



APPOINTMENT OF A MUSIC DIRECTOR

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VACANCY

Southern Voices is an audition entry chamber Choir of approximately 36 singers based in Winchester. We are recruiting a new Music Director to start ideally in April 2022 but would consider a start date of September 2022.

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

- Rehearse the Choir and provide technical and musical guidance on the interpretation of the works being rehearsed. Members are required to be competent sight readers with minimal “note bashing” necessary;
- Conduct the Choir, and any soloists and instrumentalists, in performance;
- Ensure that the highest possible musical standards are achieved in rehearsal and at concerts, consistent with the Choir's musical and financial resources;
- Propose programming ideas to the Committee (taking into account the length of rehearsal time available and financial constraints);
- Audition prospective Choir members and re-audition existing members, making recommendations to the Committee in the light of such auditions;
- Provide information for advance publicity and programmes together with programme notes in a timely fashion;
- Make recommendations to the Committee for the engagement of soloists and instrumentalists, auditioning them if necessary;
- Where appropriate, to advise and assist the Committee in the management of the Choir's affairs;
- Consult, and obtain agreement from, the Committee before committing the Choir to any expense;

- Arrange for a suitable replacement if the Music Director is not available for any rehearsal;
- Assist the Committee in the recruitment of younger singers when vacancies arise;
- Available to direct the Choir on occasional UK or European tours as agreed with the Committee.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are seeking someone who:

- Is an accomplished choral conductor - effective through personality, musicianship, technique and communication, directing rehearsals both a cappella and with piano accompaniment;
- Is a singer, vocal coach and accomplished keyboard player and can demonstrate a commitment to transmitting the feelings and emotions of the music and text;
- Is competent in directing rehearsals without an assistant or accompanist;
- Has the ability to plan challenging, varied and stimulating programmes beyond the English choral tradition and standard repertoire, alongside more familiar repertoire;
- Provides positive encouragement with an empathetic understanding of the Choir's needs;
- Uses their high expectations of members to inspire continuous improvement.
- Is able to call upon contacts with other professional singers and instrumentalists and is confident in instrumental ensemble conducting and able to work effectively with them and soloists;
- Is able to work productively with the Choir's Committee within financial constraints;
- Is effective in enhancing the reputation of the Choir, attracting new singers and greater audience numbers;
- Has a desire to enjoy making music together, so it becomes a team effort - responsive to discussion and suggestions;
- Is prepared to provide 2 references upon short listing (1 x professional and 1 x personal).

CONTRACT AND REMUNERATION

The Music Director, though not a member of the Committee, is expected to attend most Committee meetings and is encouraged to join in the Choir's social activities.

The successful applicant will contract with Southern Voices on a self-employed basis and not as an employee. They will initially be engaged for a probationary period. After this time, with the agreement of both parties, the contract will become a rolling one-year contract subject to notice provisions from either party.

The Music Director will be paid a fee of £90 for each rehearsal. The fee for each performance (which includes the rehearsal on the day of performance) is normally £380.

SELECTION PROCESS

- The Choir will be seeking applications with a closing date **of FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER 2021**.
- A short list of four candidates will be selected on the basis of the written applications and other information provided by the applicants.
- The shortlisted applicants will be invited to audition with the Choir. This audition will comprise one 50-minute rehearsal and each candidate will be asked to briefly introduce themselves, do warm up routines and rehearse a piece from the current Choir repertoire and a short item of the candidate's own selection which should be capable of being read at sight.
- Each shortlisted candidate will then be invited to attend an interview, preferably in person by a small panel which includes a professional MD in an advisory capacity.
- It is anticipated that the auditions will take place over two Mondays in January 2022 as stated below. Please note the Choir does not rehearse with an accompanist and the Music Director accompanies as and when necessary.
- By 11 February 2022 the Committee of Southern Voices will make the appointment with the assistance of an independent adviser of suitable qualification and experience.

SUMMARY OF KEY DATES

- 3 December 2021 - applications close
- 5 January 2022 - shortlist selected
- 24 and 31 January 2022 - rehearsal auditions
- 26 January and 2 February 2022 - interviews (2 days after rehearsal auditions)
- 11 February 2022 - Committee select the preferred candidate
- 25 April 2022 - first rehearsal

APPLICATIONS

If you are interested in applying for this post, please send your completed application form to secretary@southernvoices.co.uk by **FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER 2021**.

www.southernvoices.co.uk



INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHOIR FOR APPLICANTS

- **VACANCY**
- **ABOUT SOUTHERN VOICES**
- **CONCERTS AND REPERTOIRE**
- **REHEARSALS**
- **OTHER ACTIVITIES**
- **THE COMMITTEE**
- **FUTURE DIRECTION**

VACANCY

After 10 successful years with Southern Voices, our current Music Director, Katherine Dienes-Williams, who is also Organist & Master of the Choristers at Guildford Cathedral, is leaving the Choir at the end of 2021.

The Choir is naturally disappointed to lose such a talented and inspirational musician. Katherine has introduced us to some varied and exciting repertoire and we would like to thank her for her passion and commitment, particularly over this last challenging year and a half under pandemic restrictions.

ABOUT SOUTHERN VOICES

The Choir was formed in 1984 to perform a wide repertoire of choral music ranging over five centuries to the highest standard. For many years, Southern Voices has had the reputation for being one of the leading chamber Choirs in Hampshire and beyond. In the last 10 years Katherine has chosen varied, challenging and musically demanding programmes that are also attractive and accessible to both Choir and audience. She has directed outstanding concerts for enthusiastic audiences who have welcomed the sometimes unfamiliar and new repertoire. Her attention to the vocal blend within and between sections and an insistence on accurate tuning, combined with the challenging programmes, have improved the overall musicality of the Choir. It is a key requirement that candidates are able to continue this development.

Southern Voices is a mixed Choir of approximately 35 singers. Potential members are required to pass an entry audition with the Music Director, and existing members are re-auditioned periodically. They are required to be competent sight-readers, to learn the music individually, and to take steps to maintain and develop their own vocal competence, including where desirable through lessons with professional vocal coaches.

The Choir is a registered charity (charity number 1086868) and is managed by a dedicated committee. A significant number of members take active roles that help to ensure its smooth running.

Finances have been carefully controlled over many years such that there is now a solid base of reserves to underwrite each season's activities.

Copies of the Accounts and Constitution are available on the Southern Voices website.

CONCERTS AND REPERTOIRE

The Choir normally performs four main concerts a year in March, July, November and December. The majority of the repertoire is performed a cappella with the remainder accompanied by an organ or piano and sometimes a single instrument or chamber ensemble. Concerts are usually performed on Saturday evenings.

Concerts with larger forces are undertaken every three to four years. Performances take place in venues around Winchester principally the Chapel of St Cross and St John's Alresford. The Choir has performed at Southampton Art Gallery and at Winchester Cathedral, although financial constraints limit the frequency of this venue.

The Choir performs an eclectic and adventurous repertoire of sacred and secular music covering 550 years of composition ranging from renaissance and early music to contemporary compositions. This is considered a unique feature of the Choir compared to others in Hampshire and it is desired that the exploration of unfamiliar repertoire continues alongside the better-known choral masterpieces. The Choir's repertoire over the last 10 years can be seen on the website at <https://www.southernvoices.co.uk> .

REHEARSALS

Southern Voices rehearses on Monday evenings between 7:45 pm and 9.45 pm currently at St Paul's Church Winchester, Hampshire from the start of September to the end of June / early July, with breaks at Christmas and Easter and half terms. There are typically 8 or 9 rehearsals in both Spring and Summer, 7 or 8 for the November concert and about 4 or 5 rehearsals for our Advent/Christmas concert.

Additional rehearsals may be scheduled on a Friday evening before the concert at the Music Director's discretion. The final rehearsal is usually on the afternoon of the performance.

Members are expected to take responsibility for learning the music for each programme.

Southern Voices does not have an Assistant Music Director or accompanist, so the Music Director is expected to direct and accompany on piano at rehearsal as necessary with much of the rehearsal often taken a cappella. An accompanist is sourced for concerts.

The Secretary maintains attendance registers and they are expected to share these with the Music Director when required.

Southern Voices may be prepared to vary the rehearsal day to secure the services of the right candidate.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

In the past, the Choir has made successful tours to Braunschweig, Germany, where we collaborated with Choirs from Germany, Poland and Latvia to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII, and previously to the Loire Valley and Florence.

These tours have allowed the repetition of recently performed repertoire, which has further enhanced the unity within the Choir as well as being immensely enjoyable.

Southern Voices is not a Choir that is motivated by participating in competitions. However, it would welcome the opportunity to perform in festivals.

The Choir has in the past promoted choral workshops which have been open also to members of other choirs.

We have also facilitated collections at the end of selected concerts to support other charities.

There is a limited programme of social events; this continued with on-line quizzes during lockdown which strengthened the Choir's unity.

THE COMMITTEE

Committee members from the Choir are elected by the Choir members in accordance with the Choir's constitution. As the Choir is a registered charity, each member of the committee is a Trustee and therefore, by law, cannot be remunerated. The conductor of the Choir shall not be a voting member of the Executive Committee but shall be given notice of committee meetings and shall have the right to attend except when the conductor's contract is being discussed.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The Choir is motivated to continue to develop and improve and reach out to potential new members and a wider audience. In particular, Southern Voices wishes to:

- Recruit younger members and strengthen the tenor, bass and soprano sections.
- Continue to discover new and unfamiliar repertoire alongside established chamber chorus works.
- Perform works to an increasingly high standard so that the music speaks to our audiences.
- Develop audiences beyond the family and friends who currently form the backbone of our support.
- Tour periodically whilst ensuring that members are not excluded through cost.
- Develop new media opportunities for publicity and recognition.
- Consider working in collaboration with other artists and media as occurred for example at the Southampton City Art Gallery concert in 2019.

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