

# Information for choirs registering to perform in 2026

## Festival timetable

We plan to trial a new timetable in 2026. Over recent years, audience numbers for concerts held in the Presbyterian Church had declined. While that venue has lovely acoustics and is generally used for smaller choirs, nevertheless we want there to be a decent audience for every concert. So, we will be trialling a program that has 6 sessions in Phillips Hall, two free sessions in Gardners Inn (G. I.) and one session (in parallel) in Blackheath Golf Club (G. C.). The first five sessions held in Phillips Hall will each involve six choirs, three choirs each singing *for 20 minutes maximum* before a 20 minute interval, and three singing after the interval. The final session in Phillips Hall will involve three choirs before the intermission and the Festival Chorus (F. C.) to close the festival weekend. This year's Festival Chorus will be led by local conductor and composer Rowen Fox.

So the program timetable will be as follows.

	morning			afternoon						evening		
	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Friday											1	
Saturday			3		4 G. I. & G. C.			5			6	
Sunday			7			8 F. C.						

(G. I. = Gardners Inn; G. C. = Golf Club; F. C. = Festival Chorus)

### Phillips Hall session times

Friday	1	6.30pm – 8.50pm
Saturday	3	10.30am – 12.50pm
	5	3.30pm – 5.50pm
	6	6.30pm – 8.50pm
Sunday	7	10.30am – 12.50pm
	8	1.30pm – 3.30pm

### Free session times – Gardners Inn

Friday	2	9.30pm – 10.50pm
Saturday	4a	1.30am – 2.50pm

### Free session times – Golf Club

Saturday	4b	1.30am – 2.50pm
----------	----	-----------------

As can be seen, there is generally a 40 minute gap between concerts, hence the need for choirs not to run over their 20 minute limit.

This timetable allows for 45 choirs over the weekend.

## Registration

Our practice is that choirs singing for the first time, and choirs returning from a break, have priority. However, we encourage all choirs to register even if they haven't had a break for three years. Some sessions are difficult to fill for choirs travelling a distance and we have had to call on local choirs to fill gaps.

As a general rule, the more sessions you make yourself available to sing in the better your chance of being selected.

The registration form will become live on our webpage on 01 February and we will be asking a few more questions than previously. For returning choirs you can answer questions like providing your choir bio by writing “as for 2025” or whatever year is appropriate (see examples of last year’s bios here: <https://blackheathchoirfestival.org/2025-choirs/>). However, because there are only 40 minutes between some concerts, we need to give MCs and Stage Managers accurate information before the concert itself. When registering give us what you think will be appropriate (like maximum choir size, type of repertoire etc) – it helps us develop a sensible program in March. In early August we will email choirs again asking for any updates.

## Ticket prices

Ticket prices for the longer concerts in 2026 are as follows:

Sessions 2 and 4	free
Sessions 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7	\$30 (\$15 for choristers singing in the festival this year)
Session 8	\$25 (\$15 for choristers singing in the festival this year)
SHiNDiG	\$30 (\$15 for choristers singing in the festival this year)

We will also experiment with a weekend pass that covers all 6 concerts in Phillips Hall, discount price \$120 (\$60 for choristers singing in the festival this year). When purchasing a festival pass you will have the opportunity to reserve the same seat for all concerts. However, we do not want gaps in the audience because a festival pass holder doesn’t turn up for a particular concert, so we ask that you be seated at least 10 minutes before the concert starts. Ushers will allow other ticket holders use of your seat in the last 10 minutes. If you arrive later than that you will need to find a seat elsewhere in the audience.

## Concert

All choirs are allocated a rehearsal/warm up time and location just prior to their performance. Choirs performing in Phillips Hall will move from their rehearsal location to Bates Hall, accessed using the first door off the park closest to the Highway. Belongings are left in Bates whilst performing, but choristers should collect them after their performance to make way for the next choir. Choristers are permitted to return to the concert hall to hear other choirs, sitting in the rear unless the concert is not sold out. Given there are 6 choirs performing it may come down to standing room only. Colin Semmler is usually the Bates Hall Choir Wrangler, he will ask you to line up before the choir ahead has finished their set and then lead you to wait before processing down the left hand aisle to your performance. When you finish you need to process back along the opposite aisle. Processing in and out must be part of your allocated 20 minutes.

If you are singing in Gardners Inn (front dining room) you will leave your belongings at the rear of the ante room (we have a volunteer there on security). We have found you need to walk to the external door to that dining room to your performance and exit that way afterwards – the dining room and ante room are generally packed out.

For those singing in the Golf Club there is a special dining room off the bar area which is where you assemble before performing.

## Staging

This year we will erect 10m wide choir risers abutted to the permanent stage. We've had feedback that choirs using music scores are more comfortable on risers that are 1m deep. Accordingly, we will have the back 3 rows of risers all 1m deep. The first row will be 0.5m deep – it can be used as a step up with the first row of choristers on 400mm risers, or as just another row of choristers. The floor and the permanent stage can also be used for choristers in large choirs, making up to 6 rows altogether.

Row 2 (set 400mm off the floor) will have chair stoppers should a chorister need to sit, or they can be seated at floor level.

