

SUMMER SCHOOL 2026

CHORAL COURSES



Wednesday 12th – Saturday 15th August 2026, Keele University

COURSES

Our choral courses are a popular addition to our annual SfP Summer School. These three-day courses are ideal for people coming to Summer School and for whom a half-week course is more convenient. Registration is at 9.00am on Wednesday morning (or 4pm on Tuesday if you wish to stay an extra night) and the courses end after breakfast on Saturday. The choral courses form part of a week-long programme of activities for conductors and singers.

The SfP Summer School provides a wonderful opportunity for singers to enjoy a high standard of music making geared to all levels of achievement in a stimulating and friendly environment.

TIMETABLE

Each day will consist of a vocal warm-up followed by workshop and technique sessions, with refreshment breaks and evening social activities. Individual singing lessons are available at an additional cost.

The whole course combines forces from Wednesday morning to perform a large choral work, accompanied by orchestra and conducted by our Advanced conducting students which this year is John Rutter's *Requiem*; a beautifully moving piece that captures the themes of solace and hope. An alternative, informal series of workshops (exploring different genres and themes) will be provided for those who are happier singing in a smaller, more relaxed group.

The friendly atmosphere at Summer School is really special, and there is plenty of opportunity to attend concerts and social activities alongside your workshops.

VENUE

Set in magnificent parkland and overlooked by the stately Keele Hall, Keele Conference Park forms part of Keele University and combines the perfect central location with award-winning catering, newly upgraded facilities, and comfortable accommodation in en-suite single rooms.

Keele University is a campus site and easily accessed from the M6, A34 and A50. Stoke-on-Trent is the nearest railway station, and the closest airports are Birmingham International or Manchester.



COURSES

Choose from one of the following courses:

THE CONTEMPORARY POP CHOIR

Join us for a vibrant exploration of contemporary a cappella singing. Led by Matthew Roughley, founder and director of Manchester Vocal Ensemble, this course will bring your favourite pop songs to life in stunning harmony. With the global rise of pop choirs, more singers than ever are discovering the joy of performing music by today's biggest artists in dynamic, feel-good vocal arrangements. Dive into exciting music, develop ensemble and performance skills, and explore new vocal techniques. This course is ideal for singers with some choir experience. While sheet music will be provided, you don't need to be able to read music – all songs will be taught by ear, with learning tracks and supporting materials available for those who want them.

CONSORT

Join Esther Jones and the Consort Course to sing uplifting sacred and secular music on the theme of eventide. It will feature an eclectic mix of anthems and partsongs, including works by Sheena Phillips, Rheinberger and Sullivan among others - and it will be an opportunity to delve deeply into technical aspects of choral singing such as tone and blend. This course will suit you if you are an experienced or trained singer who reads music well and enjoys the demands of singing more complex music.

COST

Options	Non-Member Price
Choral course fee*	£355
Bed and breakfast accommodation in a single en-suite study bedroom (three-night package, Wednesday - Saturday)**	£140
Dinner, bed and breakfast (Tuesday 11 th)	£75.80
Bed and breakfast only (Tuesday 11 th)	£52



The course fee includes all tuition, music hire, tea/coffee, lunches, evening meals and all social activities.

* Members receive a discount of 10% on the course fees. Become a member [here](#) for £45.

** This includes bed and breakfast accommodation in a single en-suite study bedroom. Please note that the beds are large singles and we are unable to take requests for double or twin occupancy. Premium single, twin or double rooms are available at the newly built Courtyard by Marriott Hotel on campus. If you wish to book premium accommodation, please choose the 'Course fee' option only and book accommodation directly with the hotel.

Payment can be made in installments up to **June 15th**, after which the fee must be paid in full. Withdrawals within two weeks of the start of the course will be liable to pay the full amount, and withdrawals within 28 days will incur a fee up to 50% of the total cost, so participants are encouraged to [take out holiday insurance](#) in case of an unforeseen cancellation. For full T&Cs please visit the event listing at www.singforpleasure.org.uk

COURSE TUTORS

Esther Jones



Esther Jones works with choirs and conductors of all ages and abilities as a choral director, teacher, workshop leader and adjudicator. She has worked extensively with the National Youth Choir and London Youth Choirs, directed several choral societies and chamber choirs (both professional and amateur), as well as leading many educational and community music projects.

Esther's work has included performances in high profile venues across the UK, recordings, residencies and broadcasts. She has also published a variety of educational publications and choral arrangement. She teaches post-graduate choral conductors at the Royal Academy of Music (where she herself studied after her undergraduate degree at Oxford University).

Recently, Esther has established a choral programme close to home in Surrey which provides free choral education and singing opportunities for all ages and abilities. It includes a youth, community and church choir with a scholarship programme for talented young singers and organists.

Matthew Roughley

Matthew Roughley is a Manchester-based choral conductor, educator, singer, and arranger known for his dynamic and inclusive approach to ensemble music-making. He is the founder and artistic director of Manchester Vocal Ensemble, a collective of singers in the North West dedicated to creating and performing original vocal arrangements of contemporary a cappella music.

Matthew maintains a diverse freelance career, collaborating with some of the UK's leading arts organisations across concerts, workshops and education projects. Highly experienced in working with young singers, he is an associate artist with The Hallé, where he directs the Hallé Youth Training Choir, as well as conducting and leading concerts with the National Youth Choir's 9-15 age group. Matthew also directs both the Chamber Choir and Consort of Voices at the Pendleton School of Theatre in Salford.

Matthew began his formal conductor training with Sing for Pleasure, where he was awarded a Young Conducting scholarship in 2015. Now part of the organisations' tutor team, he shares his experience of leading choirs of all kinds, from youth and community groups to professional vocal ensembles with developing conductors.



“Everyone involved with SFP is so encouraging, friendly and talented. The course was better than a holiday. I am definitely coming again next year!”

Choral Course Member

ABOUT SING FOR PLEASURE

'Sing for Pleasure' was founded in 1964 as the British branch of the international 'A Coeur Joie' movement. SFP aims to encourage the enjoyment of choral singing, inspiring high standards of performance. The movement now boasts a wide range of events each year across the country. It organises many singing events for children and adults, and it plays an increasingly active and important role in offering help and advice to teachers, choral and orchestral conductors, running conducting courses and summer schools, as well as professional development programmes for teachers, school-based singing days and events for children.

CONTACT US

To book a place on the course, please visit www.singforpleasure.org.uk and complete the online application form and payment. For more information about the course please email Ula Weber at events@singforpleasure.org.uk



In partnership with Bolton Music Service

