



## Risk Assessment for Choirs

Risk Assessment for the recommencement of choir assemblies for purposes of rehearsal, meetings and participation in services

### References:

- (1) Singing during Covid: Initial Thoughts on Updated Government Guidance on Performing Arts as at 13 August 2020

A musical lawyer's perspective on the updated government guidance on performing arts (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>), focusing on the implications for singers (professional and amateur). This does not constitute legal advice, and those involved in the performing arts should consult the government guidelines, their professional organisations, other professional advisers and insurers as considered necessary before resuming their activities. Government guidelines are summarised and referenced in this article.

- (2) Template for Risk Assessment documents for churches: [risk.advice@ecclesiastica.com](mailto:risk.advice@ecclesiastica.com)

### Observations

- (1) The choir currently comprises 8 members, alongside the Director of Music. While the 2-metre rule is in operation, additional singers will only be permitted if this rule can be rigorously maintained
- (2) The church of St. Matthias is relatively spacious, with high roof and plenty of room in the choir-stalls. The Link room has a lower ceiling, but two large funnels in the ceiling add c. 20% air-capacity to the space. It allows 2-metre distancing for each choir member.
- (3) The choir meets on Thursdays and Sundays, so that 4 days elapse between the 'performance' on the Sunday and the next rehearsal - see 5.5 below.

### Risks

- (1) Infection by physical association on arrival and departure
  - 1.1 Choir members will wear face-masks on entering and leaving the church
  - 1.2 There will be no socialising events, e.g. provision of refreshments
- (2) Infection during rehearsal
  - 2.1 Choir members will be seated 2 metres apart and, when standing, will stand in front of their respective chairs or pews.
  - 2.2 Masks will be worn during distribution of music, and each member will use his or her numbered copy of each item, retained in their particular folder. There will be no sharing of copies. Wherever possible, only the respective member will handle his/her copies.
  - 2.3 No refreshment will be provided: members may bring their own water-bottles.
  - 2.4 Any singer feeling unwell will be immediately excused from attendance.

(3) Infection due to singing

3.1 There is no direct evidence that singing is more prone to the spread of the virus than speaking. Training of good vocal technique will be directly taught and exercised, including the capacity to produce good tone with the minimum expellation of air: one breath should be sufficient for some 15 seconds of singing (ref. the famous candle-test - the candle should not flicker if held 2 feet from the mouth of the singer).

3.2 In the church, singers in the choir-stalls will generally turn slightly west-ward (i.e. not sing directly at each other across the aisle).

3.3. The Link Rom will not be used for rehearsal, although the choir will assemble there to robe and collect music. Here, face-masks will be worn. Areas two metres apart will be designated.

(4) Ventilation

4.1 The church is spacious, with high roof and vast spaces of air. The Link Room, within the church, is more confined, but the two large funnels in its ceiling greatly amplify the volume of air.

4.2 For rehearsals the internal doors will be left open; the large external door will be open, but the outside gate will be locked as usual.

(5) Singing in services (St. Matthias)

5.1 Prior to the service, singers should assemble in the Link Room wearing their face-masks.

5.2 During processions, singers will process in *single file* and in the *centre* of the aisle, but without face-masks, keeping 2-metre distance from the person in front of them.

5.3 In the choir-stalls, singers will space themselves 2 metres apart, wherever possible using only one row each side of the chancel aisle. (i.e. 4 singers each side).

5.4 On return of the procession to the Link Room, singers will immediately replace their face-masks.

5.5 Music no longer required will be placed in receptacles and left for at least 72 hours before being filed by the choir librarian or Director of Music.

5.6 Anyone feeling unwell before or during a service is immediately excused from attending.

(6) It is understood that choir members sing in the choir at their own risk. They are each asked to agree to and carefully the procedures outlined above. Choir members agree that the church cannot be held liable in the event of their catching Corvid-19.

Peter Johnson (Director of Music)  
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