



Musical Director – Hailsham Choral Society

Background:

Hailsham Choral Society is an amateur choir of about 60 members based in Hailsham, East Sussex. Our much-loved Musical Director is stepping down after 13 years and we are looking for a replacement who can take over.

The Musical Director is paid an annual Honorarium to cover rehearsals, as well as a fee for conducting each concert which varies depending on the programme. (Details available on request).

We are fortunate in having an assistant MD who is able to take some rehearsals and share in conducting smaller concerts.

The choir rehearses on Thursday nights in Hailsham from 7.30pm-9.30pm.

Our choir website is: <http://hailshamchoral.org>

Job description:

- 1. to effect the musical training of the Society in such works as shall be chosen with the agreement of the Society and at such rehearsals as shall be fixed. The Music Director is required to liaise closely with the Committee in organising programmes and in preparing a budget in advance for concerts;**

The Musical Director is a member of the Committee, which typically meets about 3-4 times a year.

HCS has a small financial cushion of a few thousand pounds, meaning that we can occasionally spend more on a larger orchestra (e.g. Vaughan Williams: Dona Nobis Pacem), but at other times we have to perform works which suit our budget.

- 2. to conduct the Society and other performers at concerts as shall be fixed;**

As a guide, the choir currently has a pattern of four concerts a year: in late March, late June, early November and Christmas.

The March concert is our biggest performance of the year when we engage professional soloists and an orchestra. Recent performances have included Haydn's Creation and Bach's St John Passion. Because Hailsham does not have a venue large enough, the spring concert is held in All Saints Church Eastbourne.

Summer is usually a lighter concert in Hailsham. A typical programme would include a performance of folk songs, opera choruses, Gershwin, Cole Porter, etc, with small solo items performed by choir members. Our assistant MD usually takes some rehearsals and shares the conducting in the performance.

Our November concert also takes place in Eastbourne with a more major classical work, normally with professional soloists as the budget allows. We cannot afford an orchestra, so the accompaniment is normally piano or organ.

The Christmas concert is held in Hailsham Parish Church after a short rehearsal season, and is organised by our assistant MD. The Musical Director is not currently involved in this concert.

In every other year we also perform a Good Friday concert in Hailsham, e.g. Stainer's Crucifixion. This is conducted by the MD and done on very limited rehearsal time.

3. to plan and run twice-yearly workshops in preparation for the larger concerts;

These are currently held on a Saturday about mid-way through the rehearsal season for the spring and autumn concerts, and run from about 10am-4pm with a break for lunch.

4. to ensure that the highest possible musical standards are achieved both at rehearsals and concerts, consistent with the Society's musical and financial resources, whilst at the same time making the rehearsals fun;

As we are an amateur choir, we are keen to ensure that rehearsals are relaxed and welcoming.

Fortunately, many of the choir are fairly good sight readers, but not everyone. We usually try to make rehearsal aids available via our website so members can practice between rehearsals.

5. to audition prospective Society members, to re-audition existing members as the Music Director sees fit, and to make recommendations to the Committee in the light of such auditions;

We currently hold a simple voice trial for new members after they have been to about three rehearsals. It's very unusual to turn anyone away.

The HCS constitution allows the MD to re-audition existing members. This has not been done in recent memory but we are open to advice.

6. to engage soloists and other performers needed for concerts, and to audition them if necessary;

Although HCS has an active Committee, we have very limited contacts of the

type needed to engage soloists or an orchestra, so we are currently reliant on the MD for this.

7. to advise and assist the Committee in the artistic direction of the Society;

This includes suggesting suitable programmes for future concerts.

8. to give a report at the AGM each Autumn;

A very low-key, light-hearted affair. The AGM takes place during a Thursday night rehearsal.

9. to support and extend the choir's drive to recruit new members;

10. to be prepared to conduct at ad-hoc concerts and events as required.

We sometimes do additional concerts outside the normal pattern, for example taking part in the Mayor's concert for the Hailsham Festival, or putting on a joint concert with the choir from Hailsham's twin town of Gournay-en-Bray, France.

Applications:

If you are interested, please apply by email to hcsinfo@hailshamchoral.org with your CV and a covering letter, by 22 September 2019. The auditions will be on 3, 10 and 17 October 2019 to start in January 2020.

June 2019