

= Andrew Johnston (singer) =

Andrew Johnston (born 23 September 1994) is a British singer who rose to fame when he appeared as a boy soprano on the second series of the UK television talent show Britain 's Got Talent in 2008 . Although he did not win the competition , he received a contract to record with Syco Music , a label owned by the Britain 's Got Talent judge Simon Cowell . Johnston 's debut album , One Voice , was released in September of the same year , and reached number four on the UK Albums Chart . Although Johnston originally performed as a treble , his voice has since matured to baritone , and he is now a member of the National Youth Choir .

Johnston was born in Dumfries , Scotland , and his parents separated when he was an infant . He and his mother moved to Carlisle , where they lived in " poverty " . He became head chorister at Carlisle Cathedral , and was bullied at school because of his love of classical music . While some journalists have argued Britain 's Got Talent producers took advantage of Johnston 's background , others have hailed his story as inspirational . In 2009 , he graduated from Trinity School . Johnston now studies full @-@ time at the Royal Northern College of Music .

= = History = =

= = = Early life and Carlisle Cathedral Choir = = =

Johnston was born on 23 September 1994 in Dumfries , Scotland , the son of Andrew Johnston and Morag Brannock . He was given the extensive name Andrew Aaron Lewis Patrick Brannock John Grieve Michael Robert Oscar Schmidt Johnston . Johnston 's parents separated when he was eight months old , and from that time he lived with his mother and three older siblings in Carlisle , Cumbria , in the north of England , where he attended Trinity School . Johnston tried out for Carlisle Cathedral Choir at the age of six at the recommendation of Kim Harris , a teacher at his primary school . He was auditioned by the choirmaster Jeremy Suter and accepted into the choir at the age of seven . Johnston 's mother , who had no previous association with the cathedral , described her feelings of being overwhelmed by emotion at having her boy singing in such a " stunning building among those extraordinary voices " . His mother also described Johnston 's busy regimen of practice four times a week and all day Sundays , saying that it took up all of their spare time . However , she said that the cathedral staff became like a family to her son , and that " it was such a lovely , safe , close feeling for him " . Johnston , who attended Trinity School , was subject to abuse and threats from bullies which drove him to contemplate quitting the choir , but he was helped through the ordeal by his choirmaster and the dean and canons of the cathedral . By the time of his participation in Britain 's Got Talent , Johnston was head chorister .

In September 2008 , after his appearance on Britain 's Got Talent but before the release of his first album , Johnston embarked on a tour of Norway with the choir , performing at Stavanger Cathedral and Utstein Abbey , among other places . The tour was conceived because the Diocese of Stavanger is connected with the Diocese of Carlisle through the Partnership for World Mission . This was Johnston 's last tour with the choir . Johnston features as head chorister on one of the choir 's albums , The Choral Music of F.W Wadely , released in November 2008 .

= = = Britain 's Got Talent = = =

Johnston was entered as a competitor in the second series of Britain 's Got Talent by his mother . He passed the first public audition , singing " Pie Jesu " from Andrew Lloyd Webber 's Requiem . Amanda Holden , one of the competition 's judges , was brought to tears , and the audience offered Johnston a standing ovation . Johnston was tipped as the favourite to win the competition . Later , Johnston described his initial audition as daunting , saying that " it was scary singing in front of 2 @,@ 500 people . I had never sang on stage before ? then there was also Simon , Amanda and Piers " . He won his semi @-@ final heat on 27 May 2008 , receiving the most public votes on the

night and thereby qualifying for the final . He sang " Tears in Heaven " by Eric Clapton ; judge Holden told him he had " a gift from God in [his] voice " . At the final on 30 May , he again sang " Pie Jesu " . He finished in third place , behind the winner , the street dancer George Sampson and runners @-@ up , the dance group Signature . Johnston left the stage in tears , later saying that he " was upset . But when you see the talent that was there , it was an honour just to be in the final " . The day after the final , Cowell 's publicist Max Clifford said that it was " quite possible " that Cowell would be offering record contracts to some of the finalists , including Johnston . Johnston and other contestants then embarked on a national arena tour .

During his initial audition , Johnston claimed that he was bullied and victimised from the age of six because of his singing . When asked how he dealt with the issue , he stated " I carry on singing . " There were claims in the Daily Mail , a UK @-@ based tabloid newspaper , that the programme 's producers had deliberately overstated the extent of Johnston 's bullying as a " sob story " , suggesting that sympathy rather than his singing got him many of the votes . However , in The Times , Johnston 's success story was described as " the stuff of fairytales " , as he was successful despite having been raised in " poverty " . Johnston said he did not talk about being bullied because he was told to do so by producers , but " because I believed it would help people who were going through what I had gone through be stronger " . Johnston has subsequently visited schools and elsewhere to help other victims of bullying . He said " I want to use my experience of bullies to help other kids " .

= = = One Voice = = =

On 12 June 2008 , while Johnston was travelling with the Britain 's Got Talent Live Tour , it was announced that Johnston had signed a record deal with Syco Music , a division of Sony BMG , and that his first album would be produced after the tour . The deal was reportedly for £ 1 million . After signing with Syco , Johnston made public appearances , including performing at Andrew Lloyd Webber 's birthday celebrations on 14 September , and at Carlisle United 's Brunton Park .

Johnston 's debut album , One Voice , was released on 29 September 2008 . It includes a cover of " Walking in the Air " , performed with Faryl Smith . The album was recorded over a six @-@ week period in London , and the track listing was chosen by Cowell . Johnston described the recording process as " brilliant " , and that it was " really good ? just to be in a recording studio and meet the different people " . The album debuted in the British charts at number five , and finished the week at number four . The album was later certified gold , having sold 100 @,@ 000 copies , and Johnston was presented a gold disc by daytime television presenter Penny Smith . Critics responded positively to the album , with Kate Leaver , writing for the Korea JoongAng Daily , saying Johnston " has truer talent than hordes of his musical elders " and that " the vulnerability " of Johnston 's performance on the album " makes for a haunting musical experience " . In Music Week , the album was described as " highly @-@ anticipated " , and Johnston was called " exceptionally @-@ talented " .

After the album 's release , Johnston became involved in the Sing Up campaign , appearing in schools around the country to encourage other young people to join choirs . In December 2008 , Johnston made a guest appearance at Whitehaven 's Christmas fair , and performed at a carol service in Bradford . Johnston was also invited to turn on the Carlisle Christmas lights and perform at the celebrations . Mike Mitchelson , of Carlisle City Council , described Johnston as " one of our local heroes " .

= = = Hiatus and 2010s = = =

In September 2009 , Johnston announced that he would be taking a year off from singing as his voice had broken , changing him to a tenor . He had previously performed as a treble . He said " the tutors at [the Royal Northern College of Music] said they 'll be able to train my voice up again . It 's the same as it ever was , just deeper " . Johnston 's voice then changed from a tenor to a baritone . After remaining out of the spotlight for two years , he joined the National Youth Choir , saying " I 'm

just another lad in there ? no one focuses on Britain 's Got Talent and I 'm happy about that " . In 2011 , he was awarded a Royal School of Church Music Gold medal ; public performances that year included a charitable concert , alongside organists John Bromley and Tony Green , at St Paul 's Church , Helsby in November .

In September 2013 , Johnston began to study for a Bachelor of Music degree at the Royal Northern College of Music , under the tutelage of Jeff Lawton , who had previously tutored him at the Junior College . He immediately joined the college 's Chamber Choir and the Manchester Cathedral choir , but said that he intended to still sing with the Carlisle Cathedral choir where possible . While a student , Johnston 's singing was adversely affected by a broken nose , the result of an unprovoked attack in a Carlisle nightclub on New Year 's Day , 2014 .

= = Personal life = =

Johnston 's family home is in Stanwix , Carlisle . His mother , Morag Brannock , worked for the Office for National Statistics before giving up her job to support her son 's career . Prior to his Britain 's Got Talent appearances , he attended Trinity School , and later received tuition from a personal tutor . Johnston said that he " had a lot of support from local people when ... taking part in Britain 's Got Talent " , and was given a civic award for outstanding achievement by Carlisle City Council in March 2009 .

Johnston 's interests include jujitsu , in which he has a black belt . The Carlisle newspaper News and Star reported in September 2012 that Johnston had become the youngest person in the world to be granted a licence to teach the sport .

= = Discography = =

Studio albums