



#### Conductor

Phil Kids is directed by **Christopher Bell**, 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, Chorusmaster of the Edinburgh Festival Chorus and the RSNO Junior Chorus in Scotland, and is Artistic Director of the National Youth Choir of Scotland. In 2009 he was appointed Associate Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra.

#### Staff

Belfast Philharmonic Music Staff are trained in Kodály musicianship.

Please affix correct postage

**Ethel Ruddock**  
Chairman  
PO Box 907  
Holywood  
BT18 8AD

For further information please contact:

**Ethel Ruddock, Chairman**  
PO Box 907, Holywood, BT18 8AD  
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More information about the Phil can be found on our website:

[www.belfastphilharmonic.org.uk](http://www.belfastphilharmonic.org.uk)



LOTTERY FUNDED



# Phil Youth Choir

# Phil Kids

**Christopher Bell, Chorus Master of the Belfast Philharmonic Choir, would like to invite your child to come to an informal workshop to be considered for membership of the Phil Kids.**

In September 2006, the **Belfast Philharmonic Choir**, with support from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, started a Children's Choir. 75 singers from Primary 4 were recruited from workshops held in a number of schools in the Belfast area. Over the next three years singers were recruited from P 4 and membership currently stands at 240.

**Phil Kids** has developed into a unique choir, with singing and musicianship taught in a lively and fun way. Your child will join the Phil Kids section of the Youth Choir and when they reach secondary school age they will progress to the Phil Youth Choir. Musicianship and singing in particular, is a very important part of a child's education. Members of Phil Kids will have the opportunity to sing weekly with a highly trained group, combining singing with games and musicianship training.

**If your child enjoys singing and would like to be considered for membership then please complete and return the attached form.**

Phil Kids recruits annually each year in May and June from Primary 4 only. Workshops are held in 10 Primary Schools in the locality and invitations sent to children in other schools. The structure of the choir is such that we only recruit from Primary 4: this year is your child's opportunity if they are interested.





**Aims of the Choir**

The aims of the choir are to encourage singing to the best of the singer’s ability; to learn to read music, and to develop and train the voice. The emphasis is ultimately on singing for fun, and on the establishment of good pitching and a good ear using the Kodály Method (a plan for young singers developed in Hungary by the composer and teacher Zoltán Kodály). Musicianship sessions take the form of small groups working on pitching and rhythm games and are followed by a full singing session. Principles of sol-fa and reading of notation are introduced. This is a progressive programme with musicianship skill and singing developing weekly. If a child misses for a period they may be asked to rejoin the next September.

**History**

The Belfast Philharmonic is one of the oldest musical organisations in Northern Ireland, founded in 1874 by the amalgamation of two existing societies – The Classical Harmonists and the Belfast Musical Society. The first concert was Mendelssohn’s Elijah. When the Ulster Orchestra was formed, strong links were forged to provide choral music to the audiences of Belfast and beyond. The Phil has given performances of Messiah each December since 1886!

**Recruitment**

Members are recruited from Primary Four in ten schools near to the rehearsal venue. In addition, an open invitation to apply is extended to all P4 pupils in schools across greater Belfast. Approximately 80 children will be offered a place in the choir from the total number applying.

**Recruitment Workshop: Friday 21<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010**

The workshop is designed to be fun and is very informal. The children are put in groups of approximately 15 children (wherever possible with other children from their school) and take part in some singing games which will enable the staff to identify those who can concentrate, pay attention and have an ability to sing clearly and in tune. The workshop will last for approximately 30 minutes.

**Membership Fee**

There is an annual membership subscription for all members of the choir. For 2009/10 season this will be £70 for new members. [Please note that the subscription may be paid in instalments] Belfast Philharmonic also receives funding from other sources.

**Parental Help**

On a rehearsal night, the Phil Kids relies on voluntary help given by parents. All parents are requested to assist (on a rota basis) at choir rehearsal nights under the direction of the choir administrator. No musical knowledge is required for this: the parents on duty will help sign the children in and be in attendance during rehearsal. The voluntary help given by parents is essential and is very much appreciated by Belfast Philharmonic.

**Rehearsals**

The choir meets for one hour per week, on Wednesday evenings 5.00– 6.00 pm, during term time, in St Bride’s Hall, Derryvolgie Avenue, Malone Road, Belfast. Parking is available.

**Concerts**

We plan to have a Winter and Summer presentation or concert for parents, relatives, friends etc. In addition, as the choir continues to develop, it is envisaged that further performances will take place with Belfast Philharmonic Choir and the Ulster Orchestra.

**Award Scheme**

Phil Kids uses an unique award scheme developed by the National Youth Choir of Scotland to chart the progress of the members of the choir and give them goals to work towards. The award scheme is divided into Bronze, Silver and Gold. Members will be tested informally on things like pitching, sound production, solo singing and simple theory. Rehearsal and concert attendance and behaviour etc will also be taken into account. Award badges will be presented on completion of each relevant stage.



**WORKSHOP APPLICATION FORM**

Workshop dates:  
Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd May 2010

**Please print all details in BLOCK CAPITALS**

**Child’s Name:** .....

**School:** .....

**Sex:** Male / Female      **Date of Birth:** .....

**Home Address** .....

.....

.....

.....

**Post Code** .....

**Email:** .....

**Home Telephone:** .....

**Mobile:** .....

**Parent’s Name:** .....

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Please return this form or email the above details to:

Ethel Ruddock, Chairman  
PO Box 907, Holywood, BT18 8AD  
Email: ethel@utvinternet.co.uk

**before Friday 14 May 2010**

• please note that if you provide an email address it will be used for all communication