

# SUMMER SCHOOL 2026

FOR SINGERS, CONDUCTORS AND VOCAL LEADERS



Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2026, Keele University

New conducting courses!

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

## COURSE

Our annual Summer School has something for every choral enthusiast, including the ever-popular **singers' courses** and choral conducting courses ranging from **Essentials** through **Levels 1 to 4**. The sociable atmosphere of the week creates an ideal space for learning, which in turn leads to a high level of achievement and enjoyment with many participants returning year after year.

## TIMETABLE

Our course timetable starts on Saturday mid-morning (with registration and coffee from 10.00am) and ends after breakfast on the final Saturday. Each day will begin with a vocal warm-up at 8.45am, followed by a combined choral session, emphasising the place of singing at the heart of the organisation. The separate courses then follow their own programmes of workshop sessions, study periods and refreshment breaks during the day. Individual singing lessons are available at an additional cost. After dinner each evening there is time to relax and participate in a varied programme of informal social activities and concerts.

## 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.



## ON BROADWAY COURSE (Saturday – Tuesday)

Join tutor and Broadway enthusiast, Louise Ellinson as she explores popular tunes from stage and screen. This course is suitable for people of all experience levels and the ability to read music is not required. The course begins every day with a warm-up session followed by a morning of practical and active sessions. As well as an end-of-course performance, there will be plenty of time for informal social singing.

## SINGING COURSES (Wednesday – Saturday)

Our popular, half-week singing courses start at 9.45am on **Wednesday** morning and finish after breakfast on Saturday, with a performance on Friday evening. Join guest conductor Esther Jones and the **Consort Course** to sing uplifting sacred and secular music on the theme of eventide, featuring an eclectic mix of anthems and partsongs by Sheena Phillips, Rheinberger and Sullivan among others. Alternatively, join Matthew Roughley as he takes you on another exciting journey of **Contemporary Pop Choir** music. Discover the harmony in the songs you love and sing your favourite songs in ways you've never heard before.

The whole course combines forces from Wednesday morning to perform a large choral work, accompanied by orchestra and conducted by our Level 4 conducting students. This year's work is John Rutter's *Requiem*; a beautifully moving piece that captures the themes of solace and hope.

An alternative, informal series of singing workshops (exploring different genres and themes) will be provided for those who are happier singing in a smaller, more relaxed group.

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

Singers' Course Member



## CONDUCTING COURSES

For more than 60 years, Sing for Pleasure has been at the forefront of providing high-quality training for choral conductors and vocal leaders. During this time, we have refined our courses to enable conductors to acquire an initial repertoire of effective conducting gestures and techniques. Participants are then supported to build upon these foundations, adapting and enhancing their skills in ways that suit their individual journeys and levels of experience.

Our newly revised Choral Conductor Training Programme is designed to help you unlock your full potential as a conductor. The accessible and flexible programme is focused on the development of well-rounded and adaptable musical leaders across four key areas of learning: **Preparation, Teaching, Gesture, and Leadership**. These key skills run through each level, building upon one another to provide a holistic training programme for conductors. Courses on offer at Summer School:

### ESSENTIALS – The Introductory Course

This course is for conductors and vocal leaders of all levels of experience who are new to SfP's training programme. The course is designed to introduce the fundamental principles and techniques of the SfP methodology - exploring aspects of both gesture and teaching.

### COURSE DELIVERY

The Essentials Course is delivered in a unique way and is bespoke to each student. At the start of the week, students will develop core skills through an intensive series of technique and practical sessions. For the second half of the week, participants will work at a level suited to their experience and skills. Workshop sessions allow all participants an enviable amount of podium time to put into practice what they have learnt in a comfortable learning environment. All members of the group sing for each other, building a camaraderie and supportive atmosphere. Participants will also observe and sing for Level 2 – Level 4 courses.

“I absolutely loved my week at summer school. The other students were really welcoming, and the tutors were extremely positive and recognised each student's unique strengths.”

Essentials Conductor

### LEVEL 1 - Consolidating

This course builds upon skills and techniques learnt on the Essentials course, allowing participants to embed SfP's key pillars of learning into their practice and become a clear and motivating conductor/vocal leader. Participants will focus on effective preparation and well-structured teaching, use and practice of fundamental and economical conducting gestures, as well as positive leadership traits essential to be a motivating and clear musical leader.

*"I was overwhelmingly impressed by the very happy and mutually supportive atmosphere."*

Peter Owens, Trinity College of Music

### LEVEL 2 - Developing

This course is for conductors who have demonstrated confidence and fluency with core SfP methodology, allowing them to foster greater confidence and self-sufficiency by broadening gestural repertoire and musical leadership skills. Participants will develop the ability to prepare with musical accuracy, plan efficient rehearsals with an awareness of pace and time, and demonstrate effective teaching supported by gestures. This includes integrating a range of conducting gestures, and ultimately leading sessions with clarity, warmth, and a positive, welcoming manner.

### LEVEL 3 - Enriching

For those who have received a Level 3 recommendation. Courses at this level are designed to broaden experience and enrich prior learning by exploring specialised aspects of conducting and vocal leadership. Participants will learn to prepare music with insight to structure rehearsals, deploy adaptable teaching strategies, express clear musical intention and shape sound using expressive gestures, and lead a variety of ensembles in a motivating, supportive, and musically effective manner.

### COURSE DELIVERY

The Level 1 to Level 3 courses are delivered through technique sessions to broaden conducting skills, and practical workshop sessions with plenty of podium time to practice the techniques that have been introduced. Alongside a range of optional sessions, Level 3 students will also be introduced to orchestral conducting technique. Participants will have opportunities to work with various forces including a larger group of singers, an accompanist or a small orchestra. They will also observe members of the Level 4 course at work and will be able to take advantage of the learning these sessions can provide through singing.

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### LEVEL 4 – Extension

Available only at summer school, this intensive course provides experienced conductors with professional choral conducting experiences across a full spectrum of repertoire, including large choral/instrumental works and challenging a cappella pieces. It is open to participants who have completed Level 3 courses and demonstrate secure competencies.

Participants will learn to apply nuanced musical preparation, teach effectively by responding to the music, use a wide gestural language, and consistently demonstrate reflective leadership.



### COURSE DELIVERY

The Level 4 course combines practical workshop sessions—featuring ample podium time and instruction in baton and orchestral technique—with informative sessions on vocal health, arranging, historical styles, recitative, program notes, and concert management. Participants will practice with varied forces, including a large choir and a full orchestra.

## COST

|   | Singers            | Essentials Conductors   | Level 1 Conductors | Level 2 Conductors | Level 3 Conductors | Level 4 Conductors |
|---|--------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Full week (singers and conductors), Non-Member rate:</b> |                    |   |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Course fee *  | £720               | £750  | £760               | £770               | £795               | £805               |
| Accommodation **  | £330               | £330  | £330               | £330               | £330               | £330               |
| Additional Friday night (7 <sup>th</sup> B&B only)          | £52                | £52   | £52                | £52                | £52                | £52                |
| <b>On Broadway course only (Sat – Tue):</b>                 | <b>Non-Member:</b> | Course fees include all tuition, music hire, tea/coffee, lunches, evening meals and social activities.<br><b>* Members receive a discount of 10% on the course fees. Become a member <a href="#">here</a> for £45.</b><br>** 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. |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Course fee (non-member) *                                   | £460               |   |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Accommodation **  | £140               |   |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Additional Friday night (7 <sup>th</sup> B&B only)          | £50                |   |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| <b>Part week choral courses (Wed – Sat):</b>                | <b>Non-Member:</b> | Payment can be made in installments up to <b>June 15<sup>th</sup></b> , after which the fee must be paid in full.   |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Choral course fee (non-member) *                            | £355               |   |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Accommodation **  | £140               |   |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Additional Tue night (11 <sup>th</sup> ) B&B only           | £52                |   |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Additional Tue night (11 <sup>th</sup> ) Dinner, B&B        | £75.80             |   |                    |                    |                    |                    |

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](http://www.singforpleasure.org.uk)

## BURSARIES

SfP can offer a limited number of bursaries (to the value of £400) towards the cost of our conducting courses. These bursaries are available to people who work in the education sector, those who work within community or church settings, practitioners who work in the health sector, and young people up to the age of 26, supported by a referee. To apply, first check the bursary criteria on our website and then indicate your request when applying for the course.

## TUTORS

Our highly skilled team of tutors are all members of SfP and bring a range of experience as professional conductors, musicians, teachers, trainers, adjudicators, and workshop leaders. For more information about our tutors please visit the SfP website.

## 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](http://www.singforpleasure.org.uk) and complete the online application form and payment. For more information about the course please email Head of Programme, Ula Weber at [events@singforpleasure.org.uk](mailto:events@singforpleasure.org.uk)

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