

Inspirational! Clarence leads Minster concert

Paralysed conductor uses head

By Emily Heward

AN INSPIRATIONAL musician is to conduct a concert at Halifax Minster tomorrow – despite being paralysed from the neck down.

Clarence Adoo will lead Queensbury's Black Dyke Band using only his head to direct the world-renowned brass ensemble.

It will be a challenging feat – not least because he has only met the group once before, at a rehearsal on Monday.

"Everyone has to up their game to make it work," said the 50-year-old, who was raised in Shoeburyness, Essex.

"It demands a bit of extra concentration from those in front of me to see me. Also, there are areas where the responsibility goes back on to the ensemble group to play and listen together.

"Sometimes, there's a group on my right that I want to indicate to and I can't indicate to the group on my left.

"Sometimes I have to use different things like my eyes, so my facial expression becomes very relevant.

"I don't explain any of this beforehand, but they pick it up very quickly.

"It will be a sharp learning curve for me, getting them to respond to what I'm doing."

Mr Adoo was a talented trumpet player with an impressive CV until he broke his neck in a near-fatal car crash in 1995.

But he has defied all medical expectations to continue a successful career in music.

As well as conducting, he has taken to the stage again as a performer using a specially-designed computerised instrument called Headspace.

"I never, ever, thought that was possible," he said.



Clarence Adoo will conduct tomorrow's concert at Halifax Minster despite being left paralysed by a car accident.



Minster dress rehearsal. Right, a baton made for a past show

"Some of the massive joys and achievements I had before my accident have actually come to happen again now."

A loophole in Clarence's insurance policy meant he got no payout after his accident, so his 24-hour care is funded by a trust set up in his name.

"The carers have to do everything for me – get me washed and dressed in the morning, combing my hair, the littlest things," he said.

"Now, their job has changed

to assisting me to drive around the country, turning pages of music and holding microphones when I'm presenting and giving lectures."

Visit www.clarence.org.uk to give to the trust.

● Do you know someone inspirational? Email newsdesk@halifaxcourier.co.uk or call 01422 260208.

See tomorrow's *Courier* for the full story of Clarence's remarkable journey.