

Musicians in Residence 2021-22

Huddersfield, UK

Indicative residency dates:

Any four continuous weeks from 1 March 2022 onwards



Standedge Tunnel, Huddersfield Narrow Canal © 54north

About Huddersfield

Located between Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield, Huddersfield is a large market town in the Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees in West Yorkshire, England. The University of Huddersfield is home to around 20,000 students, and overall the town (including the surrounding villages) has a population of approximately 145,000.

Huddersfield is a manufacturing town – historically the town produced woollen textiles, which (along with the chemical and engineering industries that emerged to support the textile manufacturing industry) was the basis of its prosperity in the 19th and early 20th centuries. During the 19th century, Huddersfield was at the centre of the Luddite rebellion when local textile workers began to destroy mills, sheds and machinery in response to the emergence of the new, mechanised weaving sheds which threatened their livelihoods.

Although the number of people who work in textiles has declined, the surviving companies continue to produce large quantities of woollen products and the town remains home to textile, chemical and engineering companies including Brook Motors Ltd (which in the 1950s

was the largest exclusive producer of AC motors in the world), Huddersfield Fine Worsteds and a large number of niche manufacturers.

Huddersfield made history in 1919 (becoming known as ‘the town that bought itself’) when the local council purchased much of the land in the town centre and surrounding area from the Ramsden family, who had established Huddersfield as a trading centre in the 16th and 17th centuries and continued to shape its development (including the establishment of its first canal, its railway and many of its buildings) for 400 years.

Huddersfield is also known for its Victorian architecture – according to Kirklees Council, there are over 3,000 listed buildings in Huddersfield (the third highest number in the country) and over 200 of them are in the town centre. Landmarks include the Victoria Tower on Castle Hill (constructed to mark Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897), Huddersfield Railway Station (once described as ‘the most splendid station façade in England’) and the Byram Arcade, the town’s oldest Victorian arcade, now home to three floors of independent shops, designers and cafes.

Kirklees (the Metropolitan Borough where Huddersfield is situated) is one of the biggest authority areas in England, covering 254 square miles of space – 72% of which is green belt land, designed to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and maintaining an area where agriculture, forestry and outdoor leisure can prevail. Natural beauty is everywhere in this part of the country – to the North of Huddersfield are the stunning Yorkshire Dales, while the Peak District is to the South.

In 1981, the UK’s first ever National Pride took place in Huddersfield when London Pride decided to move the national march to Huddersfield in support of The Gemini Club, following continued raids on the iconic local gay bar.



Curious Chamber Players performing Kudzu at hcmf// 2018 © Graham Hardy

About the music and cultural landscape

The world-famous Huddersfield Choral Society was formed in 1836, and many other choirs and orchestras (including Huddersfield Philharmonic Orchestra) maintain the town's strong musical tradition. In addition to hcmf//, annual events include Marsden Jazz Festival, Holmfirth & Cleckheaton Folk Festivals, Huddersfield Carnival, Huddersfield Literature Festival, Holmfirth Arts Festival and Electric Spring, an electronic music festival which takes place at the University of Huddersfield. Huddersfield is also home to the Lawrence Batley Theatre, opened in 1994 in what was once the largest Wesleyan Chapel in the world.

Huddersfield has also made a remarkable contribution to UK sound system culture. From Armagideon to Zion InnaVision, the Arawak club to Venn Street, Matamp to Valv-a-tron, this unlikely location has been a stronghold of the British scene, yet has remained largely overlooked. *Sound System Culture: Celebrating Huddersfield's Sound Systems*, published in 2014, celebrates the people who helped establish Huddersfield as the reggae and sound system capital of northern England.

In 2015, the University of Huddersfield was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for its role in expanding the global boundaries of new music and opening the ears of millions to exciting contemporary sounds.

As part of the Yorkshire region's plans for a Year of Culture in 2023, Kirklees has designated it as a Year of Music for the district. 2023 will celebrate the richness and diversity of Kirklees' music heritage, welcoming visitors to a year-long programme of musical activity.



Kelly Jayne Jones at hcmf// 2019 © Graham Hardy

About the host – hcmf//

Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (hcmf//) is the UK's foremost festival dedicated to contemporary, new and experimental music, and is recognised worldwide as one of the most important festivals of its kind for the quality and innovation of our artistic programme and high production values. We not only provide access for audiences in the UK to enjoy and celebrate the best of new music globally, but an opportunity for British music creators to present their work alongside composers and ensembles of the highest international standard.

Since its foundation in 1978, hcmf// has featured major international figures of experimental and avant-garde music including Karlheinz Stockhausen, Louis Andriessen, Terry Riley, Brian Eno, John Cage, Steve Reich, Jonathan Harvey, Helmut Lachenmann and Sir Harrison Birtwistle. Since 2006, the festival has expanded its definition of contemporary music and increased its focus on genres at the periphery of the new music tradition (including noise, sound art, electronic music and club culture), as well as on music creators at the start of their careers.

Over the last 15 years hcmf// has made the transition from a presenter to a producer and commissioner of new work, and since 2014 we have presented pop-up editions of hcmf// in Barcelona, Beirut, Philadelphia, Mexico City and Tampere.

hcmf// is also a founding member of Sounds Now (<https://www.sounds-now.eu/>), a network of 9 European music festivals and cultural centres that promote contemporary music, experimental music and sound art, and are concerned with the way in which curation reproduces the same patterns of power and exclusion that are dominant at all levels of society. The Sounds Now project is the result of several years' collective discussion and reflection on our roles as curators working at an international level, and the socio-political responsibilities that this role carries with it.

www.hcmf.co.uk



Seth Parker Woods performing Iced Bodies at hcmf// 2019 © Graham Hardy

Music Creator Profile

In partnership with the British Council, hcmf// has recently run an online series called Unbound Listening, which looked at global challenges impacting on cultural communities and organisations and local artistic responses to those issues. The Unbound Listening events included symposia and performances, and there will be an online and printed publication to follow in the coming months.

Unbound Listening #2 worked in collaboration with artists and organisations in South Asia and was focussed on environmental issues and climate change. In order to achieve some sort of cohesion and continuity, and in order to continue this conversation, it would be preferable to work with an artist whose practice has involved or who is interested in issue-based work, environmental impacts, and working with communities.

hcmf// takes a broad definition of contemporary music practice, including composition, improvisation, electronic music, sound art and installation-based work.



Castle Hill © Richard Harvey