

Bearsden Choir pairs a powerful plea for peace with uplifting celebration, reflecting today's turbulent world while offering audiences an optimistic musical escape at Glasgow City Halls on May 23

ONE of Scotland's most prestigious choirs is to stage a concert reflecting the current state of the world while also giving a "burst of hope and light".

Two contrasting pieces have been chosen for Bearsden Choir's end-of-season concert in Glasgow's City Halls - *Dona Nobis Pacem* by Vaughan Williams and *Magnificat* by the ever-popular John Rutter.

Written by two of the most important composers of the 20th century, they are very different in nature but go remarkably well together, according to conductor Andrew Nunn.

"I have chosen them specifically because really this concert is a reflection on the state of the world just now and a kind of statement about where we are," he said.

The first half of the concert will be Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* which calls on people to remember their shared humanity and work for peace.

"Written in 1936, it feels as though this powerful work and its message have just as much relevance in today's troubled world," said Andrew.

Now 90 years old it was composed by Williams as a plea for peace at a very unstable time in Europe.

"He could see the wheels were starting to be set in motion for WW2," Andrew explained. "Vaughan Williams had



Left, conductor Andrew Nunn
Photo: Sally Jubb Photography

served in the medical corps in WW1 and had been very affected by the destruction, carnage, loss and devastation that he had seen during his service.

"His piece was a reaction to those feelings about his WW1 service and a plea for wider peace at a time when things were starting to take off again in Europe and they could see the benchmarks for an impending WW2."

Andrew said he had chosen it because even though it was 90 years since Vaughan Williams had composed the work, it looked as though history was about to repeat itself.

"It seems we have learned nothing," he said.

"We can see that things are kicking off and escalating so we are using this piece 90 years later with exactly the same purpose as Williams - a plea for peace in a troubled world.

"It is hauntingly beautiful and it is wonderful to give it this outing but it is sad that it is being used in the same way 90 years later than it was in 1936."

While the first half of the concert will be a reflection on the current state of the world, the second half is "very much about giving hope and positivity", according to Andrew.

It will feature the *Magnificat* by Rutter, who recently celebrated his 80th birthday and is still composing new works today.

His *Magnificat* is a celebratory work that is "an outpouring of joy, energy

and light" with Latin American influences in the orchestration. "It is very bright and beautiful," said Andrew.

"The times are depressing at the moment and the second half of the concert is our chance to give the audience something that is really positive - a real burst of light and positivity because while things are quite dark, there is always hope and we as a choir are trying to give that in the second half with this Rutter piece."

The choir, conducted by Andrew, will be joined by the voices of Scottish soprano Monica McGhee and baritone Daniel Shelvey, as well as the McOpera Ensemble.

"In both of the pieces, the orchestra is really important as it adds so much colour, depth and emotional weight," said Andrew.

"The City Halls also add another dimension."

Bearsden Choir has been making its mark on Scotland's musical landscape for over 55 years with more than 150 members from Greater Glasgow and beyond.

Former Director of Music Dr James Hunter died recently and this concert will be dedicated to his memory to honour his contribution to the choir.

Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* and John Rutter's *Magnificat* will be performed by Bearsden Choir on Saturday May 23 at 7.30pm at Glasgow City Halls.

"It's a bank holiday weekend so what better way to spend a bank holiday than to come and see an amazing concert," Andrew said.

Bearsden Choir performs at Glasgow City Halls on May 23 at 7.30pm. Book tickets now at bearsdenchoir.com/concerts



Bearsden Choir, Glasgow City Halls, November 2025

Photo: Julie Howden Photography

Bearsden Choir performance offers hope for harmony in troubled times

 Bearsden Choir

Scottish Charity No. SC001117

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

DONA NOBIS PACEM

JOHN RUTTER

& **MAGNIFICAT**

SAT 23 MAY 2026 | 7:30 PM

Glasgow City Halls

BOOK NOW

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