

University of Essex Choir New Member Welcome Guide

Welcome to the University of Essex Choir! We are a friendly, high-performing choir made up of students, university staff and members of the local community. We hold two major concerts each year with professional orchestras and soloists, and we're delighted you've joined us.

Rehearsals

When: Thursdays during term time, 7.00 – 9.00pm from October to May (with breaks for Christmas and Easter)

Where: Lecture Theatre Building (LTB 6/7), Colchester Campus

To ensure you are fully prepared for performances:

- Aim to attend every rehearsal, and notify your Voice Representative if you can't attend. Remember to bring your music, a pencil and rubber.
- Please arrive on time and avoid using your mobile phone during rehearsals.
- Listen to Ben (our Music Director) and avoid conversations during rehearsal, we have breaks where you can chat.
- Missing more than two rehearsals may affect your eligibility to perform.

Learning the music

If you are new to learning music, some pieces we sing can seem overwhelming at the first instance - and it can seem like everyone knows their way around the score far more than you do. It's important to ask for help, sit next to someone confident, and use rehearsal tracks (eg YouTube) between each rehearsal to get more familiar with the music. Music scores can be purchased or hired through Alex, our choir librarian alex_m_bartholomew@yahoo.co.uk

Your Voice Representative

If you have any questions, there are Voice Reps for each voice section who can answer your queries, and who you should contact if you need to miss a rehearsal. Current voice reps are:

Soprano: Renate Barker renatesbarker@gmail.com

Alto: Liz Pilkington lizpilkington@gmail.com

Tenor: Julian Baker julian-baker@hotmail.co.uk

Bass: Clive Joyce joyce.clive@ntlworld.com

Please ensure they always have your current contact details.

Concerts

We have two formal concerts each year, and are sometimes asked to perform at other times. You will need a concert folder to hold your music, which can be bought or hired.

Our **Christmas** concert usually takes place on campus. Concert dress code is as follows: women should wear a long black skirt, dress or smart trousers with a black top (not sleeveless). Men should wear a black shirt and smart trousers (not jeans).

Our **May** concert takes place at other venues such as Snape Maltings. Transport will be arranged and details given ahead of the concert. Women should wear a long black dress with long (or elbow length) sleeves, or long black skirt/trousers with black top. Men should wear a black dinner jacket and trousers with plain white shirt, black bow tie, black shoes and socks.

You'll be given instructions on what will be happening on the day of the concert, but remember:

- Arrive at least 20 minutes before afternoon rehearsals and evening performances.
- Bring everything you'll need for the afternoon rehearsal and evening performance. Please avoid wearing strong perfumes or colognes.
- Switch off your mobile phone and follow seating and stage instructions carefully.
- This is a professional performance! Maintain concert etiquette both on and off stage.

Membership

Membership subscriptions help the choir to fund rehearsals, concerts and professional orchestras. The current subscription is £210 which covers the 2026/27 academic year. If you are a full time student at the University you will be asked for verification, which entitles you to pay only 10% of the full membership cost. If membership fees present you with a financial difficulty, please speak confidentially with the Treasurer, Nick Taylor nick@taylorrushby.com or your Voice Rep or any member of the Committee. Payment should be made by bank transfer to University of Essex Choir, 09-01-53, 23985483.

The choir is a registered charity, so UK taxpayers are encouraged to complete a Gift Aid declaration, which provides valuable additional income at no extra cost.

Supporting the Choir

There are many ways to help the University Choir:

- Invite all your friends and family to concerts!
- Like, subscribe and share choir posts on your social media feeds.
- Consider becoming a Patron or making a donation.

Every contribution helps us to continue to perform our ambitious repertoire with professional orchestras and soloists.

We hope you enjoy being part of the University of Essex Choir. Whether you're an experienced singer or completely new to choral music, you'll find us a supportive community, inspiring music-making and great performances.

We look forward to singing with you!