

# ‘Choir keeps my brain active’

ADRIENNE Girvan, who sings second alto, has been a teacher of business studies and economics, a University of Glasgow administrator, and a legal secretary in her working life. Music has been part of that life since school, and she took a Diploma in Music at the Open University. She is a long-time Doctor Who fan and joined Bearsden Choir four years ago.

## How did you begin singing, and become involved in Bearsden Choir?

“At school we rehearsed a very varied repertoire to a very high standard, and I also learned to play piano and flute. Choral music has been a major part of my post-school life as a member of Strathclyde and Glasgow University Choral Societies. ‘Come and Sing’ charity events conducted by Christopher Bell, Bob Chilcott and John Rutter have all been enjoyable learning experiences.

“In March 2017, I signed up at a meticulously-organised recruitment drive for Bearsden’s performance of the Verdi Requiem. I was given a very warm welcome from my fellow second altos and from the director Andrew Nunn, and a thorough two-and-a-half hour singing workout easily convinced me that I’d found a new choral home.

“Rehearsals are hardworking but great fun. Andrew’s preparation is second-to-none, with his meticulous spreadsheets. He remembers quirky details about everyone with which he peppers rehearsals with hilarious (never cruel) effect. Each week concludes with the whole choir singing through an uplifting choice of chorus, sending us home with a spring in our steps. And that feeling has continued over the last 12 months, when rehearsals have been by Zoom.”

## What has being in the choir meant to you during the pandemic?

“Wednesday evenings are an absolute lifeline for our choir community – marking out the weeks, discreetly keeping an eye on people, and keeping the brain



active – so it was absolutely devastating when lockdown struck in March 2020. When rehearsals resumed via Zoom in April there was a palpable sense of relief.

“After a short summer break, rehearsals became more significant for me. I sustained a complicated right wrist fracture in mid-September, and struggled with day-to-day living, so participating from home was ideal for me, particularly in winter.

“However, recording the first of two Elijah tracks in late 2020 for our ‘virtual choir’ presented logistical challenges that I wasn’t sure I could overcome. But the support and encouragement of our chairman John Wotton (after I called him to withdraw from the project) was the jolt I needed. I submitted my recording on time.”

## What has been your highlight of singing with Bearsden Choir?

“This session’s aptly-named ‘Inspire Sessions’ have seen Andrew gently tease all sorts of nuggets of wisdom, experience and moments of sheer hilarity from the musicians he has interviewed. John Rutter was such a joy to listen to, entertaining and engaging, and very gracious in his response when we sang him ‘Happy Birthday’ (unmuted, and not very tunelessly!)”

“I’ve found recording Vivaldi during the lighter nights a real challenge, working around the sound of seagulls outside and nearby church bells. Despite our wonderful tutorials, I’m still apt to bump a music stand, press ‘photo’ instead of ‘video’ on my phone, or accidentally delete my best recording. I’m so looking forward to finally engaging again in real live music.”

*The Bearsden Choir’s “virtual choir” performance of Vivaldi’s Gloria will be free-to-view online at 4pm on Sunday May 30. [www.bearsdenchoir.com](http://www.bearsdenchoir.com)*

