

Belfast Philharmonic Society

Associate Accompanist Bursary

Background

Belfast Philharmonic is the leading adult choir in Northern Ireland. It performs regularly with the Ulster Orchestra and in the recent season took part in the Re-opening Concert for the Ulster Hall, the Opening Concert of Belfast Festival @ Queens which featured Ennio Morricone, and 4 concerts with the Ulster Orchestra (Creation, Messiah, Beethoven Mass in C and an Opera Gala). There are 120 members. Belfast Philharmonic currently receives funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Belfast City Council.

In 2006 Belfast Philharmonic formed a children's choir called the Phil Kids. The members are recruited through school workshops (in 2009, 22 P4 classes were visited) and join in September when they are in P5. The Phil Kids performs concerts in its own right, and in addition has performed with the Ulster Orchestra and Belfast Philharmonic Choir on a number of occasions. The choir is currently made up of 180 P5, 6 and 7 children with another 80 being recruited to begin in September 2009.

Rehearsal for both choirs takes place on a Wednesday evening. The Phil Kids rehearse from 5.15 – 6.45 and Belfast Philharmonic Choir from 7.30 – 9.45, September to mid May.

Music Director

The Music Director of both choirs is Christopher Bell who has an international reputation both as a Choral and Orchestral Conductor. He is considered one of the UK's leading Choral Directors. As well as his commitments to the Belfast Philharmonic Choir, he is Chorus Director of the Grant Park Chorus in Chicago USA, Chorus Master of the Edinburgh Festival Chorus and the RSNO Junior Chorus in Scotland, and is Artistic Director of the National Youth Choir of Scotland.

Accompanist

The Accompanist of Belfast Philharmonic is Stephen Doughty. Stephen is Organist and Director of Music of St. John's Episcopal Church, Princes Street in Edinburgh, directing an SATB adult choir singing the full range of choral services. He performed as harpsichordist, organist and pianist with Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra.

He is Music Director of the Garleton Singers and, as a freelance accompanist, works with a number of the choirs which make up the National Youth Choir of Scotland