Hutton & Shenfield Choral Society

WELCOME LEAFLET

Welcome to the Hutton and Shenfield Choral Society. Our Society has a high reputation locally for its professionalism, musical performance and standard of singing. We are proud of our success and strive to keep our standards high. In order to do this we have adopted guidelines as detailed below. If you need to know anything else, please ask. The Committee members will be happy to help and answer any questions. (You will find the names of these people at the end of these notes). The Society's website, (www.hscs.org.uk), also has important information and links to help with singing.

Membership of the Society is by probation for your first term. The Music Director will first hear you sing a few notes just to decide the section which suits you best. At his discretion he may ask to hear you from time to time as he sees fit to establish that members are still in the correct section and move them accordingly, as voices change and so does the balance of the choir.

An elected committee of officers and ordinary members runs the Society. These are appointed at our AGM. Any member of the choir may vote in these elections. We expect all members to help out from time to time, with things like practical help on concert days, social events, fund raising and, most importantly, by selling concert tickets.

We have put the following notes together to help you settle in as quickly as possible. Please read them carefully and keep for them reference.

Above all, the most important thing is to enjoy yourself and have a good time making new friends and singing some of the most beautiful music in the world!

REHEARSALS

It is expected that all members make a commitment to attend all rehearsals, and spend time at home learning the music. We rehearse at Holly Trees School, Vaughan William Way, Brentwood, on Mondays from 7.15pm to 9.30pm. Please arrive promptly. Normally rehearsals are only held in school term times, but they may occasionally occur on Bank Holidays or Half Term weeks. For some more demanding pieces of work we may also schedule an additional Saturday morning rehearsal. Such extra rehearsals may have to be held in a different venue in the Brentwood area. The Society Notice Board has a list of rehearsal and concert dates, so please check this regularly at rehearsals or online. On the day of a concert we rehearse with the orchestra and soloists during the afternoon, with the performance in the evening. It is important that every effort is made to attend the last Monday rehearsal before a concert together with the afternoon rehearsal on concert day.
Please sign the attendance registers every week – they will be on the back tables as you enter. If you know in advance, please also indicate any rehearsal that you are unable to attend. In order to sing in a concert, you must normally have attended approximately 80% of rehearsals. However, if you are unable to attend as many as this, it does **not** necessarily mean you will be unable to take part. Please advise the Membership Secretary who will liaise with the Music Director to make the final decision.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription is fixed at the AGM in early autumn. You will be given a discount in your first season with the choir.. After that you will be charged the annual rate, (pro-rata for your first year). Under 25's pay less. Please pay your subscriptions promptly after the AGM. If you are an income tax payer we urge you to Gift Aid your subscriptions. The Society is a Registered Charity, (No 273001), and so we can increase income by claiming back the tax at no cost to you. The Subscriptions Secretary is responsible for collecting subscriptions. It is possible to pay in full or by instalments. Please speak to the Subscriptions Secretary if you wish to discuss this..

CONCERTS

We usually perform three concerts per season. Members are expected to take part in all of them unless personal circumstances intervene. (Should this happen, you may still attend rehearsals if you wish). We strive to maintain a professional approach to performance. The concert manager will give instructions prior to each concert on matters such as getting on and off stage and expected etiquette on stage.

Concert dress is:

Ladies: Ankle length black skirts or smart black trousers (no jeans), and a long sleeved black blouse with or without a collar, or ankle length long sleeved black dress. Please only wear discreet jewellery, as flashing reflections can distract the audience.

Gentlemen: Black dinner suits with white shirt and black bow tie. Cummerbunds, if worn, should also be black. For some concerts the gentlemen wear a black shirt.

For most concerts we hold our music in the Society's own black folders which are provided by the Society. These should be held in the left hand as you walk onto the stage, and you must watch for the Music Director to lower his arms at the end of the piece before closing your folder.

MUSIC

We provide you with music for each concert, the cost of this forming part of your subscription. You will be provided with a plastic folder to keep the music in and suggest you have a piece of scrap paper for general notes – please do not use scores for this. You should bring a soft pencil and rubber to every rehearsal, to mark your score with the Music Director's instructions as to how he wants the work performed. Do not make any permanent markings in scores. Music must be returned, with all markings rubbed out, in the plastic folder promptly after a concert, usually at the very next rehearsal. (late

returns or damaged or defaced scores may involve the Society in penalties from lending libraries, and any such charges may have to be passed on to the member responsible). If you are not able to attend the first rehearsal after a concert, please make other arrangements to return your music, such as giving it to another member.

It may be that you have your own copy of music for a concert, which you would prefer to use. If so, please let the library co-ordinators know well in advance, so that music does not have to be ordered for you. The music Co Ordinator may also bulk buy copies for individuals to purchase their own copy if they so wish.

Finally, if you know you will not be able to sing in a particular concert, please inform the Membership Secretary as soon as possible. If you are going to miss a rehearsal, please contact the Membership Secretary on tel.01277 200056 / 07939 255772 or e mail Deborah_gill@btopenworld.com

TICKETS

Live music is a costly business and when we perform with an orchestra and soloists we need to sell a lot of tickets to break even – each concert costs on average £9,000 to £10,000 to put on. Inevitably, we make a loss on large-scale concerts, as do most amateur choral societies. We are highly dependent, therefore, on ticket sales and seek to maximise these to ensure that losses are manageable. Most sales are through our members, so PLEASE do your very best to sell as many as possible.

Tickets, together with advertising, handbills and posters, will be available at rehearsals. For most concerts, tickets can be taken on a sale or return basis, so please collect as many as you think you might sell. Money from sales should be given to the Tickets Manager, preferably by the last rehearsal before a concert, or, failing that, by the next rehearsal after a concert at the very latest.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Social events are sometimes held at the end of term in the rehearsal hall, and also a Quiz Night during the year to raise money for the Choir.

COMMITTEE

Our elected committee comprises of the following:

Jane Davenport – Chair
Bob Scott – Vice–Chair
Esme Burton – Secretary
Ian Hollocks – Treasurer
Marina Maher – Concert Manager
Pat Clark – Subscriptions Secretary
Deborah Gill – Membership / Social Secretary
John Kelk – Music Co Ordinator
David Philpott – Publicity Officer

Ex-officio:
Music Director