

THE GLASGOW PHOENIX CHOIR

PHOENIX RISING

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In Honour of all who Believe that Life was made for Friendship

The Glasgow Phoenix Choir



IN THIS ISSUE:

THE SEASON – SO FAR

Our hearts are in the Highlands...and other places!

100 YEARS OF SINGING

Four singers – one century of music

ON TOUR: SEPTEMBER 2018

Our first big event of the season saw the choir head off to Strathpeffer for a weekend of music. We enjoyed our first concert of the weekend with our great friends from the Dingwall Gaelic Choir, who were in great voice, and the audience - a full house - seemed to enjoy the singing of both choirs. Our second concert saw us heading towards the beautiful Dornoch Cathedral, where we were helping to raise funds for the restoration of the church hall. Some members of the choir also helped raise funds for some

of the local shops; not since my last game of *Monopoly* have I seen so many people rushing to go to Jail! The final concert of the weekend was performed in St Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral, Inverness in a concert to raise money for Marie Curie. All three concerts were very well attended and raised a goodly sum for each cause supported.

Needless to say – a most enjoyable time was had by all.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

New rehearsal venue

Sad news for the choir

Choir diary from January to June 2019

100 years not out

In October, we had the pleasure of celebrating a very special centenary! Anne MacDonald (S1), Janette Walker (A1), Ken O'Donnell (T2) and Stewart Moir (B1) were each presented with a glass 'wave' to commemorate their 25 years each of service to the choir. A festive buffet, supplied by the social committee, added to the enjoyment of the occasion for everyone.

All four have fulfilled vital roles during their time with the choir and everything each of them has done has been greatly appreciated by all of us.



The Big Sing: Annie MacDonald

The choir was invited to be part of the audience at the Big Sing (Songs of Praise) in Edinburgh.

A small number from each section boarded the bus, which the BBC put on for us, and headed through to the McEwan Hall - a truly magnificent building. The day was very exciting from start to finish seeing and hearing fabulous musicians and singers. Aled Jones and Katherine Jenkins were wonderful hosts. Ken Burton, who led the orchestra, was so enthusiastic when he conducted us in the carols. We donned our Christmas jumpers and reindeer antlers and sang our hearts out to some favourite carols including *O Holy Night* with Aled and Katherine (not a patch on Liz and Us) but still very beautiful. Russell Watson and Collabro also entertained us with great singing. We then changed into our Hogmanay clothes and enjoyed *The Overtones* and the lovely Susan Boyle. For me it was a great day. The atmosphere and talent was fantastic. I would have paid a fortune to go see even one of the artists. I have to mention our home grown talent the Ayoub Sisters who, as well as being very, very talented playing their own arrangement of *Pie Jesu*, were extremely beautiful. The experience was great and I certainly hope we are asked back. Here you can see us mid-sing...I caught it on the telly.



The other highlight for November, was our concert in St Michael's Parish Church in the amazing town of Linlithgow – birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots – and very worth a visit if you've never been. The Rotary Club organisers were a bit concerned that we might not attract a big audience, as the November date was a new one for our appearance in the town. In fact, the attendance was much better than it has been before, a surprise since there were so many other events, including a big rugby match (or it may have been football!), a visit to London by several local choirs and some Guy Fawkes celebrations that evening.

Singing with the choir:

We always welcome new members, especially those who have joined us this season, but... **Gentlemen**, would you like to sing in the choir? For more information, please see our website:

www.phoenixchoir.org or contact the choir manager, Ronnie Kay, at phoenixchoir.manager@yahoo.com

You can listen to the choir on our YouTube channel or come along to a concert to see if you think you might fancy having a go.



And so, to December...

In early December, and unusually for us, we had the great pleasure of taking part in **two** carol singing events in Glasgow; the first took place in the Blythswood Hotel, where the choir were very entertained by the goings-on of Gerardo, the photographer, who had been asked by the hotel to record the event. He took great pride in finding that we found him much more bossy than our own John Blue. Gerardo, very kindly, supplied us with a mass of photos, some of which can be seen below.

On the following day we sang three sets of carols in the Savoy Centre, Glasgow, which has recently been refurbished. We were led in both events by Cameron Murdoch, who managed to play piano and conduct simultaneously – and they say men can't multi-task! The funniest moment of the day was seeing the expression on Cameron's face when an elderly lady approached him as he played and conducted to try to give him some money – he's good, but he does only have two hands, both of which were very busy at that moment.

Later on the same day, we had the pleasure of taking part in a concert with Friar Alessandro, a Franciscan monk from Assisi in his first visit to Scotland, in St Mary's Church, Calton. Friar Alessandro was accompanied by the Clyde Opera Orchestra conducted by Razvan Luculescu and other guests were Rozana Nite (soprano) and Rafi Bellamy Plaice, BBC Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year 2017-18. It was an uplifting affair and was hosted, much to her own surprise, by Marilyn. She did a great job, especially as she'd had to step in at very much the last minute.

We ended our Christmas season with our usual round of three concerts in East Kilbride, Edinburgh and in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. All three were most enjoyable to take part in and greatly appreciated by our audiences. The final concert of the series allowed us to honour, formally, Bill Forrest's 60 years with the choir – Bill says he's just keeping up with Sir Cliff!



Happy 2019 - looking to the future

Amongst the New Year resolutions for choir members will be to remember that we'll be in our new rehearsal home from **Monday 14th January** in St. John's Renfield Church. We always feel very welcome at St John's and are looking forward to settling in there.

And now for our sad news. After 28 years, our much-loved conductor, Marilyn J Smith, will be leaving the choir at the end of this season. The news was met with shock and sadness, but with the realisation that things cannot always stay the same. I'm sure that the next six months will be very special as we all strive to make the remainder of Marilyn's time with us as memorable, and as tuneful, as possible. We'll be having a special farewell concert in Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall on Friday 26th April and I'm sure there will be some surprises there and along the way until her very last concert in June. The next Phoenix Rising Newsletter is likely to have a bit of a Marilyn focus.



Social committee: Annie MacDonald

On behalf of the social committee could I thank each and every one of you for contributing to our fundraising so far this year. During our Highland Tour, we inflicted a quiz on the travelling singers and raised £125.00, which was added to the money raised at our concert for Marie Curie. Our Xmas raffle made a staggering £412.00, which I would like to put to choir music. Lastly, St. Andrews hospice will benefit at the end of the season with donations from cheese and wine events. To date we have £100.00.

In a separate venture, I have set up an Easyfundraising page to raise more funds for the choir. To date we have 33 supporters and it would be great if more members could

join, especially if you do online shopping. Here's some information about it from the website: **'Easyfundraising is the UK's biggest charity shopping fundraising site. It's simple to use and it's free. Since we launched in 2005, we've helped thousands of good causes raise money simply by shopping online. Our community of over 1.5 million loyal supporters has so far raised over £25 million.'** Copy and paste this link if you want to find the choir's fundraising page.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/glasgowphoenixchoir/?q=glas&cat=cause-autosuggest>

Thanks again to everyone for their support.

Diary dates (January to June 2019)

Monday 14 th January:	First rehearsal St John's-Renfield 19:30
Wednesday 16 th January:	Rehearsal for 24 th St John's-Renfield 19:30
Monday 21 st January:	Rehearsal for 24 th 10:15 to 13:15
Thursday 24 th January:	Rehearsal 14:00 & Concert City Hall 19:30 (<i>Celtic Connections</i>)
Saturday 26 th January:	Concert Falkirk Trinity 19:30
Sunday 24 th February:	Concert Cambuslang Parish Church 14:30
Sunday 24 th March:	Concert Bishopton Old Church 15:00
Sunday 31 st March:	Concert Hamilton Cadzow Church 12:00
Sunday 14 th April:	Concert Govan Old Church 14:30 (<i>Concert & CD Launch</i>)
Fri 19-Mon 22 EASTER HOLIDAY	
Wednesday 24 th April:	Rehearsal St John's 19:30 to replace Easter Monday holiday
Friday 26 th April:	Concert Glasgow Royal Concert Hall
Sunday 19 th May:	CONCERT Mackintosh Church-Queens Cross To be confirmed (Concert & CD Launch)
Friday 24 th May:	Travel to Skye and CONCERT in Gaelic College 20:00
Saturday 25 th May:	Concert - Portree (<i>for the Skye Chamber Music Club</i>) 19.30
Sunday 26 th May:	Church Service – Broadford
Sunday 26 th May:	Concert - Gaelic College 15:00
Monday 27 th May:	Travel to GLASGOW
Monday 3 rd June:	AGM St John's Renfield 19:30
Saturday 15 th June:	Concert Paisley Abbey 19:30
Sunday 16 th June:	Concert Largs St Columba's 14:30

SPONSORING THE CHOIR: WHAT IT CAN DO FOR YOU

- Publicity for your business or organisation
- You can support worthwhile causes in the community
- You can feel part of the ongoing work of Glasgow Phoenix Choir – now in its 68th season

If you would feel able to help sponsor a concert, a recording or any other aspect of choir life, and would be interested in learning about our various sponsorship packages, please contact our business manager, John Blue, who would be happy to give you further information.

John can be contacted at eventsco@globalnet.co.uk

And finally –

2018 was quite a year for Anne MacDonald...as well as celebrating 25 years with the choir, while on tour in Strathpeffer, the choir helped her and Ian celebrate 50 years of marriage – now, that's dedication!



And, while most people know that we sing, not many realise we also have building skills!!!

