

Musical Director

Introduction

The Harlequin Singers is seeking a Musical Director for January 2017. Our MD is retiring after successfully leading our all-age, SATB chamber choir for 25 years. We are looking for someone with energy and enthusiasm to share their passion for music with a receptive, lively and talented choir.

About Us

The Harlequin Singers is a choir of about 40 members who rehearse on Mondays, 7.30-9.15pm in the centre of Bristol. We have a summer break for about 6 weeks in late July and August. We are a non-auditioned choir with a system of voice representatives who listen out to see if potential new members are suitable for the choir. We sing a variety of music from all genres, from popular to classical, choral to gospel and everything in-between. Over the years the choir has amassed a large repertoire of music, including original arrangements by our MD. A catalogue of our repertoire is available on request.

Duties/Responsibilities:

The choir elects members to serve on the committee, to assist and support the MD. However the MD has the following responsibilities:

- Inspire and encourage the choir to perform to high musical standards.
- Lead rehearsals with enthusiasm and professionalism.
- Select a challenging, appropriate and diverse repertoire, working towards concerts usually performed in May and December.
- Prepare and plan for Monday evening rehearsals, making effective use of the rehearsal time.
- Plan for performances in conjunction with the choir committee.
- Attend committee meetings several times a year after choir practice.
- Rehearse and conduct other occasional performances and/or recordings.
- Lead any "weekends away" such as cathedral visits, or overseas opportunities, that may from time to time arise.
- Arrange copying of music scores and organise new season's music for distribution.
- Issue weekly circulars to choir members.
- Be available for communication throughout the week for issues as they arise
- Organise a deputy as required, due to holiday or other absence of MD.
- Minimise the impact of holiday and liaise with committee in advance.

Concerts

- Arrange accompanist for performances and attendance at pre-concert rehearsals.
- Organise other instrumentalists, soloists or ensembles as required. Discuss programme content, rehearsal/performance details, and organise distribution of music.
- Arrange a compere or introduce programme at concerts.

Person Specification

Knowledge & Experience

- Established conducting and performing experience in a variety of choral styles and settings
- High level of musicality
- Good musical arranging/composing skills
- Demonstrable success in communicating vocal ensemble skills and disciplines

- Competent pianist/accompanist (not essential).

Ability & Aptitudes

- Strong leadership skills
- Ability to build rapport with all members of the choir
- Capacity to generate and maintain enthusiasm of singers and other musicians
- Be professional, enthusiastic and energetic
- Good organisational and time-management skills
- Communicate proactively and work constructively with choir members, the committee, musicians and audiences

Fees are negotiable. There will be a probationary period of 6 months.

The Process

To apply, please send a CV and supporting letter, with two named referees (who will be contacted only on short-listing), to be sent by email to mandyebsworth@blueyonder.co.uk

The closing date for applications is 5.00pm on 29/04/2016.

Short-listed applicants will be invited to attend an interview and choir audition in late June/July. Further details will be provided to short-listed applicants selected for interview. Candidates are encouraged to attend an open rehearsal in June, date tba.

Equality Statement

The Harlequin Singers welcomes applications from suitable candidates regardless of age, gender, race, religion/belief, sexual identity or disability.

Background of the Choir

The Harlequin Singers started life together back in 1991. A few Bristol lawyers joined together to sing just for fun and invited some friends to join them – long before Gareth Malone! They very quickly decided that a conductor would be a good idea and so a fellow solicitor, Peter Wilkinson was offered the role of MD. A few of the original members remain, but after 25 years the Harlequin Singers is delighted that new members continue to join to keep the original idea of singing primarily for the enjoyment of it at the heart of the choir.

Over the years the vast majority of the concerts we've performed have been in aid of charities, often with a local emphasis, raising many thousands of pounds. We welcome the opportunity to share music with a wider audience, whilst raising awareness of good causes.

Although we're not a church choir, sacred music makes up a significant part of our repertoire. We have been able to put that to good use on several occasions when we have stood in for Cathedral choirs. These weekends are really memorable and enjoyable for us, both for the opportunities to socialise and to use music in glorious surroundings for which much of it was written.

We have enjoyed the hospitality of our friends in Hamburg, performing with the Due Quartetti orchestra, and hosting their return visit. The majority of our concerts are accompanied by piano or organ, but in the past we have enjoyed performing with The Bristol Ensemble, Bristol Brass Consort, and are looking forward to our 25th Anniversary Concert with the Brunel Sinfonia at St Mary Redcliffe church later this year.