

Finding your way around the City Hall

Please stick to the prescribed areas so that we don't compromise the City Hall's fire safety arrangements and make life difficult for front of house and technical staff. This particularly applies to toilets; the concert arrangements will make clear which toilets we can use and any others, which we might use on other occasions, are likely to be locked. Many thanks.

Getting in and out and registration

- Chorus members usually enter via the Stage Door, which is down a set of steps towards the right hand side of the back of the City Hall; press the white button on the right if locked.
- We are sometimes asked to enter via the main entrance at the front, in which case we register at desks just inside the entrance.
- Registration is sometimes by the Stage Door; this is very cramped so try to move away as soon as you can.
- Registration is often at desks on the production corridor. From the Stage Door go through the double doors just past the stairs and carry straight on; the production corridor is through another set of double doors on the right.
- Registration is often on sheets, sometimes via membership cards; be prepared for either.
- If wristbands are provided please wear one and keep it on all day. It signifies that you have signed in and do not need a bag or ticket check (though a few random checks are sometimes conducted) and you may encounter difficulties without it.
- If you leave the building after initially registering, exit via the Stage Door, signing out as you go. This is most important, otherwise, emergency services would search for you (in vain) should the building have to be evacuated during your absence.
- Re-enter by the Stage Door NOT the main entrance.
- The Stage Door staff usually put up signs just inside the Stage Door; all the staff are very friendly and helpful, so just ask if you get lost.

Dressing rooms

The rooms we are allocated vary from concert to concert.

- North and/or South Hall; these are large rooms in the City Hall basement, adjacent to the Ballroom. Lots of space, and a mirror, chairs and bins are usually provided.
- To get to the basement dressing rooms from the main entrance, take the lift from the foyer all the way to the bottom. Or walk along the curved corridor behind the auditorium in the direction of the stage, then through the double doors. Continue forwards, passing through three sets of double doors to reach the stairs going down to the basement.
- To get to the basement from the Stage Door, go through the double doors just past the stairs and carry straight on through another two sets of double doors until you reach the stairs down to the basement.
- Vincent Harris suite - up the stairs nearest to the Stage Door, then up the next flight and on the corridor at the top. When the whole choir shares the two suites it's extremely cramped and it may be best to arrive at the City Hall already wearing concert dress.
- Barbirolli suite - in a similar position but at the other side of the stage: through the double doors just past the Stage Door stairs and carry straight on through another set of double doors, up the stairs and the next flight up and onto the corridor at the top. A longer walk from the Stage Door and very cramped when the whole choir is up there.
- Dressing Room 3 - for those with mobility limitations, and people who need to be close to the stage (eg to switch on Christmas lights, organise sherry etc). It is at platform level up the stairs nearest to the Stage Door.

- Jugs of water are sometimes provided but not always, so it's best to take your own.
- People can eat packed teas in their dressing rooms but please leave spaces as you found them and take your rubbish home. We are usually given permission to eat tea at balcony level when this isn't being sold to the public.

Getting on stage

- There isn't much space on stage for bags and coats, so it's best to take these to the dressing room before going on stage for the rehearsal. Allow a good 10 to 15 minutes to get there and back in time if using the basement dressing rooms.
- To get to the stage from the Stage Door, sopranos and tenors go up the stairs near the Stage Door and take the first right turn through the door onto the stage. Altos and basses go through the double doors near the stairs and straight on through another set of double doors, then up the stairs on the right; the stage entrance is first left.
- However you may take the most direct route onto the stage, even if this takes you onto the wrong side. It's better to cross the stage in front of the organ if that's quicker and more direct.
- The entrance doors onto the stage have a heavy curtain which is needed to filter out backstage noise, so always make sure these are drawn closed if it's nearly time to start. Similarly, if you're last in, make sure you close the doors - gently so they don't make a noise.
- Going down the riser steps can be very noisy, so if you're arriving while the orchestra or soloists are rehearsing or during the pre-concert talk, please enter quietly and sit in the organ seats for the time being.

Toilets

- There are toilets in the basement corridors and in the corridors at Stage Door level.
- There is a fully accessible toilet on the corridor near the stairs to the Stage left (alto and bass) stage entrance
- There is a toilet in Dressing Room 3; please be mindful of the fact that it may be in use by a chorus member who uses a wheelchair.
- We always ask that toilets be unlocked; please report to the Administrator or Rehearsals and Events Officer if you find them locked.
- We also ask for the auto-locks on the doors from backstage to the auditorium are switched off, so that you can use the nearest auditorium toilets. However, there is no guarantee of this and if they lock you will face a long walk back round the outside of the building and in via the Stage Door.

The concert itself

Details about stage etiquette and dress code are on the Chorus website at [Members Area / Stage procedure and dress code](#)

Entry onto the stage

- Take your places on the stage informally, in your own time, remembering that you are in full view of the audience.
- Please don't wave at friends in the audience.
- If you are happy with the long wait, you can start to take your on-stage seat half an hour before the concert.

- Please be in your seat, with your music, ten minutes before the concert start time at the latest.
- If you know you will arrive at the last minute (ie 10 mins before) please sit near the edge rather than in the middle.

Stage seating

- Our Concerts and Rehearsal Officer organises seating and a seating plan is usually circulated the week before the concert, with copies available on the day.
- Seats are unallocated within each voice part, and your seat for the compulsory rehearsal is your place for the concert.
- Please sit in voice part blocks in accordance with the seating plan, with tall people towards the back and edges of the risers and on the organ seats if we are using them.
- Choir members with mobility limitations should sit either on the organ risers or on the back row – please follow instructions at the rehearsal.
- Be prepared to move if asked.
- A special plea – can members please stick to the seating plan and not alter it to be able to sit with friends, especially where this isolates colleagues from other voice parts, which is very disconcerting at the best of times but especially so given the City Hall's dry acoustic.
- Please be in position on the stage for the compulsory rehearsal no later than 5 minutes before the start time - 10 minutes is better.

Getting off stage and out of the building

- File off stage row by row, starting at the back - as quickly as you can.
- Move along corridors etc as quickly as you can so you don't create a blockage – chat about how great it was when you reach the dressing room!
- Check that you have everything with you if you are going straight home.
- Leave via any exit, and there's no need to sign out.

Car parking

The City Hall has an arrangement with Q Parks, see <https://www.sheffieldcityhall.co.uk/Q-Park-Rockingham-Street>.

In Conversation

Tricia Cooper almost always has an on-stage 'In Conversation' session with the conductor or a member of the orchestra or a soloist, before the concert at 18.00 in the main concert hall. Members of the chorus can attend this session, which is usually very interesting and often provides an insight into the composer and the music or the way the conductor plans to interpret it. There's no talk before the Christmas carol concert(s).

Health and safety

- Do not attend the concert if you have symptoms of Covid, flu or a heavy cold or uncontrollable cough.
- Don't use breakable vessels in dressing rooms; store and carry hot drinks safely.
- No drinks on stage during the performance, even in bottles – the thud if they fall down from the risers will be very loud!
- Keep belongings out of thoroughfares, especially in restricted areas.
- Take care when using the stairs and steps to the stage.
- In the event of an emergency, a continuous alarm will be sounded, and we will be directed out to the war memorial on Barker's Pool (fire) or to Devonshire Green (bomb). Follow the directions of marshals and leave in an orderly fashion. Do not try to retrieve belongings.