

Edinburgh chorus triumphs in barbershop competition

Edinburgh-based Forth Valley Chorus has made history by achieving sixth place in the world in the annual Sweet Adelines International Barbershop competition, held in Louisville, Kentucky.

The result, the highest ever placement for a UK chorus, is from thirty two different choruses from all over the world, including the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden and the UK. This was Forth Valley's highest ever placement in the competition, having achieved tenth place in 2019.

A worldwide network of female a cappella barbershop singers, with more than 20,000 members globally, Sweet Adelines International has staged its renowned International Competition & Convention seventy five times.

Either winning their regional competition the previous year, or having been invited as a wildcard, all thirty two choruses took part in the semi-finals, performing two songs each (a ballad and an uptune), with the Top 10 scoring choruses moving on to the finals.

For their finals package, Forth Valley Chorus started their set with a rendition of Black Horse and a Cherry Tree, originally written and sung by Scottish artist KT Tunstall. Then, they performed the powerful ballad You'll Never Walk Alone, followed by a medley of Scottish tunes, all arranged

in-house by Chorus Director David Sangster and Assistant Director Rosalind Johnson. This included excerpts from Wild Mountain Thyme, the Skye Boat Song, Mairi's Wedding as well as Suddenly I see, also by KT Tunstall.

With a standing ovation after every song, the competition presenters described the performance as 'like being transported to the Highlands!' The set was clearly popular with the Judges too, who scored them into their fantastic sixth place result.

[The Forth Valley Chorus finals package is available to watch here.](#)

The chorus which was formed in 1987 are now eight times UK Barbershop Champions.

Chorus Director, David Sangster, who leads Forth Valley with his Assistant Directors, Rosalind Johnson and Linda McCurrach, said: "I am absolutely thrilled with this result.

"Only recently, we could never have dreamed of such an outcome. The standard of the contest was exceptional, one of the best ever. For us to finish as high as sixth place is just amazing. But it's not just about our placement and scores. What was truly over-whelming was the response of the audience. The number of people coming up to me, and other members (we kept our costumes on with pride and joy!!) was incredible. I had people shaking my hand, still red-eyed, telling me about their Scottish ancestry and how our music had warmed their hearts. It was so moving. What an experience.

"We have members from Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, USA, Canada, Germany, Brazil in the Chorus, but we all make Scotland our home, singing barbershop, jazz, pop and other styles. All our members sing our Scots- flavoured music with pride and joy. Now we look forward to the next challenge, believing just that little bit more in ourselves and proud to bring our piece of Scotland to the world."

Management Team Leaders, Elaine Hamilton and Hazel Davidson-Smith said: “We can only echo what David has said, this result really does mean the world to us. From a management point of view, we would like to thank David and the Music Team for their commitment to their craft, as well as our chorus members who did Scotland proud performing some of our nation’s most beloved songs. Seeing the reaction of both the crowd, and the other competitors, to our Scottish set was simply incredible.”

With more than 100 members, [Forth Valley Chorus](#) take “great joy in perfecting their craft to deliver strong vocal and visual performances their audiences won’t forget”. And all of this happens under the directorship of their talented musical leader, David Sangster.

More details on Sweet Adelines at www.SweetAdelines.com



