

Wrablers Constitution

Object

To set up a small chamber choir composed of a core of no more than 16 people, meeting weekly or fortnightly, to sing close harmony songs. To allow members to take occasional breaks, the larger group may consist of up to 20 members to cover absences. The group will be self-selecting and each member will be comfortable holding a part alone, and occasionally performing solo or as a lead singer with backing singers.

Membership

Members will be self-selecting but all members will be willing to work in small groups (duos, trios, quartets) and comfortable holding a part on their own and being the only voice on a part, or at least willing to give this a go.

Recruitment

Initially, new members will join by invitation only, and must be able to conform to ground rules as set out below. As the choir matures, other methods of acquiring new members will need to be explored.

New members will be invited to attend a rehearsal and join us in the pub afterwards (we want people who are good to sing with AND good to socialise with). If a potential new member decides they'd like to proceed with an audition, and providing we are recruiting, they will be invited to attend a rehearsal to listen and meet the group. If, after this first meeting, they and we would like to proceed, they will be invited to an audition. This will mean that two weeks before their audition, potential members will be sent a part to suit their voice for two songs in our repertoire and asked to sing them with three others on the night. The object of the audition is to determine whether a new member can hold their part against others, whether their voice is a good fit for the group and whether they gel with us socially.

Recruitment needs will be determined at the AGM at the beginning of every calendar year, and reviewed as necessary throughout the year if members leave or take breaks.

Ground Rules

The group is intended for experienced harmony singers who want to improve their technique and ability to sing close harmony in small groups. Therefore singers must be able to hold a part alone (i.e. in a four-part harmony song, they must be able to sing, for example, the alto part alone). **We are not a community choir.**

Members undertake to take responsibility for their own learning and practice, and to attend rehearsals on a regular basis. Members will maintain their own portfolio of song sheets/lyrics/recordings from which to learn.

The group may additionally provide a forum for members to have a go at singing solo, or as lead singer with the others as backing.

Members are required to attend rehearsals on a regular basis. If they are unable to do so, they will be asked to cede their place in the group to another potential member who can attend more often.

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Wrblers Constitution

Decision-Making

It is proposed that the group be run as a collective, with decisions being made on a consensus-driven and egalitarian basis. (Although group management will be kept to a minimum and singing to a maximum.)

Strategic decisions (regarding recruitment, appointment of a musical director, direction of choir, frequency of meeting, money) require a majority vote, of a quorum. We are quorate if $\frac{3}{4}$ of the membership is present. Therefore if we are 12 members, we are quorate if 8 members are present. A vote is carried by $\frac{2}{3}$ of the quorum plus one. Other, non-strategic decisions do not require a majority and can be voted on without ensuring a quorum.

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All members will share administrative tasks such as chairing meetings and producing minutes on a rotational basis to ensure the smooth running of the choir.

The choir has a website for the sharing of MP3s and other teaching materials at <http://www.wrblers.co.uk/members/>. Any member may upload material to this website, but its contents **are not to be shared with non-Wrblers**, for copyright and other reasons.

A public-facing website is located at www.wrblers.co.uk. This is be used for publicity purposes, eg recruiting new members and to showcase our work to potential bookers.

Both of these sites are currently free to the group as they run as part of one of Wendy's existing sites.

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Key Tasks

Chairing rehearsals – all by rotation

Producing learning schedule – Sebastian

Treasurer – Mercedes

Getting gigs – all

Leading songs – all by volunteering

Website admin – Wendy

Maintaining start – note sheet – Juliana

Producing publicity – all by volunteering

Repertoire

The group will undertake to sing a good eclectic mix of songs drawn from many different musical traditions, including, but not restricted to, jazz, folk, Celtic, E European, gospel, African.

There will be a Repertoire Gang (known informally as the Reprobates) who will select material for the following six months of every year. Membership of this group will change regularly. All members (not just Reprobates) are actively encouraged to offer songs for the repertoire and to undertake to lead songs for the group. This is intended to

- a) enrich the repertoire
- b) develop members' skills in teaching and learning

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Wrablers Constitution

- c) develop confidence
- d) share the responsibility for repertoire
- e) allow members to share songs they love and ensure something for everyone in the repertoire.

Religious songs are not forbidden, but the repertoire will never consist of mainly, or only, religious songs at any given time.

Wrablers will aim to learn a new repertoire of about 10 songs a year. As well as this, a core repertoire of "old favourites" will be kept live by regular revisiting.

Rehearsals

It is proposed that Wrablers meet every two weeks, with one-day weekend rehearsals every two to three months. Additionally, a smaller sub-set (or sub-sets) of Wrablers may meet in the "off-weeks" to work on small group songs.

We will not meet for all-day rehearsals except in the run-up to gigs, and not more often than four times per year.

Rehearsal Elegance

In order to use our time most efficiently at rehearsals, we will follow the following procedure.

1. Song leaders are responsible for having start notes for their songs, and for giving them at rehearsals
2. Members will arrive knowing their parts (including the name of the part they are on, and who their fellow singers are)
3. Knowing one's part is defined as: knowing the notes (melody) of the part, but not necessarily the words, which can come later
4. We arrange ourselves at rehearsals in this formation (semi circle):
5. If a song is transposed up or down at rehearsal, a new myr file and sheet music will be produced for playback and reading purposes. New MP3s will not normally be produced.
6. Feedback on how the song is going will be done through the song leader. No-one should offer feedback until asked, to avoid the general rabble that normally ensues. Every song should be rounded up with feedback. Every song should start with singing through of the individual parts.
7. Sing. Pay attention to the song leader. Don't chat. Sing.

Summer Break

Rehearsals will continue throughout the summer, but no new songs will be introduced during August. New songs for the second half of each year will be selected and shared by June each year.

Wrablers Constitution

Performances

The group will actively seek performance opportunities. All members are encouraged to look for local opportunities for performance opportunities.

It is proposed to book a suitable venue, once or twice a year for a performance which will showcase new work as well as old favourites, but other opportunities are also encouraged.

All members are invited to actively seek new performance opportunities. Members may decline to take part in non-core performances to suit their personal circumstances.

Performances will be appropriately themed to the event or season.

Musical Director

Wrablers has no permanent musical director, as the preferred option is to retain control of our repertoire and management. However, from time to time we may engage a teacher or tutor to coach us on aspects of our performance, and teach us new repertoire.

We will continue to book Wrablers-only workshops with, eg Polly Bolton, and to find new tutors for similar workshops. We may also attend open workshops and activities such as Sing for Water, with the intention of sharing repertoire and skills with the larger Wrablers group.

Members are encouraged to investigate possibilities of new teachers and workshops and to suggest them to the group.

Feedback

Group members agree it is important to be able to give and receive feedback when offered in a supportive and friendly manner, and from time to time we will allow for this in our rehearsals and social gatherings.

Costs

Members will pay an annual subscription of £10.00 to cover the purchase of new music and / musical instruments. This subscription may be reviewed from time to time. Subscriptions are due in January every year.

Mercedes kindly offered to act as Treasurer.

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