

Video Transcript

Mariéad Byrne and Con Feighery

My name is Mairéad Byrne and I have been a member of the choir for over 45 years.

My name is Con Feighery I live in Dublin. I grew up in Dunboyne County Meath, but I now live in Dublin. I've been a choir member for 38 years. It can be nerve wracking because even though you're only contributing, you know, one of the hundred members of the choir, you can also go astray, and you don't want to go astray. So that, that keeps you on your toes. But you want to give a performance that you're individually proud of and you want the choir to give a performance that you're proud of.

For me, the social aspect is secondary to the music, because I live a good hour away from rehearsal. I have lifelong friends like Aida the secretary of the choir. I've known her for a very, very, very long time. Most people live in Dublin, and I happen to live a bit further away, but I have friends and acquaintances in the choir that I've known for a very long time. It's a special thing I think to be in a choir. I have a number of friends who aren't musical, they play golf and they've no idea what's involved. Then I drag them to a performance and they're going, wow, that's why you go every Tuesday night, now I get it. And it's lovely to share that love of music with people who wouldn't necessarily go to any performance where it not for my involvement, including my children who get dragged along.

I've various friends that I recommended joining the choir and, and succeeded in them joining the choir, et cetera. So it becomes a bigger part of your whole life.

Well, the braver members just rock up and I think they deserve great credit because we know a lot of new members now who just came along, didn't know a soul. And the choir has got better at welcoming people and introducing them but they're very brave. I came 'cause I had familial contacts, but yeah, lots of people join just because of recruitment. They see an AD or they come to a performance and think oh, I wouldn't mind joining that choir. You go out of here after rehearsal with a spring in your step for sure.

The RDS is our upcoming concert, and you know that the people who are there come because they really love music. Some come because they're friends, but most people are enraptured, and they just have this two hours of joyful music and harmony and an orchestra in relative close proximity. It's not like a huge arena where everyone is miles away, like the O2. They tend to be in more intimate settings.

If someone was thinking of joining the choir, I would encourage them. I would let them know that first of all, they'd be very welcome that they don't have to have a large knowledge of music. They do need to be able to sing obviously, but after that they, they can be brought forward. And I would say give it a try.