

Classical musician Gareth Malone, 34, has turned communities' lives around with his BBC2 series *The Choir*. Gareth lives in London and is married to Rebecca, a teacher.

MY best LIFE

★ What's the best advice you've been given?

'Always have a long-term goal.' My mum's cousin's husband, a successful entrepreneur, told me that. Even when things are going badly, you should stay focused. It helped with making *The Choir*, because sometimes it just goes wrong. You have to use that experience to move forward.

★ What's been the best moment of the series?

Seeing everyone's faces while they were singing *Agnus Dei* in last week's show. As a classical musician, to hear them sing and enjoy it was amazing.

★ What's the best part of your job?

Introducing people to music. The great joy is when someone 'gets it' for the first time – that light goes on in their eyes.

★ What's the best thing about being in a choir?

The sense of being part of a team. But obviously the music is gorgeous, so it's

GARETH MALONE
 'THE CHOIR KEPT ME GOING WHEN MY GRANDMOTHER DIED'



Out on the red carpet with his wife Rebecca

really the combination of the two that's like nothing else.

★ What's your best childhood memory?

I grew up in Bournemouth. I'm an only child, but my childhood was very, very happy.

I was always being sent off by my parents to experience new things. I learnt piano, I went abseiling. I guess that's what made me who I am today. I was encouraged to give things a go.

★ What's the best part of your day?

When I first wake up. I have a cup of coffee and, for the first hour, I feel like I'm going to get everything done that day. But that feeling is gone by about 11am!

★ What do you like best about yourself?

I bounce back well from knocks. During the filming of the last series, my grandmother died, which was a dark time for me. The choir kept me going. I felt like they needed me, so I turned up at rehearsals and kept going.

★ What's your best money-saving tip?

'Don't give me your money to look after!' I spend a lot. My chief indulgence is good food in small portions. I had this most fantastic fish in France, literally just out of the sea, cooked simply, with beautiful wine, in the sunshine.

★ What's the best music for putting a smile on your face?

It has to be Bach or Mozart. Mozart's *Piano Concerto No 23* which I was listening to just yesterday. That makes me smile.



Gareth has brought classical music to the masses

BEST BOOK "It's a matter of great guilt that I haven't been reading at all recently. At the moment all I get to read is newspapers. I'm working all the hours that God sends."

BEST TV "I love the fantastic boxed sets of *The Wire* (above) and *The West Wing*. I can't choose between the two shows. I love to watch a great sprawling drama with lots of characters. Those two shows give you a window into another world that's very different to mine."

BEST JOKE "I'm terrible at remembering jokes. My wife has a joke that's so appallingly inappropriate that I can't tell it to you! It makes me chuckle every time I think of it because she's not the sort of person to tell such jokes."

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