



## Introductory Sheet for New Choir Members

### About us

Founded in 1935 by Leslie Regan (then Principal of the Watford School of Music) with support from his friend, the great Sir Henry Wood, Watford Philharmonic Society comprises an amateur choir and orchestra and is one of the largest musical societies of its kind in the country. The choir currently consists of around 170 members.

The Society holds four main concerts a year, presently in the Watford Colosseum, when it is joined by distinguished professional soloists and orchestral players. We are most fortunate to be able to perform in this wonderful concert hall, described by many as having one of the best acoustics in the country. On occasion we also have opportunities to perform in smaller groups at other functions such as weddings or special events, and to attend "Come and Sing" days.

Our conductor is Michael Cayton – a very experienced and enthusiastic young conductor, who also conducts the Chiltern Choir in Chorleywood

Membership of the choir is open to all. There are no formal auditions; however from time to time the conductor listens to all members in order to ensure that he has a balanced choir, and will offer advice, support and encouragement to any member who is experiencing difficulties.

### What we sing

We perform a wide variety of music, ranging from Verdi's *Requiem* through Bizet's *Carmen*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* to Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Schonberg's *Les Miserables* and traditional Christmas carols. The Autumn and Spring programmes tend to feature more "serious" works, whilst the Christmas and June concerts have a lighter programme.

In the 2015 / 16 season we will be performing:

<i>Saturday</i> <i>7<sup>th</sup> November 2015</i>		<i>Benjamin Britten - "Four Sea Interludes"</i> <i>Cecilia McDowall - "Ave Maris Stella"</i> <i>Ralph Vaughan Williams - "A Sea Symphony"</i>
<i>Wednesday</i> <i>10<sup>th</sup> December 2015</i>		<i>Carols and Christmas Music</i>
<i>Saturday</i> <i>23<sup>rd</sup> April 2016</i>		<i>Handel - "Zadok the Priest"</i> <i>Handel - "Alexander's Feast"</i>
<i>Wednesday</i> <i>29<sup>th</sup> June 2016</i>		<i>"Proms at the Colosseum – an evening of celebration"</i>

### Rehearsals

The choir rehearses on Monday evenings between 7.30 and 9.30pm in the main hall at Watford Girls' Grammar School, Lady's Close, Watford WD18 0AE. In the run up to a concert, we practise with the orchestra and rehearsals may be extended by half an hour. There are also rehearsals at the concert venue on the afternoon of a performance.

Music is provided free of charge. Members are permitted to mark their scores; however, we request that only small pencil markings are made to avoid damaging them.

Choir members are required to do some basic preparatory work between rehearsals, essentially learning their parts (practice CDs are usually available for purchase, and there are also free internet tracks to help with the note learning). This enables the conductor to spend more time on musical interpretation.

In order to take part in a concert, choir members are expected to attend at least 60% of rehearsals.

For the Autumn and Spring concerts, female choir members wear black ankle length skirts, or trousers, and **plain** black long-sleeved tops. Men wear black open-neck long-sleeved shirts and trousers, but no jacket.

For the Christmas and June concerts, the black top or shirt is replaced by a **plain** bright coloured long-sleeved top or shirt.

### **How much will it cost?**

Currently, the annual subscription is £174. 00, and can be given as one payment or three equal instalments.

However, for new members in your first year only, you may 'pay as you go' which means that you only pay for the concerts you sing in. If you sing in all four concerts this will equate to the full subscription. A 50% reduction in all subscriptions applies for those under 30.

<b>November Concert</b>	<b>December Concert</b>	<b>April Concert</b>	<b>June Concert</b>
£52. 00	£35. 00	£52. 00	£35. 00

### **Selling concert tickets**

We rely heavily on our members to sell as many tickets as possible to their families and friends for all our concerts. To encourage this, WPS operates a Ticket Incentive Scheme giving members who sell more than a basic quota of tickets a discount on their subscription the following year

### **Would you like to become a member?**

If you are interested in signing up as a "pay as you go" or full member please ask our New Members Secretary for a membership pack. She can be contacted via email on [new.members@watfordphilharmonic.co.uk](mailto:new.members@watfordphilharmonic.co.uk)

We are a friendly society, and we arrange for all new members to meet and sit with a "buddy" during their first rehearsals.

### **How else can you take part?**

If you do not feel able to join the choir, come to our concerts anyway. Or you could become a Friend of the Watford Philharmonic Society with a small donation towards our expenses. Please speak to Tim Venner on 01923 284320. WPS is a registered charity.