

## Information for prospective members

### Background

In the 62 years since its inauguration, Sydney University Graduate Choir has steadily broadened its repertoire and improved its standard of performance. In particular, since 1992, under the direction of Music Director Christopher Bowen, the choir's reputation for high quality performances has grown, and the addition of a chamber choir in recent years has played a part in this. The choir is incorporated as an independent body affiliated with the University of Sydney, and has a close relationship with the University's Alumni Relations Office (who provides the rehearsal venue for our concerts).

### Performances

The choir has a membership of approximately 120 singers of whom around half are graduates. You do not have to be a graduate to join the choir. The choir stages three concerts a year, normally in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney (sometimes with two performances: on Saturday night and Sunday afternoon; and sometimes in academic dress). The rehearsals of the music for a concert make up a term (so, there are three terms in the year). The choir sings mainly large-scale choral works and is accompanied by a chamber orchestra of professional musicians. Recent performances have included Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Bruckner's *E Minor Mass*, *Saints-Saëns' Mass*, Haydn's *Saul*, Mendelssohn's *Paulus*, Brahms' *Requiem* and a number of specially commissioned works by Australian composers including Christopher Bowen.

In three recent years the choir has performed Handel's *Messiah* with an invited guest choir in Sydney Town Hall and in 2013 used a similar format for a very successful performance of the *Verdi Requiem*. In 2014 we will be performing the *Australian War Requiem*, commissioned to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1. This performance will feature the choir, children's choir, soloists and large orchestra.

The choir's members also join members from the Central Coast Chorale and the Sydney Community College Choir in the annual 'Christmas at Sydney Town Hall', performing a program of readings and carols conceived by the Sydney City Organist Robert Ampt.

### Choir Structure and Balance

When a person applies to join the choir, the application is considered by the Music Director, taking into account the current numbers in each voice part. The choir operates a waiting list for some voice parts. There are also limited opportunities for those interested in joining the choir to attend a rehearsal as an observer. Further details can be obtained from the New Member Liaison Officer.

### Auditions

New applicants, and former choir members whose membership has lapsed, are required to audition so that the Music Director can assess voice quality, previous musical and choral experience, and ability to read music. Auditions take 5-10 minutes and are conducted privately

before or after rehearsal, generally at the commencement of a musical term, in an informal and friendly atmosphere. Applicants can bring along the music of any song or piece that they would like to sing. If you do not have any music or you have not previously sung with a choir, then you will be asked to sing some scales or vocal exercises so that the Music Director can determine your vocal range. Sometimes singers are admitted on a probationary basis. It is expected that if they undertake extra work on their singing over a six-month period (for example, have some lessons) and reach a standard which satisfies the Music Director, their membership will subsequently be confirmed. **Arrangements for auditions are made through the New Member Liaison Officer, Sue Scott [newmembers@sugc.com.au](mailto:newmembers@sugc.com.au).**

### Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held at the Forest Lodge Primary School in Glebe from 7.30 – 10pm every Monday, with periodic sectional rehearsals for voice parts from 7-7.30pm. Some parking is available on the primary school grounds and street parking is also available. For some concerts, there is also a compulsory weekend workshop. Copies of the score are distributed by the librarian at the beginning of each rehearsal term. Using scores not recommended by the Music Director is not optimal, and it is recommended that members avail themselves of copies through the choir library. Scores can be hired for the duration of the term for a non-refundable fee (usually \$15). In some circumstances scores can also be purchased at or near cost price.

### Commitment required of singing members

Please see the Singing Member's commitment document.

### Fee Structure

For information about fees, please see the Choir Fees document.

### Chamber Choir

For information on the Chamber Choir, please see the separate document on that subject.

**For more information about joining the choir, please contact:**

**Sue - New Member Liaison Officer**

**Email: [newmembers@sugc.com.au](mailto:newmembers@sugc.com.au)**