

## A Guide to membership

### *Introduction*

*The Esterhazy Singers is a friendly and sociable amateur choir, which aims at the highest possible standards of presentation and performance. Directed since the end of 2016 by Andrea Brown, the choir seeks to maintain a balanced membership of around fifty singers. It takes its name from Haydn's principal patrons, the Austro-Hungarian Esterhazy family; and while music by Haydn and his contemporaries is often performed, we sing music from all periods from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to the present day, including first performances of new compositions. We perform regularly in some of London's finest churches, including St Martin in the Fields, Holy Trinity Sloane Square and St Paul's Cathedral. We have recorded two CDs. The Choir has enjoyed several overseas concert tours, including Ghent, Denmark, and Versailles, as well as summer tours to attractive parts of Great Britain.*

More information on the choir can be found on our website [www.esterhazysingers.com](http://www.esterhazysingers.com)  
This practical guide has been produced to give you the key information you will need as a member of The Esterhazy Singers.

### *Singers*

We welcome newcomers in all voice parts as there is a small but regular turnover of singers. To join the choir you do not have to be widely experienced, but you should be able to maintain pitch and hold a part, understand basic musical vocabulary, possess simple sight reading skills and have a voice which blends with the rest of the choir. After attending one or more rehearsals on an informal basis, potential new members will be given a short voice trial by the Musical Director who will decide if they are suitable to join and confirm which voice part they should sing.

The choir seeks to maintain a standard which satisfies its members and attracts audiences and new singers alike. Existing members will have a regular vocal assessment by the Musical Director, which may lead to directed advice to maintain or improve standards.

### *Rehearsals*

Rehearsals are held on Tuesday evenings in term time at St Magnus the Martyr, Lower Thames Street, London, EC3R 6DN. They start promptly at 7pm and end at 9.30pm with a half-time break for tea/coffee and biscuits. Sometimes rehearsals will be sectional for part of the evening, with the accompanist taking part of the choir, and an extra rehearsal may be held before a concert. The MD provides a schedule of the music for the next concert at the start of term. Members are encouraged to look at the music at home during the week so that rehearsal time can be used for interpretation and creating a performance rather than for note-bashing. Rehearsals begin with a physical and vocal warm-up; from time to time there may be training workshops to help improve singing technique.

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### *How to get to St Magnus*

The church is reached down Fish Street Hill from the Monument, or via the stairs from London Bridge direct to Lower Thames St. The nearest Tube station is Monument/Bank on the District, Circle, Central and Northern Lines (city branch), the Waterloo and City Line and the Docklands Light Railway. Mainline stations are London Bridge, Liverpool Street, Cannon Street and Waterloo. Buses to all destinations are a short walk away. Parking at the church is not possible without special permission. Bicycles may be brought inside.

### *Attendance*

Members are expected to attend rehearsals regularly, but occasional absences may occur for reasons of work, family or illness. If several rehearsals are missed, participation in the next concert is at the discretion of the MD. A rule of thumb is that a 75% rehearsal attendance, to include the two before a performance, is mandatory.

Members are asked to ensure details of their planned and actual attendance at rehearsals and performances are up to date in the members' section of the website.

A voice representative has been appointed for each voice part as a two way conduit of information, to look after members of the section in practical and pastoral terms and to follow up absentees where appropriate. Names of the current representatives are given at the end of this guide.

### *Music copies*

Hire copies of the music to be performed are usually provided, and should be returned immediately after the concert with pencil markings removed. Members may be liable for any costs arising from failure to do so. Members may use their own copies, provided these are the same edition that the rest of the choir using thus ensuring minimum disruption to rehearsals. Members may occasionally be asked to purchase music which it is not practical to hire or which is likely to be frequently used.

### *Finance*

The choir membership fee is currently £17.50 per month. (Under 25's free). This usually includes music hire where relevant but not expenses for out-of-town concerts or other choir activities. A modest contribution is invited for rehearsal refreshments.

The Esterhazy Singers is a registered charity. In order to maximise tax relief from Gift Aid, members are asked to complete a Gift Aid form and to pay their subscriptions by monthly standing order. There is a Friends Scheme to enable supporters to contribute financially.

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We do not wish any choir member to be prevented from participating in any activity for financial reasons. Anyone who needs to should talk to the Treasurer or the Chairman who will do their best to help.

### *Concerts*

Concert programmes are chosen by the Musical Director in consultation with the choir committee, but ideas from members are always welcome. We usually give four London performances a year, including Christmas, in which all members are expected to take part. An afternoon rehearsal is held on the day of the concert.

Summer engagements outside London – in this country or abroad – are often arranged. These trips are sociable and great fun, often in relaxed surroundings; lifts can usually be arranged for those without independent transport. In recent years, we have undertaken a cathedral residency for a day or for a single service during the summer, when the choir schools are on holiday. Other musical events can include family occasions by invitation, other private engagements and carol singing.

In London, the success of the choir depends on attracting good audiences. Members are expected to sell at least two tickets for each concert, and preferably more. Concert posters, flyers and tickets are supplied; the hard sell is up to individuals! At some venues, such as St Martin in the Fields, canvassing passers-by on the day of the concert can be very productive; volunteers may be called for. Tickets are available for purchase at rehearsals and through the website via Eventbrite.

### *Concert Dress*

For formal concerts, the men have traditionally worn dinner jackets with black tie. Increasingly, open-necked black shirts are worn, especially on less formal occasions. Women wear long, plain black skirts or trousers, black shoes and a black top, with long sleeves and a scoop-neck. Velvet, satin and sparkles should be avoided, unless the instructions are “Black and Bling”. Pashminas in four selected colours are sometimes worn, which are available for purchase. Music should normally be held in a standard Esterhazy black folder obtainable from the Librarian or the concert organiser.

### *Social activities*

Socialising is an integral part of the choir’s life, and members regularly adjourn to a local pub after rehearsals. We normally organise a winter and sometimes a summer party each year, at a member’s house, at which members and guests are encouraged to entertain each other by performing party pieces.

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### *Communication*

Electronic communication is by e-mail and via the website, [www.esterhazysingers.com](http://www.esterhazysingers.com)  
All members have a password to enable them to access the members' section of the website. They are encouraged to upload further details, such as contact details, brief biography, photo etc. for other members to see, if they wish. Detailed information on how your personal data maybe processed for administrative purposes is explained in our Data Privacy Notice, available from the website.

### *People and contacts*

The choir is most fortunate to have as its patron the Countess Marianne Esterhazy, who carries on her family's tradition of musical patronage.

*The President:* David Hill.

*Our Musical Director is:* Andrea Brown

*Rehearsal accompanist:* Jan Rautio

*The Librarian:* Sandra Clapham

*Refreshments:* Helen Blumer

#### *Voice representatives*

*Sopranos:* Eileen Fox

*Altos:* Cathy Mann

*Tenors:* Ross Newby

*Basses:* Ross Newby

A committee of six members is elected at the AGM in November. The Chairman for 2017/18 is Martin Govas, the secretary is Juliet West and the treasurer is Jane Coupe. Other committee members are: Stephanie Bradley, Sandra Clapham and Mark Wilkinson.