderdale, and later Age Concern Calderdale and Kirklees.



ILLY JAFAR (FCIM) INCOMING FEBRUARY 2025

Born and raised in Halifax, Illy played in bands in LA before his award-winning career as a senior global marketing and communications leader in music, retail, culture, hospitality and international brands. He is a non-executive director of an 'outstanding multi-academy trust, and a member of the National Governance Association.



JAXS PALMER

A HR Director with 20 years' experience providing commercially sound solutions to private, public and charitable sectors, Jaxs brings expertise in business transformation and people change programmes. Her consultancy helps businesses grow through people and she is passionate about talent, succession, equality and diversity, especially women in the workplace.

THE TRUST'S PARTNERS

Thank you to the partners of The Piece Hall, this year more than ever.

Without their support the Trust would not be able to realise the extraordinary benefits for the people of Calderdale and the wider Yorkshire region.





CONNECT

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VISIT www.thepiecehall.co.uk

EMAIL info@thepiecehall.co.uk

The Piece Hall is independently managed by The Piece Hall Trust, a registered charity, number 1156948.

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THE PIECE HALL
2022 WINNER
THE GREAT PLACE



THE PIECE HALL
BEST OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT