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Altrincham Choral Society

ACS: Our Vision

Altrincham Choral Society is a large, mixed voice choir of around 120 concert singers. We offer good amateur singers from the South Manchester/North Cheshire areas the opportunity to learn and perform major choral works. The repertoire is varied and wide ranging and is performed at well attended public concerts, supported by professional musicians and directed by an ambitious and talented conductor.

What does ACS offer?

For its members:

- an enjoyable, challenging and learning experience in singing
- a friendly, social environment
- good value for money
- a choir which is well organised through the efforts of a dedicated and hardworking committee

For its audience:

- an exciting listening experience
- choral singing of a very high standard, supported by high quality soloists and musicians
- good value for money
- professionally presented concerts

For its patrons and sponsors:

- an opportunity to enjoy well-sung choral works on a regular basis
- the satisfaction and commercial benefits of being associated with a well-known and highly respected performing arts organisation

For its professional accompanists, musicians and soloists:

- a worthwhile and uplifting musical experience
- the satisfaction of being appreciated
- well organised events

For its conductor:

- a competent and hard-working group of committed singers
- the opportunity to explore a progressive repertoire
- an association which enhances their personal prestige

Information for Members

Welcome to Altrincham Choral Society. The choir, which has been in existence for over seventy years, has over one hundred and twenty members. Some members have been with the choir for many years, which we believe reflects the quality of experience offered. We hope you will enjoy singing with us and will wish to join our happy group of music makers.

Below is an abridged Code of Practice for your information:

1. Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings at the Methodist Church, Springfield Road, Altrincham. Rehearsals commence promptly at 19.45 and end at 22.00.

Latecomers are requested to take their seat with the minimum of disruption.

2. Attendance at rehearsals is expected and necessary. It is at the discretion of the Musical Director whether an individual performs in a concert. In order to sing at a concert, 75% rehearsal attendance is the minimum expected and no more than 3 consecutive rehearsals may be missed. If you are performing in a concert, you must attend the Dress Rehearsal at the venue prior to the concert.

If you know you will be away for rehearsals and/or a concert, please tell your voice representative. This is particularly important prior to a concert when exact numbers are required for concert seating. Please do not sing at the last rehearsal before a concert if you know you cannot sing in that concert. You may attend to listen.

3. Members are expected to purchase the 'Hundred Carols for Choirs' and 'The Faber Book of Carols' for themselves. All other music is provided by ACS, either from other societies or libraries or by purchase. All music on loan from ACS must be returned to the music librarians immediately after a concert.

If you are unable to sing in a concert, the music must be handed in at the end of your last rehearsal and NOT on the occasion of your next attendance. Any member losing music must pay the cost of replacement. Any fines or expenses incurred by ACS for late returns must be paid for by the member/s responsible.

4. Subscription and other costs:

- The subscription for the 2016/2017 season is £175 and is reviewed annually by the committee. The subscription is made up of two parts:
 1. The membership fee which includes rehearsals and music hire costs, which we ask members to Giftaid if possible;
 2. Tickets: each member receives 2 tickets for the three major concerts. (excluding the Carol Concert) We encourage all members to sell or give away their tickets, to ensure full audience capacity. This season's tickets are £75.
- There is a one off additional cost for a music folder. This is currently £5.00.
- The choir runs from September to July. Members joining in the January and April terms will pay a pro rata membership fee. Membership fees may be paid in a single amount or by Standing Order.
- There is a reduced subscription for all members under the age of 21 and for any member in full time education. This subscription is £10 a term.

5. Concert Dress

Ladies: A plain black top, with either round, slightly scooped or V- neckline and full or three-quarter length sleeves. (No shirts/blouses with collars). Full length, smart black trousers or full length black skirt worn with black hosiery and black shoes. The front row at a concert must comprise ladies wearing *trousers*. Discreet jewellery (gold/silver/ black/pearl colour range).

Gentlemen: Plain black shirt with a plain black tie, worn with a smart pair of black trousers. Black shoes, socks and belt. No buttonholes, unless agreed for everyone.

Additional Information

Please see our website: <http://www.altrincham-choral.co.uk/>

You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter: Twitter @acs1945

Tea Rota

Tea is provided free of charge during the rehearsal break. Two members bring 2 pints of milk each, make and serve tea, then clear away. Members are expected to be part of a rota to provide this welcome service and duties usually occur every 14 months. Please see the Notice Board for rota details.

One Way System

Members are required to follow the clockwise one way system in the car park. This is a condition of our hiring the venue.

Auditions: Your Questions Answered

How do I arrange an audition?

You can email us from the link on our home page (<http://www.altrincham-choral.co.uk/>) or come to a rehearsal in person where the Membership Secretary will help you.

After attending two or three rehearsals, please complete our application form (see Membership Secretary) and you will be invited to audition with the Musical Director. Auditions take place in private on a one to one basis on a Monday night, prior to rehearsals or during the tea break.

What does the audition consist of?

1. You will be asked to sing scales and arpeggios suitable to your voice part.
2. A solo piece of music (song, aria, oratorio aria), which shows your ability, should be prepared beforehand. This should have a voice part independent of the piano. Please provide a copy for yourself and a copy for the Musical Director.
3. Sight Reading: this will consist of a chorus from an oratorio. After hearing the piano accompaniment, you will be asked to sing the line appropriate to your voice part, using the text wherever possible. Although we ask for a good standard of sight reading, a good voice and the ability to learn parts quickly will contribute to the Musical Director's final decision.

The above are guidelines and the decision of the Musical Director is final in all matters.

If I pass, do I become a full singing member?

After the audition, the Musical Director will tell you whether:

- a. you are accepted into the choir, and in which voice section, as a full singing member, or
- b. you are a singing member under review – you will be able to sing with the choir for six months, but be expected to take singing lessons to improve any areas discussed at your audition. At the end of the review period, you will be asked to re-audition to demonstrate your improvements.

Please remember, we are not looking for a ‘perfect musician’. Dedication, commitment and the ability to be part of a team are very much part of making music at ACS. All singers have different strengths and attributes and it is a combination of these which are assessed at your audition.

Once you have passed, you can look forward to belonging to a well organised, good quality choir and a thoroughly enjoyable musical environment, in which you can delight in your singing, improve your voice, have fun and make new friends. All that on a Monday – what better way to start a week!

‘What if I don’t pass my audition/re-audition?’

Don’t panic! You will be able to re-apply, but with a recommendation that you take singing lessons for the intervening 12 month period. However, you will not be able to sing with the choir during that time.