



We take the music very seriously *but we don't take ourselves too seriously*

During the last four years, The Opera Boys have performed more than 1,000 concerts to thousands of delighted audience members worldwide, surprised a lot of brides on their wedding day, and even brightened up a few dreary corporate dinners.

Along the way, the boys have also performed lead roles on London's West End and on Broadway in New York and featured as backing vocalists for some big names, including Tom Jones, Sir Elton John and Russell Watson. There has even been an appearance on the Eurovision Song Contest. "It's a broad spectrum," agrees singer Rob Cherry.

"We take the music very seriously but we don't take ourselves too seriously because we're all good mates and we want the show to be funny.

"We have a lot of fun with each other and the audience – there's plenty of participation and messing about because that side of it is a big deal for us."

Having fun is top of the agenda for Rob and his fellow Boys and he hopes that this helps the group bring the sounds of classical music to an audience that might not normally go to listen to a whole opera.

"There's a preconception that you put on a bow tie and go to the opera and it's all a bit stuffy," says Rob.

"We're trying to do away with that completely. We are classically trained and we sing the songs properly but we also make it fun, entertaining and accessible."

It was Rob who was instrumental in putting together the group, who make up some of the UK's finest classically trained voices, with

training from London's Royal Academy of Music.

"We had a few mates who we called up saying we wanted to put together a good show and have a bit of fun.

"It was kind of organic despite everyone always asking us if we'd done *Britain's Got Talent* or *X Factor*.

"We didn't do any of the TV talent shows and just worked and worked at it and we are proud of the fact we did it the old fashioned way.

"We have some talented boys and there's lots of nice stuff going on between us."

It was bass baritone, Michael Story, who ended up representing Belgium in Eurovision 2015 – finishing a very creditable fourth but Rob denies there are any egos battling in the group.

"We get on great and we do enjoy touring together," he says.

"We do a lot of cruise ships and spend a lot of time on long-haul flights, so to be able to do a tour where we can drive from place to place is quite nice.

"We just jump in the van, get to the hotel and go to sleep. Coffee and *The Guardian* crossword is just about all we can handle these days!"

Coming to perform in a country famous for its male voice choirs isn't fazing the Boys ahead of their show in Wrexham but they're full of admiration for the singing traditions of Wales.

"Everybody in Wales can sing!" laughs Rob.

"None of us have a Welsh bone in our bodies but we do meet a lot of Welsh singers on the ships.

"The Welsh guys tell us we sing well, so maybe we can be honorary Welshman for the night!"

Ahead of their Wrexham performance, **Jamie Bowman** discovers it's a sense of fun that gives The Opera Boys the edge when it comes to entertaining their fans



● The Opera Boys will perform at Wrexham's William Aston Hall on Friday, March 31 at 7pm. Tickets from www.glyndwr.ac.uk / 0844 888 9991