

## Appointment of Conductor

### Details for applicants

**Application deadline:** 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Start date:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023

**Contract and Remuneration:** The successful applicant will contract with Sheffield Bach Society on a self-employed basis and not as an employee, for 2 yearly terms. Fees are paid for each concert and the rehearsals leading up to that at a rate of £5000 per season.

**Further details:**

Formed in 1950 **Sheffield Bach Choir** is an auditioned choir of currently approximately 45 members coming from across the City of Sheffield and the surrounding area. Like many choirs, in the post pandemic period, the choir has reduced in size and the Committee are hoping that the appointment of a new conductor signals a regeneration of the choir towards its previous strength of around 60 singers.

Since 2020 the choir have performed four major concerts in each season which runs from September each year. A key feature of the choir's calendar is our performances of J S Bach's Mass in B Minor, St John Passion and St Matthew Passion over a three yearly cycle, in addition to Handel's Messiah on the first Monday in December each year. The Society works with professional orchestral players and soloists for most concerts, occasionally also performing with a visiting organist. The choir is a part of the Sheffield Voice-Exchange scheme which enables auditioned singers from other choirs to help boost numbers for some of the larger works we perform, but also means that some of our singers support other choirs too.

The newly appointed Conductor will play a key role in shaping the season's future programmes and supporting the Committee in identifying potential soloists. Programme planning takes place well in advance, so in the absence of a substantive conductor, the Committee have already scheduled the programme for our 2023-24 season which will include a performance of Mendelssohn's' Elijah in the Autumn of 2023 and a joint performance of Brahms Requiem with Sheffield Oratorio Chorus in the Summer 2024. The Conductor is invited to attend meetings of the Committee, approximately 5/6 times per annum where all planning for the Society's work takes place.

Rehearsals are on Monday evenings at Cemetery Road Baptist Church (*Napier Street, Sheffield S11 8HA*) from 7.30 – 9.30pm with a short refreshment/social break. However, some changes to our rehearsal arrangements were made to encourage members to return post-Covid, when the decision was to rehearse from 7.30pm to 9.00pm without a break. Many members missed the more social time and so the Committee are now gradually working towards reintroducing the original rehearsal times. *Currently*, we are still rehearsing from 7.30-9.00 pm *except* on the first Monday in each month when we have a break and finish at 9.30pm. We rehearse from early September through to July each season, with only occasional breaks, primarily for Bank Holidays. The Society employs a rehearsal pianist who often also plays continuo in our performances.

The Society is proud of its long-standing tradition of high-quality music making. All new choir members are required to pass a short audition after attending a few rehearsals to familiarise themselves with the expectations of choir members. Auditions are led by the Conductor and an Officer of the Society and do not currently involve any sight-reading. We do however expect all members to read music well and to take personal responsibility for learning new works outside rehearsal time, with the help of YouTube or similar. To maintain the high standards to which the Society aspires, there is a 5 yearly re-

audition policy, although this has been temporarily suspended until the choir is back to its previous full strength.

Please also see our website: [www.sheffieldbachchoir.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldbachchoir.org.uk) for more information about our history and performances.

#### **Our ideal new Conductor of Sheffield Bach Choir:**

- will have proven experience of working with singers successfully to prepare a choir for its concerts and have the ability to direct performances of a high standard with professional players and soloists
- must be a highly competent musician and a good communicator; bring vitality and enthusiasm to the role and be able to hold the choir to high standards but with patience and good humour
- will bring knowledge of a wide-ranging choral repertoire to the choir and the ability to introduce singers to newer works
- will have the ability to enthuse the choir, retain existing members and, we hope, attract new singers
- will, in the occasional absence of the rehearsal accompanist, have the ability to rehearse the choir from the keyboard

#### **SELECTION PROCESS**

The selection process will include both an interview with the Committee and a session of approximately 45 minutes where each shortlisted candidate will be invited to rehearse the choir in excerpts from Bach's St Matthew Passion. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to lead a rehearsal on either **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March** or **Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March between 7.30 and 9.30pm**. The interviews will take place on a different evening to the rehearsal sessions which will be determined depending upon the number of candidates shortlisted. A conditional verbal offer, subject to satisfactory references and DBS check, will be made to the successful candidate as soon as possible after the selection process. All candidates will be informed of the outcome of the recruitment process after this is confirmed.

**Please send a CV and covering letter outlining the skills and experience you feel you would bring to the role of conductor of Sheffield Bach Choir and including details of 2 referees to the Chairman, Sheffield Bach Society – Mr Christopher Walker [chairman@sheffieldbachchoir.org.uk](mailto:chairman@sheffieldbachchoir.org.uk)**

The closing date for applications is **10<sup>th</sup> February 2023**.

---

#### **ROLE DESCRIPTION**

The Conductor of Sheffield Bach Choir will be required to:

- lead the choir's weekly rehearsals in preparation for concert performances, providing technical and musical guidance on the performance and interpretation of the works being rehearsed
- encourage the members of the choir to achieve the highest standard of music-making in rehearsals and concerts and to enjoy their involvement in the choir
- conduct the society's concerts as shall be agreed with the Committee including rehearsing choir, players and soloists on the afternoon of concert days and lead any other additional musical activities that shall be agreed between the Conductor and the Committee
- lead all auditions for entry to the choir and the 5-yearly re-auditions

- attend, where possible meetings of the Committee, in a consultative capacity. Assist the Committee by proposing music, programming ideas, editions and possible soloists taking into account the rehearsal time and monies available
- prepare programme notes on the works to be performed
- lead rehearsals from the keyboard in the event of the absence of the accompanist
- arrange for and remunerate a suitable deputy if the Conductor is exceptionally unavailable for a rehearsal, except in the event of illness
- maintain an up-to-date DBS check
- lead all the Society's music-making activities except where a Guest Conductor has been invited to take a concert and some/all rehearsals for that concert.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

	SKILLS	Essential	Desirable
1	Highly competent musician	*	
2	Able to hold others to high standards	*	
3	Demonstrates attention to detail	*	
4	Competent keyboard player	*	
5	Ability to instil confidence in others	*	

	KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE	Essential	Desirable
1	Proven experience of working with choral groups	*	
2	Experience of conducting performances with choir, professional orchestra and soloists	*	
3	Knowledge of a wide choral repertoire	*	
4	Knowledge of vocal technique and able to communicate this in an encouraging and accessible manner		*
5	Able to work creatively within financial constraints		*
6	Has knowledge of strategies designed to retain members and encourage interest in joining the choir from additional singers		*
7	Able to lead rehearsals from the keyboard in the absence of the accompanist	*	

	PERSONAL QUALITIES	Essential	Desirable
1	Effective communicator	*	
2	Demonstrates excitement, enthusiasm and vitality	*	
3	Good humoured & personable	*	
4	Shows patience and empathetic understanding of the choir's and individual's needs	*	
5	Confidence	*	
6	Able to inspire others; enthuse excitement and interest	*	
7	Able to challenge under-performance in a supportive and diplomatic way	*	
8	Able to promote members enjoyment of rehearsals and pleasure in performance	*	