

# DAILYGUIDE

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*The Choir With No Name performing The Big Christmas Singalong last year*

Foyling area.

## Event preview

# The Big Christmas Singalong

Brighton Dome, December 15

THE Choir With No Name – an organisation running choirs for people who've experienced homelessness – will be returning to Brighton Dome with their Big Christmas Singalong next week.

Expect festive favourites such as Winter Wonderland and I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day.

Many people who have gone through homelessness have paid testament to the helpful impact of the choir.

One former member, Ronnie, said: "When you're homeless, so much of what you experience strips you of your dignity.

"The Choir With No Name gave me hope and optimism.

"It was my North Star in a constellation of helplessness. It gave me my dignity back."

A current member, Dan, said: "I can look forward to it, leave my troubles at the door, just go and sing. Simple.

"If my life was a ladder, at the time I

joined Choir With No Name I was on the very bottom rung of that ladder. Coming to choir got me out of my hostel and brought me out of my shell.

"Music allows me to express myself and is a distraction from the negative stuff in my head.

"Coming to choir was the start of me climbing up that ladder and slowly but surely I got to where I am today – a confident, outgoing person."

The Choir With No Name said: "Our Christmas gigs are by far the highlight of our year, with members and audiences alike singing their hearts out and feeling part of something very special.

"We are really excited to be bringing our uplifting live experience back to Brighton this year, and hope that we'll fill Brighton Dome to the rafters with joy to support our members who've been affected by homelessness."

The Choir With No Name provides choir communities for those who have been affected by homelessness or are marginalised due to other factors, such as mental health problems or drug and alcohol addiction.

Members get a hot, nutritious meal

after each weekly rehearsal and have the opportunity to make friends and get themselves back on their feet.

The choirs have helped in building the confidence and wellbeing of members, helping them to move away from homelessness in the long term.

## Live review

# Ben Featherstone

★★★★

Adastra Hall, Hassocks, December 2

THERE is a certain "thing" in a great music concert that does not have a name, but every music lover knows what it is. It is that feeling in the air at the concert of emotional energy flying around the room.

As a freelance music writer in the 1970s I have seen many acts through the decades – I have been lucky enough to have seen the powerful delivery of John Martyn and Tom Waits.

Once I even witnessed Johnny Cash break down in tears in 1968 on stage. My line is pretty high when it comes to seeing great concerts.

So imagine my unexpected delight to stumble upon this small concert, in

this unassuming venue in a village on the foot of the Downs, which had that certain "thing" I referred to earlier.

The music swelled and receded like the tide, Featherstone able to change from a likeable humorous character to a heartbroken crooner and sometimes an intimidating, intense individual.

I counted about four or five different genres from classical, folk, blues and contemporary rock. I believed every lyric and note in the concert, his chord progressions and timings are truly unique.

Reading between the lines of his lyrics you can tell this is a man who has truly experienced a rich tapestry of life, love and loss.

He is certainly the only artist I have ever seen to use the steam button on an iron as a percussive instrument which was effective but clearly tongue in cheek as the band could not help smile every time it went off.

I only popped in to have a quick look and ended up staying until the end when the concert was finished with half the room in tears from the emotional energy delivered from the performance.

David Henderson