

ADVERTISING FEATURE BEARSDEN CHOIR

A spectacular May concert in Glasgow's City Halls will be a thrilling formative experience for the youngest members of Bearsden Choir, writes Ann Wallace

ENCOURAGING new talent has always been at the heart of Bearsden Choir's ethos. As the esteemed ensemble marks the end of its 55th anniversary season, looking ahead to the future is as important as reflecting on the past, says musical director Andrew Nunn.

"Young people are really important to us – we have a very strong membership of students and young professionals, which for a choir of this type I think is unusual," he explains.

"Many of our members come through the National Youth Choir of Scotland and the Juniors at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and it is essential we continue to support these fantastic young singers.

"It is the only way to ensure the survival of the choir, as it looks forward to the next 55 years."

Bearsden Choir's sensational spring concert takes place on May 19 at Glasgow City Halls. The ambitious and diverse programme features Estonian composer Arvo Pärt's *Salve Regina* and Puccini's *Messa Di Gloria*, alongside *Love Lives Beyond the Tomb*, a new piece by former Bearsden Choir member, George Swann.

"Pärt's *Salve Regina* is very beautiful, it's minimalist in its approach and it's what I would describe as a sacred piece, but one that transcends religion," explains Andrew, who has been at the helm of the 150-strong choir since 2014.

"It's almost other-worldly and manages to be both modern and ancient at the same time. It is very technically demanding, but the choir has risen to the challenge."

He adds: "The Puccini work is a huge contrast, it is operatic and exciting, full of hope; and then we have George Swann's new work, *Love Lives Beyond the Tomb*... there really is a bit of everything in this concert."

One of the choir's newest – and youngest – members is teenager Dylan Howe, who is studying film-making at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

The 18-year-old, who stays in Cowcaddens, moved to Glasgow from his home town of Oban.

"There were not too many opportunities at home to join an ensemble like Bearsden Choir," explains Dylan, who also plays violin and guitar. "I sang in school choirs, though, and I loved it. The act of singing is so visceral and enjoyable."

At Bearsden Choir, he explains, the pieces are often challenging, but fun.

Having composer George Swann in the rehearsal room to work with the choir on his



Bearsden Choir's singers come from all over Glasgow and the west of Scotland

Heavenly harmonies will fill the City Halls

own piece, *Love Lives Beyond the Tomb*, was an extra-special bonus, adds Dylan. "Choral music can sometimes be seen as archaic, so it has been a lot of fun working on a modern piece," he explains. "It will be great to sing at the City Halls, it's a fantastic venue."

He adds: "I have learned so much at Bearsden Choir, and I have made good friends. Everyone is very friendly and supportive. It feels like more than a choir, really, it's a community."

Musical director Andrew Nunn agrees.

"Our members come from different backgrounds, they are students, doctors, retired people, all walks of life – and we are all in it to have fun and work together," he says. "Not everyone is from Bearsden, despite the name – our singers come from all over Glasgow and the west of Scotland, and we now rehearse in the West End of the city too."

There are no plans to change the name of the choir, however. "Ours is a huge, 55-year-old name which comes with a reputation," says Andrew.

"It's not about the place any more, really, it's about our heritage and community."

Tickets are available now from www.glasgowconcerthalls.com or www.glasgowlife.org.uk/event/3/bearsden-choir



Andrew Nunn

Bearsden Choir

Conducted by
Andrew Nunn

proudly sponsored by
RATHBONES

PÄRT

SWANN

PUCCINI

SALVE REGINA

LOVE LIVES BEYOND THE TOMB

MESSA DI GLORIA

Sunday 19 May 2024 | 4pm
City Halls, Glasgow

Performing with The McOpera Ensemble
Daniel Bell - Tenor
Pawel Piotrowski - Baritone

Tickets available from glasgowconcerthalls.com
Tickets: £25, £20 & £15
Under 26: £6 incl. booking fee

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