



CORNWALL INTERNATIONAL MALE CHORAL *festival*

01/05/2026 - 03/05/2026

“The World’s Largest Male Choral Festival”

INTRODUCTION

Male voice choirs/ensembles will again have a wonderful opportunity to gather in Cornwall, one of the most beautiful counties of England, for a unique festival of male choir concerts, other singing opportunities, workshops, competitions, socialising and sightseeing.

The male choir tradition in Cornwall has long been a significant part of its cultural life. 30 male choirs are active in the County. New boys choirs are being established here and Boys / Youth Male choirs from across the world will be particularly welcomed.

This **Thirteenth** International Festival will be centred on the very attractive cathedral city of Truro. However, all choirs involved in the Festival will have the opportunity of performing in other venues and tourist attractions in towns and villages across Cornwall.

The previous Festivals (the first was in 2003) were considered resounding successes. Each year the Festival has grown and over 40 choirs participated in 2024. Over 2,000 singers took part in more than 60 concerts and events in 50 different venues including Truro Cathedral, The Hall for Cornwall, Healy’s Cider Farm, St Austell Brewery and the Minack Theatre. Press reports of the Festival have included phrases such as *“exceeded everyone’s expectations”, “a triumph”, “superb opportunity to develop friendships across continents”, “practically every concert was sold out”*.

The Festival aims to bring male choirs from the UK and across the world together to join with Cornish choirs in a spirit of musical friendship and song. In previous Festivals, choirs have come from Australia, Canada, South Africa, France, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Holland, Germany, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Switzerland, Finland, Faroe Islands, Jersey, Poland, Russia, Sweden, USA as well as from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Choirs and ensembles of all sizes, ages and traditions are invited with their supporters to join in this exciting Tenth Festival, and Cornwall looks forward to welcoming you to ‘The World’s Largest Male Choral Festival’!

Gareth Churcher
Festival Director

CORNWALL

Situated in the far south-western part of the UK, Cornwall is known for its ancient heritage, beautiful landscapes, rugged cliffs and golden sandy beaches, picturesque towns and fishing villages, magnificent public gardens (like the Lost Gardens of Heligan) and the stunning Eden Project - which houses a vast global garden within breath taking space-age conservatories.

The National Maritime Museum in Falmouth and the Tate Gallery in St Ives are additions to Cornwall's cultural heritage. It is a wonderful place to visit and an ideal situation for an International Male Choir Festival. Truro, the County town has a superb Cathedral, elegant cobbled streets and Georgian town houses. It is set at the head of the Truro River. Truro is Cornwall's cultural, commercial and administrative centre and has excellent pedestrianised shopping. It also boasts the Royal Cornwall Museum.

TRAVEL TO AND WITHIN CORNWALL

Being in the far south west of the UK, travel to Cornwall takes time! From any of the major London airports, the fastest train journey will take nearly five hours. Coach travel from a ferry or Eurostar / Le Shuttle point of arrival (e.g. Dover or Folkestone) takes seven hours. Newquay Cornwall Airport has limited scheduled services outside the UK. However, choirs have previously chartered aircraft arriving there to participate in the Festival. Exeter, Bristol, and the London airports all have excellent European and worldwide connections. All are served by fast train services to Cornwall.

The Festival's tour operator, Melody Music, maintains up-to-date links with all relevant transport hubs and travel companies and has access to all necessary timetables and other relevant information. Much of this will also be posted on melodymusic-company.com/cimcf. Melody Music can make all travel arrangements for choirs if required and can also assist choirs in making their own travel arrangements.

Melody Music can also negotiate with local bus and coach companies on behalf of visiting choirs for transport from their accommodation to and between Festival events. Because Melody Music maintains contacts with transport companies, they are in a position to obtain favourable rates.

There is no obligation for Choirs to use Melody Music for transport arrangements.

FESTIVAL PROGRAMME

The Festival programme operates in seven main areas.

- **Prestigious International Festival Gala Concerts** involving six to eight choirs from outside Cornwall and some Cornish male choirs in shared concerts. Choirs perform their own short choice of programme individually. These evening events will take place normally on the Friday at Truro Cathedral and other venues on the Saturday and Sunday of the Festival.
- **International Male Choir Competitions** (details are elsewhere in this briefing) with a first prize in each category of £1000. Choirs chose their own programme. The competitions will be held on the Saturday of the Festival.
- **Regional Festival Gala Concerts**, normally involving a number of choirs, will be organised in most of the major towns across Cornwall. Choirs sing their own programme of music. All concerts have professional compères and are almost always followed by "afterglows" - a time of socialising for everyone involved.
- **Daytime Singing opportunities** are organised at the Minack Theatre, Pendennis Castle, Trebah Gardens, Land's End, Healeys Cider Farm, Killacourt Newquay and Princess Pavilions.
- **Festival Workshop and Symposium** will take place over the Festival period.

- **Opportunities for Sightseeing.** There will be ample time during the Festival for all visiting choirs to visit places of tourist interest throughout Cornwall.

Participating choirs can take part in any or all of the above areas. Choirs do not have to compete in the International Competitions, but it is hoped that they will – over twenty choirs have competed in each of the previous Festivals. All choirs have the opportunity to perform in at least three locations across Cornwall during the Festival, and all choirs will have the opportunity to perform in Regional Gala Concerts.

Socialising is an important part of the Festival and, after almost every Regional Gala Concert, “afterglows” give the opportunity for meeting one another and developing longer-term relationships for future exchanges.

The main venues booked for the Festival include the impressive Truro Cathedral with its fine choir acoustics. Other churches, halls and theatres throughout the county will be utilised as Festival venues. Other venues include the unique outdoor Minack Theatre (built high up into the Cornish cliffs overlooking the sea) and the fabulous Pendennis Castle overlooking Falmouth and the Fal Estuary.

It is hoped that visiting choirs will come for at least three nights to incorporate the new 3 day Festival Model we are running this time (Friday to Sunday inclusive). The Monday after the Festival is a public holiday in the United Kingdom.

FESTIVAL ACCOMMODATION

It is a condition of participation that choirs stay in accommodation allocated to them by the Festival Tour Operator, Melody Music. Choirs are not permitted to book their own hotel accommodation. The major reason for this is that the Festival works with and is supported by 20 hotels across Cornwall and needs to make best use of the space available by ensuring all hotels we work with are as full as possible. The accommodation details for this festival may be found at melodymusic-company.com/cimcf.

Accommodation will be organised during the Autumn preceding the Festival with hotels already contracted to provide accommodation for the Festival. All accommodation is at Choir cost. It will be based mainly in and around the coastal towns of Newquay and Falmouth, or Truro, and within travelling distance of Festival venues. Youth Choirs may opt for Hostel or Campsite accommodation via Melody Music.

Twin and double rooms are normally available. Single rooms may be available but are very few in number and will involve paying a supplement. Accommodation is available in the following price bracket:

Accommodation available in 3, 4 and 5 star properties on a bed and breakfast basis, with prices ranging from £40 - £90+ per person per night in twin or double rooms.

The Festival may have a limited fund to offer assistance in special cases to visiting overseas boy choirs.



COMPETITION / FESTIVAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Financial Liability

- 1.1. All choirs participating in the Festival are expected to pay their own travel and accommodation costs. The Festival may assist some choirs from overseas in very exceptional circumstances.

- 1.2. Cornwall International Male Choral Festival Ltd accepts no responsibility for any expense incurred by any choir or individual chorister participating in the Festival.

2. Broadcasting and Recording Rights

- 2.1. It is a condition of participation that choirs agree that:
 - 2.1.1. any performance it gives during the International Male Choral Festival may be broadcast live and / or recorded for subsequent broadcast on radio and / or television without payment to the choir. All broadcasting rights to any performance at the Festival shall belong to the Festival which will be free to dispose of them as it sees fit;
 - 2.1.2. any performance it gives during the International Male Choral Festival may, without payment, be recorded by contractors of the Festival and the Festival shall be entitled to possession of any such recording and shall further be entitled to reproduce any such recording and to sell, let for hire, offer for sale or hire, distribute or otherwise dispose of any recording or reproduction of recording of any such performance in any manner that it sees fit;
 - 2.1.3. for copyright reasons, no sound, video or other recording of performances is made at any event other than those authorised in writing by the Festival Director.

3. General

- 3.1. It is contrary to Law to perform music which has been reproduced illegally. Should a choir do so, the Festival accepts no responsibility for any action taken by publishers.
- 3.2. The Festival accepts no legal responsibility whatsoever in respect of a choir's participation in the Festival and fringe activities.
- 3.3. The closing date for receipt of entry forms and registration fees is **30 September 2025**. However, such is the popularity of the Festival and competition that choirs are advised to apply as early as possible.
- 3.4. The Application Form must be completed and submitted together with:
 - 3.4.1. the Festival registration fee of **£160** (£80 for Cornish Choirs);
 - 3.4.2. a link to a recent (less than 2 years old) short recording of the choir as a sound or video file unless your choir has participated in the 2022 or 2024 Festival. In this case, a recording is not necessary;
 - 3.4.3. a Biography (200 words maximum) included in the application form response.
 - 3.4.4. A photograph of the Choir will be requested at a later stage, closer to the festival. Details of this will come from the festival office.
- 3.5. All submitted to the Festival Office using the online form by the closing date.
- 3.6. The Festival reserves the right to refuse entries and to close registration early, if the festival has reached a maximum level of entries possible.
- 3.7. Participation in the International Male Choral Festival implies acceptance of all the relevant rules and regulations.

4. Festival Entry and Registration Fee

- 4.1. An inclusive registration and entry fee of **£160** exists for participation in any aspect of the Festival. Registration and entry fees cover any concert, the International Competitions, preferential rates at Festival-organised accommodation and all associated events. All choirs are encouraged to register for the Festival as soon as possible as entries will be considered on a first come, first served basis.

5. Festival Selection

- 5.1. Only applicants enclosing all the application requirements will be considered. Choirs are largely selected on the basis of their application material. The Festival Director will be happy to answer any queries choirs may have regarding any aspect of Festival participation. The closing date is **30 September 2025**. Priority will be given to UK choirs (outside Cornwall) that have not participated in a recent Festival.

6. Participation and Application Procedure

- 6.1. Choirs are required to submit the Application Form and other details as set out in this document.
- 6.2. Online submission of entries is required using the form link in an invitation email sent to you or on the Festival website www.cimcf.uk. Bank transfer in GBP sterling of the relevant registration fee is to be made as indicated in the entry form and the applying choir must pay the bank charges **following receipt of an invoice from the Festival Office**. Anyone having difficulty in submission of their entry online must immediately seek advice by emailing the Festival Director at director@cimcf.uk.
- 6.3. All applicants will be notified if their entry has been accepted as soon as possible.

7. International Choir Competitions and Celebration Events

- 7.1. The International Competitions are not obligatory but choirs are encouraged to take part. Three International Choir Competitions will be held on Saturday or Sunday including a Youth Celebration Event:
 - 7.1.1. Category I competition for Adult choirs/ensembles; for Choirs who are more proficient and experienced at choral competition*
 - 7.1.2. Category II competition for Adult choirs; for Choirs who are less proficient and experienced at choral competition*
 - 7.1.3. Celebration Event for Boys and Youth Male and Youth Mixed Choirs.

* Choirs will be able to select their preference to the respective categories and this will be reviewed by the Festival Director who will be supported by a panel of experienced adjudicators. If required a choir will be allocated to a different category if the Festival Director and panel assesses the Choir to have selected the wrong category.

8. Prizes

- 8.1. In each Adult category, prizes will be awarded as follows:
 - 8.1.1. 1st Prize £1000;
 - 8.1.2. 2nd Prize £400;
 - 8.1.3. 3rd Prize £200;
 - 8.1.4. Best Single piece of Music £100.
- 8.2. In addition, Trophies will be presented for:
 - 8.2.1. Best Overall Choir;
 - 8.2.2. Best Overall Conductor;
 - 8.2.3. Best UK and Cornish choirs in each category;
 - 8.2.4. Best UK and Cornish Choirs Overall.
- 8.3. There will also be a Trophy and award for the Best Youth/Boys Choir and an additional Trophy and award for the most entertaining performance.
- 8.4. An international jury will judge each competition and provide a written adjudication for all competing choirs. The same panel will adjudicate all classes.
- 8.5. All prize winners are listed on the Festival's website: www.cimcf.uk.
- 8.6 Youth Choirs will receive a grading for their performance of either Gold, Tin or Copper and associated feedback from the adjudicators.

9. Competition Eligibility

- 9.1. A choir should have been in existence for at least one calendar year prior to the International Male Voice Choral Festival (and must be able, if asked, to substantiate that), all choristers to be at least 14 years old¹ at

¹ Applies to Adult Choir competition only

the start of the Festival. Competing choirs must consist of 12 or more Singers², although smaller choirs may still participate in the rest of the Festival.

- 9.2. All members of a choir, except the conductor and accompanist, must be amateurs (i.e. people who do not earn their livelihood as singers).
- 9.3. No person may compete as a member of more than one choir in the same category and a choir can only compete in one category.
- 9.4. The Festival reserves the right to limit the number of entries for each category, or to cancel or amend a category.
- 9.5. The Festival reserves the right to alter the timetable according to the number of entries received for each category.
- 9.6. Adjudicators' decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding any aspect of their deliberations.
- 9.7. All mark and comment sheets will be made available to choirs after the Festival.
- 9.8. A choir which withdraws from a category, or any part of the Festival, is not entitled to a refund of the registration fee.

10. Competition Repertoire

- 10.1. Repertoire for the competition is at the discretion of Musical Directors. There is no set piece but it is recommended the programme should include one unaccompanied piece.
- 10.2. The competition programme must not exceed 12 minutes. Marks will be deducted where time is not used effectively.
- 10.3. Music copies or lyric crib sheets should not be used on stage by choristers.
- 10.4. It is recommended that the programme should contain at least one unaccompanied piece.
- 10.5. The adjudicators will assess and allocate marks on performance quality, technical difficulty, the variety of musical styles included in the programme and range of period from which the music is selected. Choirs should consider including works by contemporary composers. Adjudicators will also take into account the success of the choir's repertoire in terms of how well the choir communicates with the audience.
- 10.6. Three copies of each item sung in competition must be forwarded to the Festival Office for use by the jury no later than the date specified. Photocopies will only be accepted when accompanied by the full, written authority of the copyright holder. The Festival maintains the right to retain one set of the choir's music for archive purposes.
- 10.7. No changes to competition repertoire can be considered after the date specified.

Cornwall International Male Choral Festival Ltd
c/o CMST Truro School, Trennick Lane, Truro , Cornwall UK TR1 1TH
director@cimcf.uk
www.cimcf.uk

² Applies to all choir competitions