

Following their lauded 50th anniversary events and Remembrance Day Concert , Bearsden Choir are now preparing to accompany some truly incredible performers for their ‘Concert at Christmas’

UPLIFTING songs and emerging stars of Scotland’s choral scene will take centre stage at Bearsden Choir’s forthcoming Concert at Christmas.

The successful choir is performing Fauré’s Requiem and Vivaldi’s Gloria at St Johns Renfield Church in Glasgow on December 12, accompanied by organist Chris Nickol and soloists Karla Grant, Rebecca Pennykid and Daniel Barrett, who are all students at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

It follows on from the choir’s hugely successful Remembrance Day concert in support of Erskine, the charity dedicated to supporting Scottish veterans and their families.

“This is a lighter concert for the choir, after the big, lengthy works we have tackled this year and it will be a lovely change of pace,” explains director of music Andrew Nunn.

“These two pieces are choral classics, real staples of the repertoire which will really appeal to audiences who may be familiar with them.

Fauré regarded the Requiem as ‘a work composed for pleasure’ and it has long been a favourite of choirs and choral societies.

“Vivaldi composed this Gloria in Venice, probably in 1715, for the choir of the Ospedale della Pietà but it was lost when he died and was not performed again until 1939.”

Andrew adds: “The cheerful nature of the work is something that has always appealed to the Bearsden Choir.

“The challenge for us, as these two pieces are so well-known, is to put our own stamp on them – to make them a



little bit special and exciting.”

The choir will be accompanied by organist Chris Nickol, who enjoyed a viral internet hit in 2016 with his David Bowie tribute during Kelvingrove’s lunchtime organ recital.

“Chris is famous, because he played Life on Mars after hearing of Bowie’s death on the morning news bulletins – the footage went everywhere,” smiles Andrew.

“We are very lucky to have him as our accompanist, and to have someone of his

calibre performing with us at the concert is fantastic.”

The concert will also feature three young soloists, who are all students at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where Andrew has been Director of Choirs since 2012.

Soprano Karla Grant, mezzo-soprano Rebecca Pennykid and baritone Daniel Barrett, who are undergraduates at the prestigious school, have all been chosen by Andrew as “ones to watch”.

He explains: “Bearsden Choir is

delighted to support these young singers and to give them a fantastic platform to showcase their talent. They will bring a wonderful energy to the concert, and it’s an amazing opportunity for them to perform in two of the great classical choral works.”

Bearsden Choir, which was formed in 1968, has around 140 members of all ages and from all walks of life.

Its hugely successful 50th anniversary programme kicked off in November 2018 with a fantastic gala dinner, as chairman John Wotton explains.

“It was a wonderful evening, with choir members past and present and their families, and we were very lucky to have two previous musical directors there too – Renton Thomson, who was MD from 1971 to 1979, and Jim Hunter, who was at the helm from 1979 until 2007,” says John.

“It was the perfect start for our anniversary year – but I think none of us imagined it would be quite as spectacular as it was. The past 12 months have surpassed our expectations.”

The year has included acclaimed performances of Handel’s Messiah and Bach’s Mass in B Minor, a trip to Halifax in October to join the illustrious Halifax Choral Society in a performance of Verdi’s Requiem, and the emotional



Remembrance Day event.

Coming up next year are Mendelssohn’s Elijah in the City Halls on May 10; performances of Bach’s St John Passion and Brahms’ German Requiem; and a repeat of the choir’s successful

2016 Choral Education Project when 280 school children from 11 schools across Greater Glasgow came together with the choir, orchestra and professional soloists in a performance of Haydn’s Nelson Mass.



From far left, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland soloists Daniel Barrett and Rebecca Pennykid, organist Christ Nickol and, above, Karla Grant will all perform on the night

Andrew Nunn explains: “It is an exciting time for Bearsden Choir. One of the big challenges, following a successful anniversary year, is how you keep that momentum going.

“People come to sing because they love it, and they want to be challenged, and to do different and interesting and exciting things.

“This programme includes more epic works, more big performances and we are

all looking forward to it.”

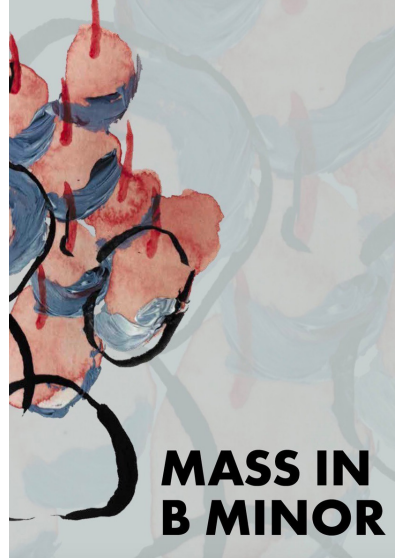
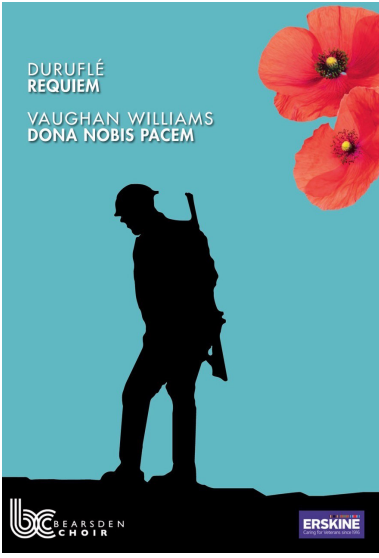
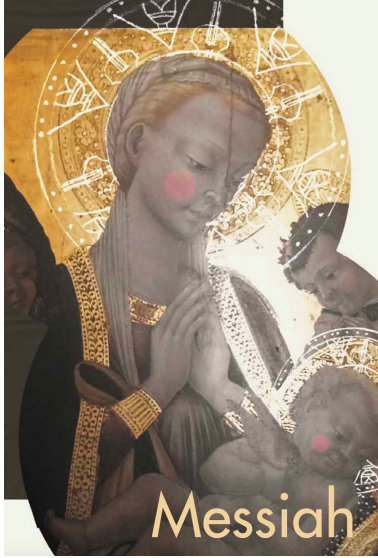
For the moment, however, Bearsden Choir’s focus is on next Thursday’s performance and Andrew is keen to point out that while it is A Concert at Christmas, it is definitely not a Christmas concert.

“We wanted to do something a little bit different,” he explains. “Carols are beautiful at Christmas, but there are so many choirs doing carol concerts at this time of year that we wanted to try something new.

“St John’s Renfield Church is a lovely place to perform and it will be very atmospheric, with the candles lit and the music filling the space.”

He adds: “We want people to leave the stress of this busy, hectic time of year behind, and to relax and reflect for a moment of calm, by listening to some incredible music in an amazing venue.”

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Fauré’s Requiem and Vivaldi’s Gloria follow on from Bearsden Choir’s successful performances of Mass in B Minor, Handel’s Messiah and a wonderful Remembrance Day concert





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THURSDAY 12TH DECEMBER 2019 7.30PM

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