

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus

Virtual rehearsal instructions

We have been planning how our music making together can continue, and have come up with a plan for a trial run of a virtual rehearsal together.

We would like to do this on **Tues 30th June, at 7pm**, to prepare us for rehearsing that way when the new season starts in September.

Singing together at a virtual rehearsal is not the same as gathering to sing in person, but those of us who have tried it are strongly of the belief that it is a LOT better than nothing. So, come with an open mind and you might find that you are delighted by at least some aspects of it!

Many choirs are rehearsing like this successfully, including Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, who have just done their 11th Zoom rehearsal and are still getting more than 120 people at each one. We are keen to maintain our collective and social identity as a choir, and this offers a way to do that. From September these rehearsals won't be compulsory but we will expect people to attend unless they really feel it's not for them.

For the trial run we will use Messiah. In future it will be possible to use the format to learn new music, possibly in conjunction with small group or socially distanced live rehearsals, depending on what we learn about choral singing between now and then.

We are going to use Zoom. Those of you who have already used this know that it is the most straightforward of the online gathering options. If you haven't used it yet, rest assured that self-declared Luddites and technophobes on the committee have found themselves able to use it with relative ease, on PCs, laptops and iPads. We will be on hand to help!

How the rehearsal will work:

- 1) At 7pm, we all "arrive" at the Zoom rehearsal. See below for detailed instructions.
- 2) While waiting for everyone to arrive, you can chat, wave, smile at each-other and exclaim at people's backdrops: book collections/pets/children/gardens etc.
- 3) At a signal from Darius, your microphone will be automatically muted by the host so that the rehearsal can start.
- 4) Maggie will conduct a warm up. You will be able to see and hear her, she will be able to see but not hear all of us.
- 5) Darius will take over to conduct the rehearsal. We will be able to see and hear him, he will be able to see but not hear us.
- 6) Darius will take us through pieces in the normal way, accompanying us himself.
- 7) Darius will also hand over to Rachel from time to time to play individual parts; Maggie will be on hand for coaching throughout; and Darius may also ask Rachel to play recordings of the piece being rehearsed to familiarise us and to remind us of the choral sound we're aiming for. We

may just listen together, Rachel may play a given line at the same time as the recording, or we may be asked to sing along.

- 8) So, you will only be able to hear yourself singing, and Darius will not know what we sound like. He (and everyone else) will be able to see whether you are singing, whether you come in at broadly the right place, and how engaged you are!
- 9) The rehearsal will be shorter than usual, probably around an hour and a quarter, including the break.
- 10) At the end of the first ½ (7:30pm) there will be a chance for any questions. The host will centrally enable manual unmuting of microphones by members, so that you can unmute your microphone if you want to speak. Please mute your microphone again once you have asked your question.
- 11) Then Darius will hand over to Anne for any notices, then we'll have a break.
- 12) You will be automatically sent to virtual break-out rooms in randomly assigned groups of 6. You will be able to chat for 10 minutes or so. Other choirs who are virtually rehearsing have told us they have really enjoyed getting to know people that they had never spoken to before. You will be warned (by a pop-up message) when the break is coming to an end, and then automatically sent back to join the main rehearsal.
- 13) At the end of the second half there will be another chance for questions, then those who wish to can get themselves a drink and stay for a chat "down the pub".
- 14) Health and Safety: We need to remind everyone that singing can be strenuous: as everyone is singing remotely, and some people may be on their own at home, we need to alert you that we (SPC) cannot be responsible for your safety during the rehearsal. If you are on your own, it might be good practice to arrange to check in with someone, perhaps someone else in the choir, at the end of the rehearsal.

HOW TO USE ZOOM

These instructions may make Zoom look hard – it doesn't have to be! Once you've downloaded the app you may find you can manage just by following the instructions within it – the best way is to try it out.

So if you know a family member or a friend who uses Zoom we suggest you have a test run with them. If you would like to test it with a member of the choir the following have volunteered to be Zoom buddies:

Marianne Grayson: MarianneGrayson@sheffieldphil.org

Paul Henstridge: PaulHenstridge@sheffieldphil.org

Annie Park: annabelparktraining@gmail.org

Others:xxxxxx

INSTRUCTIONS

Kit:

You will need:

A computer or a tablet. (Zoom is also possible on a smartphone, not ideal though)

An internet connection, broadband, wired or wireless

A webcam (built in or external)

Speakers (or earphones) and a microphone (built-in or external)

Many laptops and tablets have built in speakers, microphones and webcams. If not, external webcams usually include microphones, and can be bought inexpensively, and you should be able to use any earphones to provide the speakers element. Zoom claims to work with older kit, including Windows 7 for example.

The rehearsal invitation:

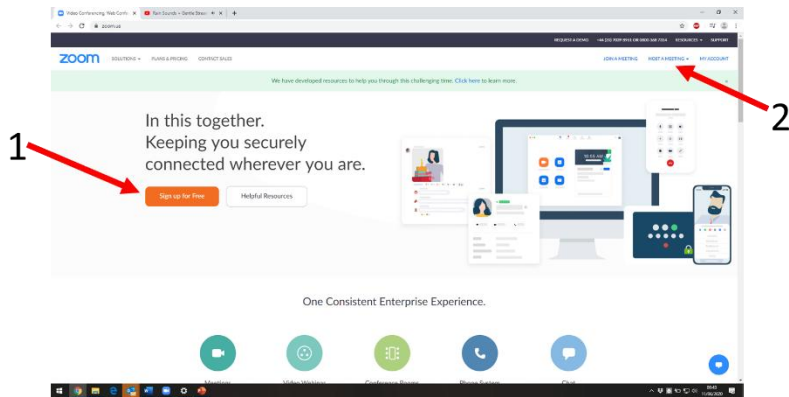
Before the rehearsal you will be sent a Zoom meeting invitation by email, which includes a link. The link will be "live" 30 minutes before the rehearsal starts. Simply click the link to join the rehearsal. There will be no password and no "waiting room".

Download Zoom before the rehearsal:

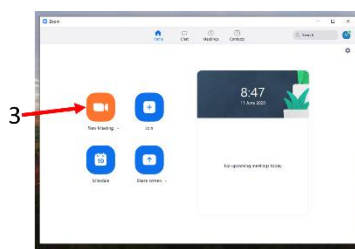
If you don't already have Zoom, when you click the rehearsal invitation link it will automatically prompt you to download the app. You don't need to pre-install the app, but it is a good idea to do so, so that you can check that your video and audio works.

To pre-install the app go here: <https://zoom.us/> or search "Zoom" wherever you get your tablet/phone apps.

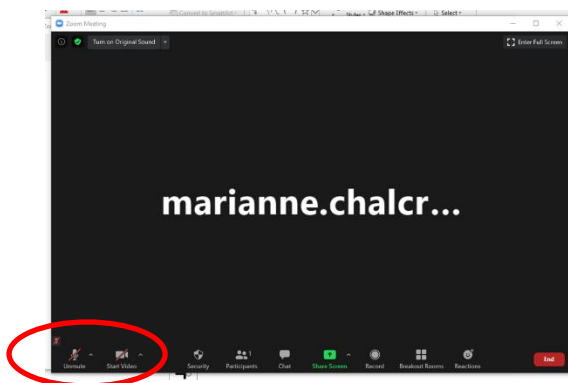
1. Click “Sign up for free” and create an account using your email address



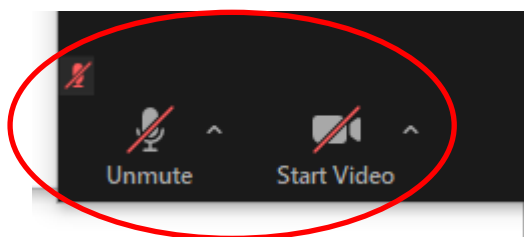
2. Test it works, by clicking “Host a meeting” in the top right-hand corner of the webpage
3. OR, if you’re already in the app, click the orange “new meeting” button



4. The test meeting will start, with just you in it.



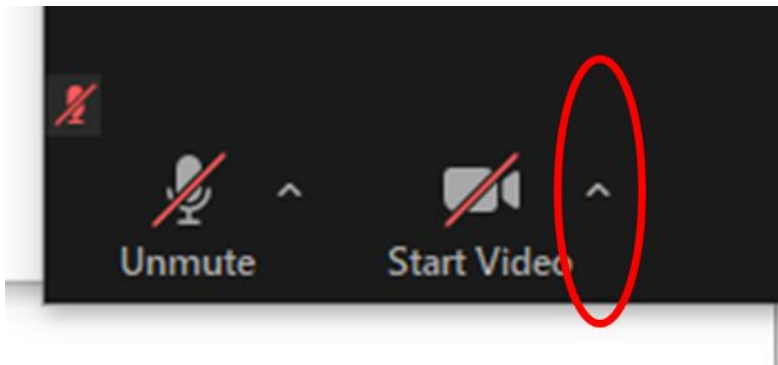
Video and audio are controlled bottom left of the screen. (Top right on tablets)
If the controls aren't there wiggle your mouse/touch the screen and they'll appear.



If you can't see your face, turn on your video: click “Start Video”.

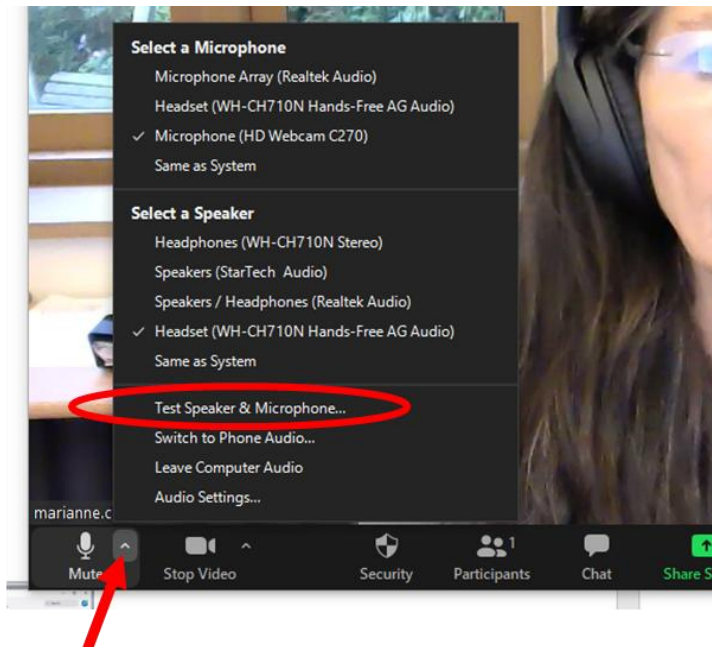


If your face doesn't appear click the small up arrow to the right of Start Video:

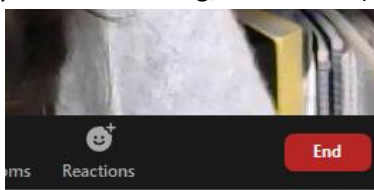


and a list of your video options will appear (eg webcam or built in camera). Choose whichever works!

5. Now test your audio: click the small up arrow to the right of the microphone icon, then click "Test Speaker & Microphone", then follow the on-screen instructions.



6. To end your test meeting, click "End" (or "Leave meeting") bottom right:

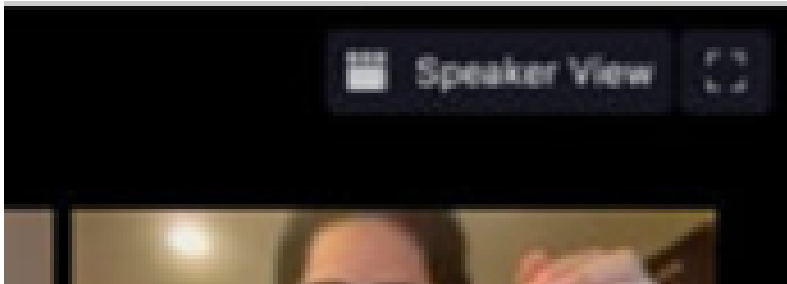


7. When you're in the virtual rehearsal it will look something like this:



8. Only a certain number of faces can appear on one screen at a time – the blue arrow on the right hand side of the page will take you to the next page.

9. Note the setting top right on a PC:



To see everyone you want it to say "Speaker View". If it says "Gallery View" you will see a big screen view of the speaker only, so click it to change to see everyone.

You may want to use Speaker View to see Darius when he is rehearsing us, or you may prefer to watch everyone at the same time. The speaker box is outlined in yellow.

We're really looking forward to seeing you on Zoom very soon!