



Information for New Members

The Choir

The Royal Leamington Spa Bach Choir has a history going back to the 1930's when it was first launched in the town. In the almost unbroken record since this time, the Choir has produced a wide range of concert performances both in Leamington and from time to time in other venues, such as Notre Dame in Paris and Peterborough Cathedral. We strive to maintain high standards of music making and therefore we do audition all new members and re-audition existing members on a regular basis.

We generally put on three or four main concerts a year, and also get involved in other activities, such as Carol Singing at Christmas and occasional music-themed Saturday workshops.

The Choir has a website www.rlsbc.org (*under construction - Feb 2017*) with links to our online concert ticket sales kiosk, and a Facebook page [@RoyalLeamingtonSpaBachChoir](https://www.facebook.com/RoyalLeamingtonSpaBachChoir).

Rehearsals

The Choir meets on Wednesday evenings throughout school term-time at the main hall of Lillington Primary School, Cubbington Road, in Lillington. The Choir secretary produces schedules of dates for rehearsals, concerts and other events at the start of the season. Please ask for a copy if you haven't already received one, or check the Choir website.

Rehearsals start with notices at 7.30pm prompt. We have a 15 minute mid-rehearsal break during which refreshments can be purchased (eg. Hot drinks 30p cake/biscuits 30p). Each week there is a raffle in aid of choir funds (prizes of wine/chocolates etc. donated by choir members). Rehearsals finish at 9.45pm.

On the day of a concert all singers are expected to attend an afternoon dress rehearsal, which usually starts at 2pm and finishes by 5pm or earlier.

Attendance at rehearsals is monitored by means of the weekly registers. It is useful if you can inform via the registers if you are unable to attend, or to notify via email or text message.

Who runs the choir?

The Choir is run by the officers and committee, who are elected at the AGM in the autumn term. Any member of the Choir can stand as an officer or a member of the committee. We also encourage all members to have some sort of role, this spreads the load, so for example we have a library team and a concert staging team, so if you have a talent that the Choir could use please put yourself forward!

Musical Director: Nigel Stark MA ARCO Dip.CHD
Accompanist: Colin Druce FRCO GBSM ARCM
President: The Mayor of Leamington Spa

How do we fund the choir?

Subscriptions: The annual membership subscription is set each season to help the Choir to meet rehearsal and concert costs (hire of hall, conductor, accompanist etc.). Subscriptions are due each year in September but can be paid pro rata for members joining later in the season.

Concert Ticket Sales: Proceeds of ticket sales help towards concert expenses such as venue hire, soloists' fees, conductor, orchestra etc. Most of our ticket sales are made through Choir members, so it is important that everyone does their bit, even if you are not able to sing in a particular concert.

Friends and Business Patrons are non-singing affiliates of the Choir, often friends and family, or local businesses who pay to help support the choir, with different levels of contribution and benefits.

Fund raising efforts include the weekly raffle, tea and coffee proceeds, book & CD sales and special events which may include Carol Singing and themed social events.

Auditions

Nigel Stark, our Musical Director, explains what to expect:

Many people are frightened by the word 'audition'. Please be assured that this process is completely painless! The purpose of your audition is to make sure you are comfortable with your place in the choir and to allow the Musical Director to hear every voice individually, to identify possible candidates for semi-chorus and solo opportunities and to make sure you are singing the voice part best suited to your voice.

The Musical Director will ask you to sing some scales and arpeggios with the piano and a few long notes. You will be asked to sight-read a short passage of music. We are not necessarily looking for technical knowledge, rather an ability to learn music quickly.

All singers will be heard individually and each audition will generally last no longer than five minutes. Please remember, everyone presently in the choir has gone through this process and lived to tell the tale!

Auditions for new members are normally held before a Wednesday rehearsal; the Membership Secretary will arrange times with the Musical Director and Choir members. The result will be confirmed in writing, and you will be able to discuss the outcome with the Musical Director if you wish.

FAQs

When do I need to pay my subscription?

When you have passed your audition, you will be asked to pay an annual or pro rata subscription. You can pay by online Bank Transfer or by cheque/cash to the subscriptions secretary. If you are a tax payer make sure you complete a gift aid form.

Are there any concessions for membership fees?

As many of our members are retired it is unrealistic to have any general concessions, our current subscription is equivalent to £3 a week, which seems very reasonable.

What if I can't sing in a concert?

We ask people to sign up for concert attendance during the rehearsal period. We know that sometimes holidays or events mean that you know you can't attend. This shouldn't stop you from enjoying the rehearsals, but don't attend the final couple of rehearsals. In case of illness or emergency let the stage manager know.

What if I miss a number of rehearsals?

There is no hard and fast rule, however, you will need to be confident in performing well in the concert. If in doubt speak to the Musical Director who will help you make a decision.

What do I need to wear for concert performances?

Concert dress will be advised shortly before each performance.

Ladies normally wear long plain black skirts or trousers and long-sleeved black shirt/blouse, with a lavender choir scarf. Black shoes and tights, and only discreet jewellery should be worn. Handbags should not be taken on stage.

Gentlemen are normally required to wear a DJ with white dress shirt and black bow tie and shoes.

You will also need a **concert folder**. Please ask a library team member if you do not have one.

Concert Diary

Details of the programme for the current concert season are provided in the Choir's Concert Diary leaflet, available from the Publicity team.

More information is also available on the Choir's website: www.rlsbc.org

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