

# **East Malling Singers Members' Handbook**



**April 2021**

To be reviewed in April 2022

Note that adjustments to our operations are made as necessary to conform with the prevailing Government restrictions due to Covid19. Please follow the latest guidance you receive.

# Welcome

*Whether you are: curious; a prospective member; or an existing member you are most welcome to browse through this handbook. The East Malling Singers community while an amateur choir is a professional and really fun place to sing, with a thriving social life outside our practice sessions, which take place on Wednesday evenings. We are a very welcoming group that prides itself on enabling singers to develop their vocal and music skills to achieve high standards in performance.*

*Over the 50 years we have been singing together, the choir has grown from modest beginnings to one with a membership of over 80 voices that delivers a truly impressive sound, yet we have maintained our values of having fun.*

*Please read on to find out more about us.*

# East Malling Singers

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# Introduction

East Malling Singers is a community of choral music lovers, which presents varied concerts that include favourite works and also introduces music that is not as well known. We perform unaccompanied as well as working with guest accompanists, orchestras, solo singers and instrumentalists.

We are proud of our community atmosphere and enjoy social events, as well as music making together.

We are committed to:

- a high standard of performance by providing opportunities for members to develop their musical skills through working with orchestras, solo singers and rehearsals that challenge and inspire;
- sharing our love of music with as many people as possible through sell-out performances in a relaxed and friendly but professional atmosphere;
- the future of the choir and working to maintain musical and financial viability;
- efficient choir management and effective communication between the committee and the membership.

The committee has established policy statements, which are available for members to consult, on issues of importance to the management of the choir. These policy statements cover a range of issues including: data protection; health and safety; and safeguarding.

The committee, elected by and from the membership, meets approximately five times per year. It organises concerts and social events and is responsible for appointing a Music Director. All committee members are charity trustees.

This document provides information about the choir for new and existing members, as well as useful tips on how to make the most of rehearsals and performances.

There are two sections to this document. Section 1 contains general information for members. Section 2 lists some basic musical terminology, chronology and tips on how to perform musically.

The EMS constitution is in a separate document.

# 1. Information for Members

## Overview

East Malling Singers, in its present form, was founded by Belinda Hunter in 1971 and directed by her for the next twenty years. David Leeke then took over the baton and led the choir for eight years. In 1999 Benjamin Rous took over from David. Our present choir Music Director is Ciara Considine, who took up her post in 2013. The choir has around 80 members; anyone interested in joining should contact the Membership Secretary.

## Concerts

A minimum of four concerts are usually given each Season, the first in the autumn, the next just before Christmas, and one each in the spring and summer. Most concerts take place in the church of St. James the Great, East Malling and include solo singers or instrumentalists. Some concerts are accompanied by a full orchestra, others by piano or organ. One concert per year may be a Come-and-Sing event with up to forty guest singers. In addition, EMS may participate in local music festivals or accept invitations to sing with other choirs, even abroad.

## Dress

East Malling Singers concert dress is worn for all concerts unless otherwise directed by the concert manager.

Ladies should wear a long-sleeved black top with a red satin flower brooch, long black skirt or trousers, and black shoes. In cold weather they should wear something under the blouse that doesn't show – no polo necks please. Between concerts the brooches are kept by the concert manager; and they are issued to performers at the last rehearsal before the concert.

Gentlemen should wear a black dinner or lounge suit, white shirt, red bow tie and black shoes for all concerts except for the summer one, when they should wear black trousers and a long-sleeved black shirt.

The exceptions to the above are Come-and-Sing concerts, when ladies may be asked to wear white blouses, and gentlemen a black bow tie. The concert manager will confirm the dress code prior to the Come-and-Sing concert.

## Music

The music we perform comprises both sacred and secular from a wide range of styles. A large percentage of our music is borrowed from libraries or other choral societies, while some music has to be hired specially. The copies will be issued by the EMS Librarian, usually without charge, but must be returned immediately after the relevant concert, or earlier if not attending the concert. Copies returned late can incur extra costs in returning them to the lenders, while copies lost, mislaid or damaged must be paid for by the member. Please take good care of all the music and only use a soft pencil for any markings. Please rub out any markings before returning your music after the concert.

We will only provide music for the choir that complies with relevant copyright legislation. Whilst we endeavour to source all our music from libraries, it is not always possible to do so. In those circumstances, and without infringing copyright legislation, we would email the music to choir

members (having first checked the quality) for home printing. A limited number of photocopies would also be available for those choir members who were unable to print their own copies. Any works that ran to more than 10 pages would be professionally printed for all choir members (in those circumstances we may suggest that a small, and purely voluntary, donation be made to help cover the cost of printing).

The society owns a piano and a small quantity of music, mainly books that we use frequently such as 'European Sacred Music' edited by John Rutter, and 'Carols for Choirs' volumes 1, 2 and 3, edited and arranged by David Willcocks and John Rutter. Although these are lent freely, many members prefer to buy their own copies of these works. For concerts that require sheet music, members should use black folders (please ask your section representative for further information).

## **Rehearsals**

Rehearsals take place in the church of St. James the Great every Wednesday from 8 pm until 10 pm. Please try to arrive ready for a prompt start. There is a break for refreshments and notices around 9 pm. There is an attendance register which members should tick on arrival. The register shows section voice parts. Please check that your name is in the correct section and voice part. After rehearsals some members retire to the nearby 'King and Queen' pub – come and join us!

## **Recordings: Sound and Images**

Occasionally the committee may decide to take photographs, or make a video or audio recording of a concert, either for our own interest or to post onto our website or Facebook page. Obviously, if a recording is going to be made as part of a concert, we ensure that everyone in the choir knows about this well in advance. We also obtain the prior permission of any soloists and professional musicians appearing with us before including them in the recording. Finally, the Music Director checks the quality of the performance on the recording before we upload it onto the Facebook page or our website. The Committee believes that such recordings not only add depth to our on-line presence but can also help us to reach a wider audience for our concerts.

The Committee reserves the right to use all images and audio recordings as they see fit.

## **Subscriptions**

The annual subscription rate is set at the AGM and should be paid to the Membership Secretary at the start of each singing year in September. It is possible to arrange instalments if necessary, in which case the final instalment is to be paid by 30<sup>th</sup> March.

## **Committee**

The committee, elected at the Annual General Meeting, makes decisions concerning the operation and funding of EMS. Each section of the choir has a representative on the committee. These Section Reps will raise matters of concern on behalf of members.

## Contacts

Chairman	Elaine Gordon	<a href="mailto:chair@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">chair@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Honorary Secretary	Lisa Dean	<a href="mailto:comeandsing@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">comeandsing@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Honorary Treasurer	Michael Rogers	<a href="mailto:secretary@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">secretary@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Librarian	Michael Taylor	<a href="mailto:patrons@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">patrons@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Membership Secretary	Margaret Mannerings	<a href="mailto:treasurer@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">treasurer@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Concert Manager	Liz Williams	<a href="mailto:librarian@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">librarian@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Publicity Officer	Dominic Monteiro	<a href="mailto:membership@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">membership@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Fundraising Officer	Sue Greenham	<a href="mailto:concertmanager@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">concertmanager@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Section representatives:		<a href="mailto:publicity@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">publicity@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Soprano	Mandy Malas	<a href="mailto:website@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">website@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Alto	Barbara Kavanagh	<a href="mailto:fundraising@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">fundraising@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Tenor	Stephen Kemp	<a href="mailto:boxoffice@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">boxoffice@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
Bass	Bob Norris	<a href="mailto:sopranorep@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">sopranorep@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
		<a href="mailto:altorep@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">altorep@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
		<a href="mailto:tenorrep@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">tenorrep@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>
		<a href="mailto:bassrep@eastmallingsingers.co.uk">bassrep@eastmallingsingers.co.uk</a>

## Patrons

The patrons' scheme was launched in July 1999 with the retiring conductor, David Leeke, becoming the first lifetime member. Patrons of East Malling Singers receive a discount on concert tickets, acknowledgement in concert programmes, a Christmas card, and are invited to participate in social and fund-raising events. There are currently around 30 subscribers to the scheme, including several choir and regular audience members. The patrons' scheme is run by the Secretary.

## Making Music

EMS is a member of Making Music (formerly the National Federation of Music Societies). This is an organisation that represents and supports over 2,500 voluntary music groups throughout the UK.

## Maidstone Area Arts Partnership (MAAP)

EMS is a member of MAAP. This is an organisation that represents and supports arts organisations in the Maidstone area.

## Charitable Status

The society was granted charitable status in 2002 (Registered Charity No. 1091754). All members of the committee are trustees of the charity and entrusted with ensuring its stated aims are complied with.

## Data Protection

Member information will only be kept and used by EMS for purposes relating directly to EMS and it will be managed in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act. It will not be shared

with any other bodies except to comply with our statutory obligations or assist in a criminal investigation. A copy of the EMS Data Protection Policy is available for members to consult.

If you would like to know more please contact the Membership Secretary.

## Health and Safety

Health and safety is everyone's responsibility. The following guidance should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety policy for East Malling Singers.

Our rehearsal venue is St James Church. Please make a note of the emergency exits, these will also be shown to you at the start of each term, and emergency evacuation drills will be conducted regularly.

During rehearsals the main door will be the emergency exit.

During concerts emergency exits will be announced. Please listen carefully.

In the event of a power failure:

- Remain in your seats.
- The committee will have torches and will provide basic light.
- If power cannot be restored quickly, then each row of seating will be asked to leave in turn. Please wait for the instruction from the Chairperson or Concert Manager, who will take the role of 'Incident controller'.

In the event of an incident requiring the church to be evacuated;

- Leave the church via the main exit when the alarm is raised.
- Do not pause to collect personal belongings.
- Walk to the muster point, which is the green by the War Memorial at the corner of Church Walk.
- Wait for further instruction from the 'Incident Controller'.
- Please do not leave the muster point unless instructed.
- Remember to leave the roadway free for any emergency vehicles.

Some choir members with mobility issues may need help to leave the church in an emergency. If you think you fall into that category, please speak to your section rep who will help you to identify one or two 'evacuation buddies' who will be able to help you leave the church.

## Websites

[www.eastmallingsingers.co.uk](http://www.eastmallingsingers.co.uk)  
[www.makingmusic.org.uk](http://www.makingmusic.org.uk)  
[www.cyberbass.com](http://www.cyberbass.com)  
[www.choraline.com](http://www.choraline.com)  
[www.musictheory.net](http://www.musictheory.net)  
[www.youtube.com/](http://www.youtube.com/)  
[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)  
[www.johnfletchermusic.org](http://www.johnfletchermusic.org)

EMS's website  
Making Music  
Downloadable audio files for rehearsal of all voice parts  
Suppliers of ChoraLine rehearsal CDs and MP3 files  
An excellent site with music theory tutorials  
Enormous selection of recordings and performances  
Enormous selection of music books and recordings  
Downloadable audio files for rehearsal. Subscription fee applies to access works still in copyright.



# At Rehearsals

Do not attend a rehearsal if you have an infectious condition. If you have any questions or concerns, contact your section representative.

Bear in mind that the conductor has a rehearsal plan and only a limited time during each rehearsal to get through it. In order to maximise the time available to best effect, members are requested to comply with the following guidelines:

## Punctuality

- Arrive by 7.55pm in order to start at 8pm, on the dot.
- Return to your seat and be ready to start again as soon as possible after the end-of-break bell.

## Discipline

- Try to concentrate on the rehearsal, following the conductor.
- Listen. Take note of what is being said, even if it is not directed at your voice part.
- Don't chat. Keep chatting to non-rehearsal times, i.e. before 8 pm, during the break, and after 10 pm! Chatting includes asking: "Which page are we on?", "Where are we starting from?" etc.

## Difficult bits

- The conductor can hear whether the effect she wants is correct, and will rehearse areas of music/parts if they need it.
- If you are puzzled by part of the music, speak to the conductor at break or after rehearsal.

## Take Notes

- Always bring a soft black pencil (HB, B, or 2B) and a rubber.
- Take note of the details we rehearse, especially dynamics, and key places where it is crucial that everyone watches the conductor closely.
- Always erase your (and any other) notes from hired music before return.

## Practice

- If possible, practise at home, especially those items given particular attention at rehearsal.

By adopting these guidelines we will all gain enormously from focused rehearsals.

## At Concerts...

**Smile!** 😊 when standing for the first time. It really makes the audience feel welcome. Also try to look happy during a performance – unless the music is very sombre – as it shows the audience that we are enjoying ourselves and have confidence in our performance.

Please follow the directions for seating and sit where you are asked to by the concert manager or music director. The seating order has been carefully planned and needs to be adhered to if we are going to present a polished performance, in looks as well as musicality! If there are any problems, please address these to the concert manager.

Ladies seated in the front row should please sit without crossing their legs! It really does make such a difference to how we look!

If requested and provided by the concert manager, black folders must be used for your music.

During sections of the music where the choir is not singing, look interested in what's going on! Find the page of the next entry quietly and look up at soloists or audience. Be aware of the conductor so you know when to sing again!

Pay attention to the conductor regarding standing and sitting. Please try to do so promptly and quietly when directed.

Similarly, take careful note at the end of a piece and only relax and lower your music/turn the page etc. when the conductor has lowered her arms. Too often, the last sounds of beautiful music have been sadly let down by rustling pages, lowering of books, flapping of arms etc! Try to stay absolutely still until the conductor gives the signal.

When the choir sits (led by a nominated person in the front row) you may applaud soloists etc, but when standing please don't clap – you are receiving applause. If a singer near you forgets this rule or is not aware of it and starts applauding, please tactfully remind them to refrain. And once again, **Smile!** 😊

## 2. Some Musical Ideas

### Introduction from the Music Director

In rehearsing East Malling Singers my first responsibility is to teach the music for our next concert. However, I'm not interested in just teaching pieces - but mainly in how to perform musically, how to learn music, how to sing. I know that for many of you the main concern is to get the right notes in the right place with the right words. I understand that learning notes takes time - I just don't want anybody to get into the habit of thinking that's all they can or have to do.

**As soon as you know the rhythm, notes and words of any passage** (in that order of importance) **you should be thinking about how you can improve the way you are singing it.** Dynamics, articulation, phrasing...

### Watching the Conductor

- ✓ **Look up often!** Hold the music in line of sight with the conductor so that your eyes have to travel less distance between the two!
- ✓ Respond to the beat that you are watching.
- ✓ When the conductor raises her hands to begin, focus on what you are about to sing and **remember the first few notes** so that conductor's downbeat does not equal all heads-down!
- ✓ Only by watching the conductor can we make music together. This is about collective music making which is only possible if you are connected with the conductor and the rest of the choir.
- ✓ With everyone watching, the conductor can guide mood, phrasing, articulation and dynamics so that we are working **together** to make a coherent musical whole.
- ✓ Try to learn the music, (at home or in rehearsal), so that it is not necessary to spend the majority of time with your head in the copy.
- ✓ Compare the isolation of looking into your copy and singing to your feet, with the feeling that you are part of the choir and performing to an audience...

### Listening

- Check that the sound you are actually producing is really what is wanted! Try singing along to the recording at home so that you can hear yourself properly without others around you.
- **Pitch** – to help tuning, before singing out loud imagine the sound of the note in your head and the feeling in your throat of singing that sound.
- **Dynamics** - giving equal effort does not produce equal volume throughout the range of your voice. Usually a rise in pitch will produce a rise in volume and vice-versa. In many cases this is good; it gives a natural shape to a phrase. However, **in larger intervals, like the octave, compensation is necessary to avoid notes sticking out and disturbing the phrase.** Try to spot the places where it might happen and mark them or practise them so it doesn't.

# Some Singing Tips

## *Breathing*

(Russian Orthodox music and other pieces where staggered breathing is needed)

- ❖ Allow plenty of time for breathing, not between notes but missing out notes.
- ❖ Fade out, choosing an irregular place, not always at the end of a phrase!
- ❖ Take a slow, silent, deep breath (filling up from the bottom of your lungs).
- ❖ Fade back in slowly.

## *Legato (=smooth) singing*

- ❖ In legato singing join the end of a word to the beginning of the next.
- ❖ Take care not to accent the beginning of that next word.

## *Phrasing*

- ❖ Unless marked otherwise, *crescendos* (getting louder) and *diminuendos* (getting quieter) should begin at the dynamic that the music is already at - not suddenly quieter at the beginning of a diminuendo and especially not suddenly louder at the beginning of a crescendo!
- ❖ This is partnered by *rubato* (= flexible tempo). Rubato is usually progressive in the same way as *crescendo* (*cresc.*) and *diminuendo* (*dim.*) - not a jump in speed or dynamic but a gradual, subtle quickening and relaxation of pace – **watch the conductor as much as you can to catch this!**
- ❖ The high points of each phrase are not all equally strong, so there is a direction towards the most important climax. **Try to recognise where each phrase is leading and sing towards that point.**

## *Diction*

- ❖ Unless otherwise directed, consonants at ends of words should be placed on the beginning of the next beat. The most noticeable are 's' and 't' and it's especially noticeable when the next beat is a rest.
- ❖ If we all followed this simple rule then we'd all sound together and it would make a huge difference to how professional we sound!

# Practising


Members of the choir are encouraged, whenever possible, to practise their music at home. At the very least everyone should be listening to a recording of the works we are to perform at the next concert.

If you are able to practise at home it is worth both revising what was worked on at the previous rehearsal and looking at what will be rehearsed the coming week. If you miss a rehearsal try to find out what was covered and at least listen to a recording of those passages.


# Some Musical Terms


Some musical terms and signs which it would be helpful to know.


## *Rhythm*


 = breve (not very common – twice as long as a semibreve)

 = semibreve (twice as long as a minim)

 = minim (twice as long as a crotchet)

 = crotchet (often, but not always, one beat)

 = quaver (half as long as a crotchet)

 = semiquaver (half as long as a quaver)

## *Dynamics*

crescendo/cresc. (= getting louder) – watch conductor

diminuendo/dim. (= getting softer) – watch conductor

**pp** = pianissimo (= very soft) – watch conductor

**p** = piano = (soft) – watch conductor

**mp** = mezzopiano = (moderately soft) – watch conductor

**mf** = mezzoforte = (moderately loud) – watch conductor


**f** = forte = (loud) – watch conductor

**ff** = fortissimo = (very loud) – watch conductor

## *Articulation*

staccato (usually indicated by a dot by the notehead – ) = detached notes – watch conductor

legato = smooth – watch conductor

 = (pause) – watch conductor

## *Tempo*

rit. = ritardando or rall. = rallentando = (slowing down) – watch conductor

Accel. = accelerando = (speeding up) – watch conductor

## *Pitch*

octave = 8 notes. For example, an octave higher = 8 notes higher – which is the same note but at a higher pitch.

# Musical Chronology

Below is a list of works from some previous and upcoming EMS concerts, grouped in the five main musical periods with a rough guide to dates. It's useful to be able to put music in its historical context when deciding how to perform it. Try to recognise which period of music a piece we are singing comes from by the way it sounds.

## ***Renaissance (1450-1600)***

Allegri (Miserere)  
Gabrielli (Jubilate Deo)  
Monteverdi (Beatus vir)  
Tallis (Mass for four voices)  
Victoria (O Quam Gloriosum, Ave Maria, Jesu Dulcis Memoria)

## ***Baroque (1600-1750)***

Bach (Jesu Priceless Treasure, Mass in B minor, O Jesu Christ, Meins Lebens Licht)  
Handel (Messiah, Coronation Anthems, Dixit Dominus)  
Lotti (Crucifixus)  
Pergolesi (Stabat Mater)  
Purcell (Dido and Aeneas)  
Vivaldi (Gloria)

## ***Classical (1750-1820)***

Beethoven (Symphony no.9)  
Haydn (The Creation, Nelson Mass)  
Mozart (Requiem, Ave Verum Corpus, Coronation Mass)

## ***Romantic (1810-1910)***

Barber (Agnus Dei)  
Brahms (Nänie, Ein Deutsches Requiem)  
Bruckner (Locus Iste, Ave Maria, Os Justi, Christus Factus Est, Afferentur Regi, Mass in E minor)  
Dvořák (Mass in D, Blessed Jesu)  
Elgar (The Dream of Gerontius, My Love Dwelt In A Northern Land, As Torrents In Summer)  
Fauré (Requiem, Cantique De Jean Racine, Madrigal)  
Franck (Panis Angelicus, Mass in A)  
Gounod (Messe Solennelle de Sainte Cécille)  
Mendelssohn (Elijah)  
Rachmaninoff (Vespers, Liturgy of St John Chrysostom)  
Rossini (Petite Messe Solennelle, O Salutaris Hostia)  
Saint-Säens (Calme Des Nuits, Les Fleurs Et Les Arbres)  
Tchaikovsky (Dostoino Yest, The crown of Roses)

## ***20th Century/Modern (1900 – )***

Bernstein (Chichester Psalms)  
Britten (Saint Nicolas, A Ceremony Of Carols, The Evening Primrose)  
Chilcott (Little Jazz Mass, Nidoros Mass)  
Durufé (Requiem, Ubi Caritas)  
Howard Goodall (Eternal Light)  
Karl Jenkins (Stabat Mater, The Armed Man)  
Morten Lauridsen (O Magnum Mysterium, Lux Aeterna)  
Orff (Carmina Burana)  
Poulenc (Salve Regina, Babar, Gloria)  
Puccini (Messa di Gloria)  
John Rutter (Requiem, various Christmas carols/music, Feel the Spirit)  
Tavener (Song for Athene, Svyati, The Lamb)  
Vaughan Williams (Serenade To Music, Fantasia On Christmas Carols, Five Mystical Songs)

Eric Whitacre (Cloudburst, Animal Crackers, Lux Aurumque)



THE NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF MUSIC SOCIETIES

East Malling Singers – Registered Charity No. 1091754