

AYLESBURY CHORAL SOCIETY

<https://www.aylesburychoral.org.uk>

Chair: Dr Christopher Dalladay



INFORMATION PACK



Introduction

Aylesbury Choral Society (ACS) was founded in 1932 by Charles Pope, who lived locally and did so much for the musical life of the town. Its first president was Rutland Boughton, Aylesbury's own 'classical' composer, much admired by Sir Edward Elgar.

With an initial eleven members, the Society concentrated mostly on madrigals and part songs. After a very successful appearance at the Buckingham Festival, the Society began to grow, and consequently started to expand its repertoire. Our numbers continued to increase as we developed into a well-established Choral Society within the town and one of the leading groups in Buckinghamshire.

ACS are seeking a dynamic and creative Musical Director to succeed Jeff Stewart who has been with us for about ten years. The position will become vacant for September 2025 with a potential to commence after our concert on April 5 2025.

We rehearse on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 - 9:30pm at The Church on Fairford Leys, Aylesbury (HP19 7HT). We usually put on three concerts per year in venues within the town (most commonly, St Mary's Church in the town centre). These are normally early December, late March/early April and late

June. We usually rehearse for thirteen weeks each in the Autumn and Spring, and eight in the Summer (34 weeks in total over the year). Our programmes are varied, with the Autumn and Spring concerts frequently being of a 'classical' nature - at least one with orchestra - and the Summer concert is often of 'lighter' music such as choral items from the "Encores for Choirs" and "In the Mood" books, or a cappella madrigals, anthems and motets.

We are extremely fortunate to have as our resident accompanist and répétiteur, Colin Spinks.

Our concerts

Our 2023-2024 season comprised:

- J.S. Bach *Christmas Oratorio* (cantatas 1-4); with orchestra
- A concert of 'Magnificats', including Bach, Vivaldi, Purcell, Walmisley, Dupré, and Pärt; with orchestra
- A concert of largely a cappella music, matching Palestrina's *Missa Brevis* and three motets by Bruckner in the first half with 'lighter', more contemporary vocal works in the second.

Our current 2024-2025 season:

7 December 2024	G. Rossini <i>Petite Messe Solennelle</i> ; with piano and harmonium
5 April 2025	Mozart <i>Coronation Mass</i> and Marianna Martines <i>Quarta Messa</i> ; with orchestra
21 June 2025	Opera choruses with some solo arias; accompanied on the piano

The planned programme for the 2025-2026 season (though some input from the new MD would be most welcome) includes:

6 December 2025	Bruckner <i>Mass in e minor</i> , Tippett <i>Spirituals</i> , etc.
28 March 2026	Fauré <i>Requiem</i> and Duruflé <i>Requiem</i> ; though the Fauré may be replaced with the <i>Requiem</i> by John Rutter; with orchestra
20 June 2026	programme to be confirmed

Works planned even further ahead include Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Bach's *Mass in b minor*, and Mozart's *Requiem*.

ACS's membership is currently around 50, though we are exploring how we might recruit more men as the numbers of tenors and basses are quite low. We tend to have a slightly smaller ensemble in the Summer (30-35).

Who do we need?

We have been fortunate that our current (and previous) MD is able to supply excellent musicians as both soloists and to form ad hoc orchestral ensembles (which we 'label' as *The Aylesbury Sinfonia*). The soloists are frequently superb musicians just starting out in their careers and the instrumental members are, many of them, now 'old friends' of ACS who play with us regularly. As a lecturer at some of the greatest conservatoires in the country, as well as being a professional opera singer and vocal coach, Jeff Stewart is often able to call upon students from the colleges and conservatoires of London as well as other personal contacts. We would be particularly looking for the next MD as someone who could also arrange for suitable soloists and orchestral musicians and budgets will be presented to the MD for such purposes. Currently, we generally pay £350 per soloist and between £100 and £200 for orchestra members (these fees are deemed to include travelling expenses).

We need an MD who is at home with both 'classical' choral works - the major works of the repertoire, the shorter, less well-known works, and the contemporary fields - and the lighter repertoire such as music from musical theatre, the jazz age and popular genres.

He/she will be a dynamic and 'fun' leader who can enthuse our members and motivate them to want to continue to be part of what is arguably the leading choir in the area, and who will have ideas for how we might recruit new members and, thus, grow. They will also be experts in the field of vocal development so that we might grow in our abilities as well as numbers.

Rehearsals

Typically, each rehearsal begins at 7:30pm with ten minutes or so of warm-up activities. We then rehearse until around 8:20/8:30pm. We break for fifteen minutes and coffee/tea/juice is available to those who wish some; then we rehearse again until 9:30pm. About three times each term, we have a raffle in the interval with prizes supplied by each voice part (sopranos, altos and men). Also, on occasion and generally towards the beginning of a term, the MD will be expected to carry out a brief voice assessment for any new members. We do not audition as such but, but carry out these assessments to ensure that members sing in the choir section most appropriate for their voice. It is especially helpful where divisi works are sung.

Other information

The MD is an ex officio, co-opted member of ACS's committee (non-voting) of ten members and has an input into many of the workings of the Society as far as he/she would like to contribute. They will

also be a member of the 'music sub-committee' whose function is to plan future programmes and repertoire. The executive committee comprises:

Chair (Christopher Dalladay)

Honorary Secretary

Treasurer

Membership Secretary

Concert Manager

Librarian

Webmaster and Social Events

Marketing and Publicity

Venue Liaison

Social Media

We have a range of social activities throughout the year and the MD will wish to support those, though this is not an official part of their role. This year, we are planning a quiz night in November, a members' entertainment evening in February, and a professional musical comedy evening in May (Victor and Albert, <https://timandroly.com>).

Our income and expenditure each year currently runs at about £22000 - 24000 and, we frequently come close to breaking-even over the year as a whole, so we are in a good financial position at present.

We have a set of staging for use when required (e.g. for larger, orchestral concerts) which is stored in a public storage facility when not in use.

ACS is a registered charity, charity number: 274768.

ACS is a member of *Making Music* (<https://www.makingmusic.org.uk>)

Fees

Current fees for the MD are:

Rehearsals £115 per week (2 hours plus preparation; 34 weeks per year)

Concerts £500 per concert. This to include on-the-day rehearsal from 2pm

These fees equate to £5410 per annum which we believe is highly competitive for choirs such as ours.

Orchestras are not normally rehearsed before the rehearsal on the concert day.

Please note that the quoted fees are generally inclusive of travel expenses.



Applications

Applications should be made by one of these means, please....

- Please download an application form from the following web-page: <https://www.aylesburychoral.org.uk/dbpage.php?pg=mdposition> (where you can also find a job specification) and send the completed form together with a CV and any other supporting documents you care to include (e.g. references). This should be sent to Dr C. Dalladay at 24, Chiltern Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP21 8BT;
- An electronic version of the above to be emailed to acschairman@gmail.com. Please mark the 'subject line' to include the words *MD application*.

Verbal queries can be to the same address as above or to 0781 477 3919.

Emailed queries can be made to acschairman@gmail.com

Text messages can be sent to 0781 477 3919.

Application deadline: Friday 30th November 2024 at noon.

Interviews (probably online) will be held in the week beginning 6th January 2025 and short-listed candidates will conduct a portion of a Tuesday night rehearsal later in January 2025 when the members will have a say and be able to vote on who they feel is the most suitable MD for the choir. Candidates will be notified of the results within 14 days following this.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Also available to view on the web-page detailed above is a copy of our latest member newsletter (annual), the 'friends' newsletter (termly), a flier for our up-coming concert in December, and a copy of our generic recruitment flier. Please also look at our website (<https://www.aylesburychoral.org.uk>).