

THE DURHAM SINGERS

Membership of The Durham Singers

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Durham Singers is committed to providing a welcoming and harmonious environment for all of its members. In order to uphold our commitment to musical excellence and respect for one another, members must meet the requirements of the following Code of Conduct.

First and foremost, you are required:

- To respect the rights of others and treat one another with dignity and respect at all times
- To show proper care and regard for the thoughts and feelings of others
- To avoid any actions that could be deemed as harassment or bullying.

More specifically you are required:

- To follow the instructions of the Music Director and respect their decisions
- To follow the organisational directions of the Committee and respect their decisions
- To attend regularly and punctually
- To endeavour to deliver the quality of singing required
- To work collaboratively and to the best of your ability with other members of the choir under the guidance of the Music Director and Committee, both in rehearsals and performance
- To ensure the health and safety of yourself and others
- To be polite, considerate, and respectful
- To use acceptable and appropriate language and behaviour
- To be co-operative and contribute to the smooth running of events
- Not to post social media in the name of the choir (i.e. as if it were from an official choir social media channel) without the direction or permission of the Chair or the Committee
- To ensure that in any social media postings you do not undermine the reputation of the choir and its members or post anything that might be considered discriminatory
- To seek permission for the use of people's images taken either during concerts or rehearsals
- To follow rehearsal and concert protocols.

REHEARSAL PROTOCOLS

- The purpose of each rehearsal is to create the best possible musical sound from the choir as a whole. It is, therefore, in the interests of the choir that each member dedicates time at home to learn their musical line.
- Please be prompt to rehearsals.
- Please sort out music and collect any handouts on arrival.
- Always bring and use a (2B) pencil to mark up your score.
- Mobile phones must be off or on silent mode.
- Please arrive in good time to deal with business and socialising in advance and be in your seat in time for the warm-up.
- If the Music Director is dealing with a particular section of the choir, other sections should pay attention and be aware of what is being rehearsed and the musical points arising from it.
- Make (2B) pencil markings in your score to remind you of all the Music Director's instructions.
- The short break during the rehearsal gives time for any choir notices from the Committee. If any member wishes to raise any matter with the choir (e.g. promote an event that might be of interest to members), then they should ask the permission of the Chair first.
- Consistent attendance is important. Please inform the Registrar and Music Director in advance if you know there is a rehearsal you cannot attend via apologies@durham-singers.org
- Assist with promoting and selling tickets for concerts.

- Do not wear perfume or strongly scented soaps in rehearsals or concerts in case other performers have allergies or other sensitivities to them.

CONCERT PROTOCOLS

- Please follow the specified dress code for each concert. Unless otherwise indicated the standard dress code requires smart black clothes in one of the following combinations: a long-sleeved top and smart trousers or long skirt; or a full-length long-sleeved dress; or dinner jacket with black trousers, black shirt, black socks, and black shoes.
- Unless told otherwise, for a concert your music should be in a black folder.
- The choir will line up off stage and then file onto the platform, row by row, as directed. Members in each row should stand until the whole choir is on stage, then all sit down together. At the end of the concert, the choir will sit down as the conductor leaves the stage. The procedure for coming onto the stage is reversed for leaving. Exceptions, for example for reasons of reduced mobility, can be agreed with the Music Director.
- The choir should stand to acknowledge applause.
- During the interval, members may socialise with the audience but should return in good time to line up for the second half of the concert.
- You will be told, as a concert approaches, what the arrangements are for returning music afterwards. Please return music on time and, very importantly, with all markings removed.

QUALITY OF SINGING

The choir strives for excellence in every performance, and therefore it demands high standards of musicianship and quality of singing from its members. Whilst formal training is not necessary, members are expected to have a relevant history of choral singing. Most concerts are performed unaccompanied, which requires an accurate contribution to the overall sound of the choir. The Music Director has responsibility for this sound and will help members of the choir to reach it. From your side, you are expected to be able to demonstrate the following:

- To have a voice range appropriate to your section
- To have a level of musicianship that enables you to meet the demands of the choir, including at least a basic level of reading and aural skills
- To be musically sensitive when singing in the choir to achieve a unified sound
- To be accurate in pitch and timing and to hear and adjust pitch, diction and tonal quality when requested
- To attend individual voice check-ins as required by the Music Director, where the Music Director will get to hear how you sing and explore ways of helping you to develop as a singer.

Ultimately, the Music Director has the authority to determine membership of the choir based on the quality of singing and discussion with any prospective member. In exceptional circumstances, the Music Director may advise a member of the choir that they do not have the skills to meet the level of musicianship and quality of singing that are required. This can only be done in consultation with Committee.

CONCERNS

- If you have a dispute with another member of the choir, then please try, in the first instance, to resolve it directly with them. If that fails, then speak to a member of the Committee who will attempt to mediate between you.
- If you have a concern about a member of the Committee, then please raise it with the Chair, who will ask another committee member to attempt to resolve it on your behalf. If your concern involves the Chair, then please raise it with the Honorary Secretary, who will ask another committee member to attempt to resolve it on your behalf.

- If a concern cannot be resolved by informal means or if you have a more general concern, then please raise it with the Chair or another Trustee of the choir.
- Please approach all disputes and grievances with calmness, patience, and respect, as the choir is run by volunteers who are not there to be verbally abused.

PROCEDURE FOLLOWING A BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Committee and the Music Director have the authority to dismiss members from the choir if the Code of Conduct is significantly and/or consistently violated. Dismissals will be made in accordance with the following process.

1. The Music Director and/or Committee have the right to exclude immediately from rehearsals and performances any choir member who is significantly in breach of the Code of Conduct to allow any investigation necessary to be undertaken unhindered and without prejudice. The exclusion will last for the period of the investigation, which will be undertaken as soon as possible.
2. A breach of the Code of Conduct will be investigated by a panel of three members of the choir appointed by the Committee, who have not been involved in the dispute. At least one member of the panel will be a member of the Committee. In any meeting of the panel with the member being investigated, the member is entitled to be accompanied by another member of the choir of their choosing. The panel will report to the Committee and make a recommendation about further action.
3. On receipt of the recommendation, the Committee may consult with the member, counsel them as to the inappropriateness of their conduct, and support them in making changes. The Committee may also issue a verbal warning requiring change of conduct.
4. If, following a verbal warning, the choir member has made no appropriate change, then the Committee has the right to require the member to leave the choir.
5. If any member is unhappy with decisions made by the Committee, they have the right to appeal in writing to the Chair, who will review the case in consultation with the Trustees of the choir who have not been involved in the dispute. Representatives of the Trustees will meet with the member being investigated, who is entitled to be accompanied by another member of the choir or an independent advocate. If the original decision is upheld at this appeal stage, there is no further right to appeal as this decision is final and binding. In the case of a concern regarding the Chair, then the appeal should be made to the Honorary Secretary, who will initiate a review of the case by the Trustees without the Chair.
6. This right of appeal also extends to a member who, in exceptional circumstances, is asked to leave the choir by the Music Director.