

Putting on an event with Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir.



Planning

1) The choir gets booked up well in advance so booking us as early as possible will help to secure your preferred date. (Our availability is dependent on other bookings and also the availability of our music team, who do have other commitments).

2) Choose a day and time that will help to maximise your audience (and choir turn out). Saturdays are usually the best for all concerned but we will consider other days – though weekdays will always result in a smaller choir. We don't recommend bank holiday weekends as that will result in a reduced audience as well. *(Please note that we can't reduce our fees for a smaller choir. The choristers don't get paid, our main expenses don't vary – music team's professional fees, rehearsal room hire etc).*

3) Set your ticket price at a sensible level. Too high will put people off, too low and you don't maximise revenue. Your optimum will depend on the demographic of your expected audience. Typically £10-£12 seems to work but more can be acceptable if interval drinks are included. However, charging separately for drinks can help to increase the total takings.

4) Often the choice of venue is inherent in the reason for the event but if you have a choice then things to consider are: Distance from where most of your audience will come from, toilet facilities, Parking, Comfortable seating and Heating. The choir will also need somewhere to change. Unless there is a good piano on site, we will also need an electricity supply for our piano.

Publicity

1) The choir doesn't undertake publicity for events they are hired for.

2) Start your publicity early – people's diaries fill up.

3) Word of mouth is good but don't rely on it (a couple of notices in church on a Sunday won't be enough). Ask local community groups to inform their members. Ask your local school to share it with parents. Don't restrict your activity to your own neighbourhood – spread the news. We typically try to avoid accepting bookings in close proximity within a short period so audiences can be maximised at one location.

4) Create a large eye-catching poster. We can supply photos and a choir logo if required. Make sure that it tells people what to expect. "Concert" isn't enough. "Choral Concert" is better but people generally know what to expect at a "Welsh Male Voice Choir Concert" (you can give more detail in smaller print – "singing traditional Welsh songs & hymns as well as contemporary and secular tunes" – but don't make it too busy). Include the venue, start time, doors open time and how to get tickets. Distribute the posters EVERYWHERE: Pubs, halls, schools, shops, bus shelters, village halls, churches, car windows etc.

5) Place an advert in your parish or village newsletter if you have one, but don't assume everyone reads those. (If it's for a charitable cause the publishers of these will often allow a discounted price)

6) Put flyers through people's letter boxes and don't be afraid of doing this twice, the second time closer to the event.

Ticket Sales

- 1) Set a ticket price that will optimise revenue versus attendance.
- 2) You might want to consider two-tier pricing depending on the demographic of your expected audience. Possibly also offer free or reduced tickets for people bringing children. (We don't mind, if they're not too disruptive).
- 3) Choristers often like to bring their wives along. This can help to guarantee some audience and many clients allow us some discount for the wives' tickets. However that is your prerogative.
- 4) Try to encourage ticket sales ahead of the event, or at least have them ordered for collection at the door. That way you can gauge the attendance ahead of time and adjust your publicity drive accordingly. Some clients offer reduced prices for buying ahead.

Set-up

- 1) If it's a cold building, ensure the heating is switched on in advance.
- 2) Ensure there are enough chairs for the audience numbers you expect, with sight lines as best as can be achieved. The choir will also need somewhere to sit during the soloist spots
- 3) The choir generally like to have access about 90 mins before the start time, for staging and rehearsal. This should be finished about 30 mins before the start time and we really discourage audience from arriving whilst we're still rehearsing. It's therefore useful to include a "Doors open" time in your publicity.
- 4) Hopefully we will already know who the liaison person is but if they are different from whom we've been in contact with, please let us know.
- 5) Perhaps stating the obvious but have your ticket sellers close to the door so people can't "gate-crash". Have reserved tickets ready with names on and note if they've pre-paid or not. Also ensure you have a float of change to give – especially if the price isn't in "whole note" denominations. (We have had one or two cases where people have expected to pay with their credit card! Not much can be done about that except point them to the nearest cash-machine).
- 6) We will usually process on stage exactly at the stated start time, unless asked to delay for any reason. Typically the concert organiser will say a few words of welcome to the audience, introduce our Chairman and then hand over.
- 7) The usual format is two sets of four songs with a soloist between them, and interval of about 20 minutes and then the same in the second half. We can discuss changing this but we do need to allow time for our choristers to sit and rest during the concert.
- 8) If you are providing refreshments in the interval, consider either having helpers distribute plates / trays of food and drink to the audience or perhaps have multiple tables offering the same thing from different locations (if you have the space, of course). This will help to expedite the serving process and allow the second half to start at the allotted time.
- 9) We usually have an encore prepared but we'll only sing it if asked to.