

BARBER CONCERTS 75

— 1945–2020 —

TIMELINE

1932

The Institute was established by Deed of Settlement in 1932 by Dame Martha Constance Hattie Barber in memory of her husband, Sir William Henry Barber, Bt, who had died in 1927. The Concert Hall was built according to the proportions requested by the then Professor of Music, Victor Hely-Hutchinson (1934-1944). It was designed by Robert Atkinson FRIBA and originally had a seating capacity of 364 (now reduced to 349 seats).

1939

Queen Mary was entertained by music when she opened the Barber Institute in July.

The first public concert in the building followed three months after opening, where the Professor of Music, Victor Hely-Hutchinson (composer and pianist), gave a recital of sonatas by Beethoven.

1945

On 5 November, the first Barber Evening Concert took place with a performance by the Philharmonic Quartet of works by Bliss, Sibelius and Ravel. The Times critic applauded this 'unusual' programme and quoted the Concert Hall of being 'in ideal conditions of perfect acoustics, physical comfort, and rest for the eye.'

1959

The first Barber Opera Production, Handel's *Xerxes*.

1983/4

The Barber Evening Concerts moved to the Vaughan Jeffreys Lecture Theatre, School of Education at the University of Birmingham due the new roof being installed on the Institute.

1992

The first charged Barber Concert. Until 1992, admission to the Barber Evening Concerts and Operas was free of charge. Students in the Music Department were expected to attend as part of their degree course, and performers had access to tickets for friends and hosts. Members of the University applied from the remaining tickets, which were allocated by ballot.

2008

The reopening of the largest room in the building, The Concert Hall after refurbishment. A celebratory concert of the re-opening took place on Friday 3 October 2008 at 6.30pm, with performances by alumni and alumnae of the University of Birmingham Department of Music.