

BELFAST PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

The Belfast Philharmonic Society is a registered charity (NIC 103443). It is currently administered by a Board of Trustees (all volunteers) and a part time administrator.

Belfast Philharmonic Society comprises:

- An Adult Choir of around 120 singers. It is the only symphony chorus in Northern Ireland .It performs 5-6 times each year with the Ulster Orchestra and promotes other concerts and events. It was established in 1874 and has performed every year since its foundation.
- The Phil Kids and Youth Choirs - aged from 7- 20 years - established in 2006 under the leadership of Christopher Bell (then Chorus Master of the Adult Choir)

The Phil Kids and Youth Choirs used the model of the RSNO Junior Chorus in consultation with the NYCoS [National Youth Choir of Scotland]. From a choir of 70 children in 2006 there are now 313 young people in 4 choirs.

The children perform in three separate choirs:

- **Phil Kids Children's choir** : ages 7 - 11 yrs (218 members)
- **Youth choir** : ages 11 - 15 , singing in three parts (53 members) includes a new ensemble for developing changing voices in boys
- **Youth Chamber Choir** : ages 15 - 20 yrs , a mixed voice four part choir (42 members)
- **Cross Border Youth Choir**: The Youth Chamber Choir has recently collaborated with the Dublin Youth Choir forming a Cross Border Youth Choir. It meets twice yearly and in October 2017 participated in the City of Derry International Choral Festival attaining second place in the Youth Choir section.

The unique feature of the programme is that all young singers in the Phil Kids and Youth choirs are taught musicianship weekly based on the philosophy of Zoltan Kodaly in addition to choral singing. We believe that music learning through singing should be fun and enjoyable for children and that a child centred approach to learning with good teaching will build the skills to enhance enjoyment from fundamental knowledge to more advanced concepts.

The musicianship teaching is delivered by the team of six musicianship tutors, engaged on a freelance consultancy basis, using a teaching programme developed by NYCoS. Staff have been trained by NYCoS and benefit from

ongoing support from NYCoS. The programme develops pitching and rhythm skills, learning to read music/sight reading to provide the skills for a life-time of musical enjoyment. Many singers have gone on to join the Ulster Youth Choir or University Choirs and hopefully some will return to join the adult Philharmonic Choir in the future. The skills learnt and abilities nurtured will therefore enhance and contribute to the work of the adult symphony chorus and the wider musical community.

The Childrens' Youth and Chamber choirs perform two presentations annually for parents and friends and take part in other concerts and collaborations with the Ulster Orchestra, RTE Cor na nOg, NI Opera and other organisations. Their 10th Anniversary concert in St. Anne's Cathedral with the Ulster Orchestra was a great success. The Society has watched these young people develop their musical skills that also inspire confidence and friendship which extends into the greater community.

Although children have to audition there are mixed abilities within the organisation and whilst we do not actively target disadvantaged children - all are included in the audition process. Fees are £120 - £150 per year which is approx £6- £7 per week. Instalment payments are offered and if there is obvious hardship in paying children are offered free places.

Safeguarding Children and Young Adults at Risk is a crucial part of the Society. A recent audit by Access NI showed that the Society complies with the Access NI Code of practice.

Interview panel

Alastair J Rankin, Chairman
Michael Chambers, Vice-Chairman
Cliona Donnelly, Board Member

Independent Assessor

Majella Hollywood, Chief Executive, Chamber Choir Ireland

Interviews

Interviews will be held during the week commencing Monday 2 July 2018