



London Oriana Choir

Audition Guide

What we are looking for

To help you pass your audition here is a rough guide to the qualities that are usually required for singing in a choir. Don't worry if you don't have all of these. With the right attitude, most of them can be learnt and singing lessons are available through the choir.

1. Vocal range. Your range should be appropriate to your part.
2. Tone quality. Your voice must be useful to the choir and not be inaudible.
3. Breath control. You should have the ability to sing a phrase of a reasonable length without huffing and puffing.
4. Communication. You must show a commitment to singing out, positive enjoyment of singing and an understanding of the music. This includes musical and physical expression and posture.
5. Dynamic range. You should have the ability to sing a range of dynamics from piano (soft) to a reasonable forte (loud).
6. Diction. You must have a clear presentation and understanding of text with an awareness of the importance of consonants and vowels.
7. Sight reading. You must be able to read music. If not, you will have to have an exceptional voice, a very quick ear and be prepared to take lessons on how to read music immediately.

The audition and result

Your audition will last about 10 minutes and will be conducted by the choir's Musical Director or Associate Conductor. There will also be an accompanist and, if possible, one of the choir's resident singing teachers. It may feel daunting to walk into a room with three people sitting there but they are friendly!

There are three parts to the audition:

- To begin with you will be asked to sing a few scales. This is to find out your potential range – which are your highest and lowest notes and what section of the choir is right for you. (Nos. 1–3 above.)
- Next, you will be asked to sing two pieces of music that you have prepared. This is to see how well you can communicate words and music to an audience so it is a good idea if you can do your pieces by heart. Please bring one accompanied and one unaccompanied piece: it is best if they are songs or arias. Otherwise you could sing a hymn or something you know well. If the accompanied piece has a piano part or you want the pianist to play other parts, you must bring a separate copy or photocopy for them. It is not acceptable to look over their shoulder and face away from the panel. (Nos. 3–6 above.)
- Finally, you will be asked to do a short piece of sight reading. This may well be unaccompanied. Try not to worry about this – most people are much better at it than they think they are. It doesn't matter if you make mistakes; believe it or not everybody has trouble pitching notes! What is important is to try to stay calm and keep the rhythm going, making sure to count your rests as you go. (No. 7 above.)

Normally you will have to wait to receive an email to find out if you have passed your audition, but occasionally the Musical Director may wish to discuss something with you there and then. It could be that you are rusty on a few things and he may suggest that you can join the choir on a trial basis for 3 or 6 months, during which time you will be expected to take some lessons. At the end of the trial period you will be asked to re-audition to demonstrate your improvements – usually a formality by then if you have done your work.

Once you have passed your audition you can look forward to your Wednesday evenings in a well-organised, high quality and thoroughly enjoyable musical environment where you can delight in your singing, improve your voice, perform in first-class venues, have fun and make new friends.