

# Marsh Choir Sings Backup for Rolling Stones

*TD Garden  
50 &  
Counting  
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crazy  
surprise*

WHEN SCOTT JARRETT ARRIVED AT THE TD Garden on June 12, 2013, for the Boston stop of the Rolling Stones 50 & Counting tour, he was able to declare proudly, “I’m with the band.”

Thanks to a serendipitous series of events and the close-knit nature of the choral community, BU’s own Marsh Chapel Choir, which is directed by Jarrett (CFA’99,’08), was accorded the rare privilege of accompanying the Stones on their iconic anthem “You Can’t Always Get What You Want.”

Originally recorded with London’s Bach Choir for the 1969 album *Let It Bleed*, the song has become one of the band’s most recognized, and was featured in its recent tour of 10 North American cities. At each stop, the band teamed with a local choir to perform the song. The 2013 tour marked the first time the Stones have performed it with a live choir, and some fans paid as much as \$500 for a ticket.

When choir members filed onto the glimmering, lip-shaped stage for the Stones’ first encore, the crowd roared in appreciation and surprise. As Mick Jagger gyrated and crooned just feet away, the singers clapped, swayed, and sang their hearts out. They were naturals.

The campus-based choir, which includes professional singers as well as students, alumni, and Boston residents, goes on tour every year and has recently graced stages in San Francisco, New York, and Montreal. But to sing with the Stones in front of nearly 19,000 people was a gig beyond his wildest imagination, says Jarrett.

“You Can’t Always Get What You Want,” which begins with an a cappella choir section and is punctuated with high Cs, is not easy to sing. With just three weeks’ notice, Jarrett had to put together a group of 24 singers, heavy on sopranos, find another conductor to lead half the choir, and negotiate a contract. Students had already gone their separate ways for the summer, but Jarrett had no problem finding the two dozen singers. Those singers, in 2 groups of 12, took their places on either side of the TD Garden stage

The Rolling Stones 2013 tour was the first time the band performed “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” with a live choir.



when they performed with the Stones on June 12 and again on June 14.

Bethany Saul (CAS’14), who is from Sheffield, England, says friends and family back home were shocked at the news. She was a little nervous, she says, “mainly about silly things like tripping over a wire or saying something completely embarrassing to Mick Jagger.”

The choir was also given what Jarrett describes as a “nice check,” which will underwrite its visit to New York City for next year’s Bach Experience.

When Jagger leaned into his mic to thank the Marsh Chapel Choir from Boston University after the choir’s last refrain of the song’s signature backup “aaahs,” it was a triumphant moment, a high that surpassed all those high Cs. Jarrett and his singers will carry the moment forever. And they’ll have quite a story for their grandchildren. ss