

Twickenham Choral is seeking a new Conductor for September 2024

Twickenham Choral, one of the foremost choirs in South West London, is looking to appoint a new conductor for September 2024 following the retirement of Christopher Herrick after 50 years with the choir.



During Christopher's tenure the choir has gone from strength to strength. We are looking for a skilled, ambitious and motivating conductor to continue this journey.

Twickenham Choral is an auditioned choir of c.90 singers drawn from South West London. We rehearse on Thursday evenings in Twickenham, and perform in venues local to Twickenham and in central London. Our repertoire is ambitious and challenging and includes new commissions, notably and most recently from Roxanna Panufnik and Iain Farrington for our centenary celebration in 2021/22. With our new Young Composers scheme we will continue to commission new works.

We perform a minimum of three major concerts per year in December, March/April and June/July with rehearsals during term time from September to June. We currently engage the Brandenburg Sinfonia and professional soloists for all our concerts. We also occasionally join with other choirs to perform major choral works in major London venues.

This is an exciting time for the choir following our recent centenary celebrations in 2022 and we are looking for the right individual to take us forward. If you would like to explore this opportunity we look forward to hearing from you.

In this document you will find more details on the role, the essential skills and qualities we are seeking and the application process.

Helen Coulson

Chair,

Twickenham Choral

www.twickenhamchoral.org.uk

Registered Charity: 284847



Twickenham Choral – An Overview

The enduring presence of Twickenham Choral, as we are now known, is testament to the commitment and success of the choir since its inception 100 years ago. During this time the choir has been ever present and continued despite challenges, not least over the 18 months when the pandemic prevented us from singing together in person on more than a handful of occasions let alone perform a concert. Yet the membership of the choir and the support we bring to one another has endured and we have embraced new and innovative ways to continue our learning and singing.

Over the past century, the choir has grown to become one of the leading amateur choral societies in South West London with an enviable reputation. These achievements are the result of great partnerships between the choir, our conductors and accompanists. This has enabled us to attract many eminent musicians over the years, not least our current conductor Christopher Herrick. During his tenure, Christopher has challenged us to learn, improve, tackle demanding works, new repertoire, give of our best and, above all, enjoy what we do.

Members join for a variety of reasons – to continue their love of singing, challenge themselves or try something they have always wanted to do. Whatever the reason, we bond together as a choir in our love of music. Many members have formed great and lasting supportive friendships.

As we look forward we want to ensure that Twickenham Choral continues to provide the opportunity for talented singers to challenge themselves, support composers with the commissioning of new choral works and provide enjoyment to our audiences.

Twickenham Choral is a registered charity. Our finances are well managed and we attract sponsorship from local businesses as well as grant funding and donations. We have a thriving committee of experienced members who expertly manage all aspects of the choir. We consult our members on repertoire and planning is done by the committee alongside the conductor. Repertoire frequently includes works in original languages. As part of our centenary legacy we have established a 'Young Composers Fund' with the aim of commissioning new choral works every two to three years.

In addition to concerts in the Twickenham area and central London, we undertake a tour every two years around Easter time. Recent destinations have included Bratislava, Vienna, Perugia and this year we will be heading to Salamanca. We also from time to time hold a one-day public workshop on a choral work that we are rehearsing. This is usually once every two or three years.

Conductor Overview

We are looking for a dynamic conductor with experience, commitment and enthusiasm to lead us.

The principal responsibility of the new conductor is to enhance and further develop the choral singing of the choir in both repertoire and performance.

The conductor is expected to:

- Take all, or most rehearsals for concerts and events promoted by Twickenham Choral (TC). Our rehearsals are on Thursday evenings in term time.
- Conduct all public performances unless agreed otherwise. These are usually on a Saturday.
- Take the musical lead in other choral events organised by TC as and when planned and promoted, such as choral workshops and tours.
- Liaise and agree with the Accompanist and Committee to ensure that all the musical leadership requirements of rehearsals and performances are covered. This includes engaging a deputy on occasions when the conductor is not available.
- Plan all rehearsals to ensure the choir's readiness for all events is achieved.
- Audition all new members to ensure they meet the standard agreed by the Conductor and the Committee.
- Re-audition existing members periodically to ensure the musical quality of the choir is maintained and that members are singing their appropriate voice part. (This is currently every three years).
- Advise on the vocal balance of the choir and whether any action needs to be taken to maintain a balance.
- Work with the committee to select and plan the repertoire for future seasons, liaising with the librarian on the editorial versions and availability of scores.
- Advise/recommend on the replacement of the Accompanist as and when this role becomes vacant.
- Recommend and appoint all professional musicians engaged by TC, such as solo singers and orchestral players, subject to the committee's approval. (Note that we currently work with an established orchestra fixer).
- Attend committee meetings, on an evening other than the usual rehearsal evening, when required to do so. The conductor is an ex-officio member of the committee. There are usually four meetings a year.
- Actively promote the choir e.g. through local and established networks as well as their personal network, interviews etc. through a variety of platforms.

Conductor – Professional Requirements

Experience & Skills

- Professional musical training.
- Experience in training and conducting large mixed choirs for excellent public performance.
- Experience in conducting professional orchestras, both chamber and full sized.
- Experience in conducting a varied repertoire of choral music.
- Ability and knowledge to recommend suitable and balanced musical programmes, together with players and soloists.
- Demonstrate and work with the financial constraints of amateur choirs and plan appropriate repertoire accordingly.
- Focus on continual training and improvement of the choir's vocal sound.

Conductor - Personal Qualities

- Committed, energetic, enthusiastic and adaptable.
- Patient and willing to work with singers with varied sight reading abilities to performance standard.
- Ability to work with the Committee to improve and maintain high standards with the choir, whilst respecting the choir's purpose for education among the diverse membership.
- Committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Punctual, reliable and well organised.
- Demonstrate strong and clear communication skills.
- Have a good sense of humour.
- Be willing to compromise when proposing choir repertoire.
- Feel comfortable working with choir, orchestra and soloists in performance.
- Demonstrate the ability to make a positive impact on the choir, whilst inspiring and challenging the choir to tackle unfamiliar and challenging repertoire as well as well-known choral works.
- Be willing to make a strong commitment to Twickenham Choral and participate in tours and occasional social events.

Contract

Initially for a three year period , renewable for a further three year period ongoing, subject to the agreement of the conductor and committee.

The contract may be terminated by either party by giving at least one year's notice.

Remuneration: in the current year is £1,670 per concert plus £159.50 per rehearsal and a termly administration fee of the same amount once a term. This is reviewed annually in line with RPI and Government statistics on average earnings.

Application Process

Process and Planned Schedule

- Vacancy publically advertised 14th December 2023 – 26th January 2024
- Applications received by midnight 26th January 2024
- Applications reviewed and shortlisted for interview by February half term.
- Interviews for shortlisted applicants post February half term.
- Selected shortlisted candidates take trial rehearsal with the choir early March. Several rehearsal options will be available.
- Successful candidate offered Conductor position no later than end May 2024.
- New conductor takes up appointment 1st September 2024

Applications

Please send your application by email to: secretary@twickenhamchoral.org.uk

If you have any queries about the application process then please address these to Gill Zettle, secretary at the same email address.

Your application must be sent in MS Word or PDF format and attached to your email.

Your application will be acknowledged by return.

Your application should include the following:

- A covering letter explaining why you are applying for the role and what you feel you can bring to TC
- Personal details, contact information, education and background.
- CV of experience
- References and testimonials – references from 2 professionals and testimonials from at least 2 choirs with which you have worked?
- Your vision for the choir in five years' time

Candidates shortlisted for interview will be required to submit a proposed musical repertoire for the next three years. They should note that venues have already been booked up to summer 2025 and music for the December 2024 concert provisionally agreed/on order.

Thank you for your interest in Twickenham Choral and we look forward to receiving your application.

A reminder that the closing date for applications is midnight on 26th January 2024. Applications received after this date may not be considered.

