



COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE

Junior School Choir of the Year 2014 **Competition Terms & Conditions**

Who May Enter

Entries are invited from choirs made up of children in full time education. Only schools with a Coventry or Warwickshire postal address will be considered.

A Junior school choir is defined as one made up of children aged 11 and under on 1st December 2014.

For the purpose of this competition, the maximum number of choir members is 40. We will not accept entries from choirs that exceed this number. Teachers may not form part of the school choir.

Choirs should not include any children who are closely related to a member of BBC staff or anyone connected to this competition. Proof of eligibility may be requested. All children in the choir must meet the eligibility requirements set out in the terms & conditions at all times.

How to Enter

Initial entry to the Competition will entail submission of a CD recording that comprises 2 performances:

- one hymn, worship song or inspirational song based on the Christian faith selected from any published hymnbook or online source.
- one other song of the school's choosing.

Entries must not be longer than 3 minutes each. Schools are advised to consider how their chosen pieces will come across on the radio.

A completed Official Entry Form must accompany the initial entry CD recording. The dates of birth, but not the names of the choir members, must be submitted with the entry form. Official entry forms can be requested by calling BBC Coventry & Warwickshire on 02476 55 1000.

One adult (e.g. Choir Director) must be nominated as the choir's main contact. The entry CD must be clearly marked with the name and telephone number of this contact. The BBC will only ever use personal details for the purposes of administering this competition. Please also mark on the CD the duration of each track. The entry CD must contain only the performances being submitted for this competition and performed by the choir members intending to go forward into the later stages of the competition. *Please note that the competition spans two school years.*

The named contact will be responsible for obtaining all permissions necessary from the school and parents of the children participating before entering the competition. Proof of relevant consents may be requested.

CDs are not returnable so please remember to keep a copy.

CDs and completed entry forms must be sent by post to the following address: Junior School Choir of the Year 2014, BBC Coventry & Warwickshire, Priory Place, Coventry, CV1 5SQ. This is the only method of entry. Email entries will not be accepted.

The closing date for entries is **Friday 25th July 2014**. Entries received after this date will not be considered.

Progression To The Live Semi Final.

A panel of shortlisting judges, appointed by the BBC, will listen carefully to the quality and style of the singing as demonstrated by the performances on CD. They will select 5 choirs for the live semi-final.

The panel will not be judging the technical quality of the recording although it would be beneficial for you to read the Sound Recording guidelines at the end of this document.

The judges will be selecting schools throughout the competition using the following criteria:

- Technical ability e.g. tuning, diction, voice quality, balance, ensemble, dynamics, overall sound.
- Musical Expression e.g. musicality, communication, phrasing, passion, energy, commitment and interpretation of the text.

Those invited to appear in the live semi-final will be informed in September 2014, after which a BBC representative may visit the school.

The live semi-final will be held in early November 2014 in Coventry. It will be recorded for radio broadcast on BBC Coventry & Warwickshire at a later date.

Responsibility for transporting choir members to and from the live semi-final venue will lie with the schools.

Children in the choirs will be expected to remain under the supervision of their school staff during the live semi-final.

The five choirs selected to take part in the live semi-final will each be asked to perform three songs, to be agreed with the producers. BBC Coventry & Warwickshire reserves the right to ask the live semi-finalists to make adjustments or change their entry - for example if other schools are submitting the same hymn or song.

Schools should use **PIANO** accompaniment **ONLY**. NO OTHER INSTRUMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

We expect that schools will provide their own accompanist for the choir's performance.

Tickets to the live semi-final will not be made available to the public. They will be strictly distributed on the basis of 140 tickets per school, to be distributed by the school as follows:-

40 tickets for each school choir (one ticket per choir member).

80 tickets for parents / guardians (maximum two tickets per choir member)

20 tickets for school staff.

Progression To The BBC C&W Carol Service

Immediately after the live semi-final the judges will select one school choir to perform at the BBC Coventry & Warwickshire carol service on Saturday 20th December 2014.

The carol(s) chosen for performance at the carol service must be agreed with the competition organisers. Schools should use **PIANO** accompaniment **ONLY**. **NO OTHER INSTRUMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED**.

We expect that schools will provide their own accompanist for the choir's competition pieces.

Responsibility for transporting the winning choir members to and from Coventry cathedral for the carol service will lie with the school. Again, children in the winning choir will be expected to remain under the supervision of their school staff during the service.

BBC Coventry & Warwickshire's Carol Service is a public event, with tickets at a premium. The winning school will receive 70 tickets, to be distributed by the school as follows:-

20 tickets for the school choir (one ticket per choir member).

40 tickets for parents / guardians (maximum two tickets per choir member)

10 tickets for school staff.

Additional Information

The rules of this competition are compliant with the BBC's current code of conduct, which is available at www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/. Entry for the Competition implies acceptance of the present rules. The decision of the judges is final, without appeal and no subsequent correspondence on their decisions will be entered into. In case of any dispute concerning nominations, matters of eligibility or interpretation of these rules, the decision of the BBC shall be final

The title of "BBC Coventry & Warwickshire Junior Choir of the Year" is held for one year only. Winning schools will be eligible to re-enter the competition following a gap of three title-years. A school may make only one entry to the competition this year. The title should not be used for any initiative which could bring the BBC into disrepute or any commercial activity without the BBC's prior approval.

The competition is not open to any choir that has won any BBC choir-related competition over the past three years. This applies to local and national BBC outlets, covering TV, radio and online.

Parental consent must be given for each child to take part in the competition and the permission for each child to appear in the radio recordings must be sought by the school. The BBC is legally required to apply to the LEA for a license for each under 16 years old to perform. An application has to be made to the LEA in which the child lives, not where the child goes to school. Schools that make it through to the live semi-final will be asked to sign a standard BBC All Rights Contract. Entries must not infringe the rights of any other party. The BBC accepts no liability if entrants ignore these rules and entrants agree to fully indemnify the BBC against any claims by any third party arising from any breach of these rules.

Entrants must agree to take part in any post-competition publicity if required.

The BBC reserves the right to replace schools whose entry breaches any of these Terms and Conditions or, in its opinion, entries that do not reach the required standard.

The BBC reserves the right to cancel this competition or amend these terms and conditions at any stage, if deemed necessary in its opinion, and if circumstances arise outside its control.

The BBC, its sub-contractors, subsidiaries and/or agencies cannot accept any responsibility whatsoever for any technical failure or malfunction or any other problem with any server, Internet access, postal system or otherwise which may result in any entry being lost or not properly registered or recorded. Proof of sending is not proof of receipt.

These Terms and Conditions are governed by the laws of England and Wales. I have read the above rules and regulations and agree to adhere to them.

Name and position

Signature.....

Name of School

Please tick this box if you do not wish BBC Coventry & Warwickshire to keep your contact details on file for use after this year's competition. These details would only be used to inform you about the School Choir of the Year competition in future years.

Entries should be sent to:

Junior School Choir of the Year 2014
BBC Coventry & Warwickshire
Priory Place
Coventry
CV1 5SQ

Entries should be clearly labelled and mailed to arrive not later than:
Friday 25th July 2014

SOUND RECORDING GUIDELINES FOR CHOIRS

Whilst your choir will not be judged on the production quality of the recording, it is vital to get the best recording of your choir, in order to paint an accurate picture of how your choir really sounds. For example, your choir may be well balanced, but if the recording equipment is not appropriately placed it may pick up more of one part, or even individual voices, which will make your choir sound unbalanced on the recording. Remember, the recording is the only reference the shortlisting judges have of your choir's sound.

The following simple guidelines will help you to achieve a better-recorded sound.

1. CHOICE OF EQUIPMENT

Not all choirs are blessed with state-of-the-art recording studios but you really do not need one to achieve a suitable recording; a basic set-up is adequate.

The minimum you'll need is two microphones, or one stereo microphone, and a recorder. It's better to record in stereo (i.e. independent left and right signals) in order to capture the full sound of the choir.

2. PLACEMENT OF MICROPHONES

This is key to achieving a suitable recording.

The best way to approach this is to think of recording like you would filming the choir. You would want to get everybody in the shot and the choir to be centre of the picture.

Microphones should be a few feet away from the choir in order to achieve a balanced sound. The further away the microphones are the more balanced the choir will sound. You may need to experiment with what is suitable distance.

Simply get the choir to sing a few bars and then have a listen. If you discover you are picking up individual voices, or the sound is too 'in your face', then move the microphones or choirs backward.

Do bear in mind this is a choir competition; microphones should be placed to pick up the choir, with piano accompanying the choir and not the other way around.

3. NOISE REDUCTION

Try to record with as little background noise as possible.

4. LEVEL

In order to achieve the correct level for the recording, get the choir to sing the loudest parts of the songs they will record and make sure the recording does not distort.

5. PRODUCTION

In the world of recording and with the rapidly developing sound technology at our disposal, recording engineers often use techniques to make a recording sound more commercial and to give the best possible sound.

As this is a competition where the choirs are required to sing live, we recommend that only recordings which are a true representation of the choir singing live are submitted. We discourage choirs from employing specific production techniques to make a sound more balanced, or sound bigger. Many conductors are not responsible for the recordings so please do pass this on to anyone who may be responsible for making the recording of the choir.

Choirs should not use the following production practices and techniques:

- i) Dynamics Processing - the choir should be recorded without dynamics processing, i.e. compressors, limiters, expanders, gates. The judges do judge dynamics, and therefore need to hear the true dynamic range of the choir.
- ii) Auto-tuners should be avoided. Again, the choir is being judged on tuning;

iii) Tracking/layering voices should be avoided. This is where individual voice parts are recorded, so they can be manually balanced by a sound engineer. This also includes a technique known as 'double-tracking', where a choir records multiple times to give a warmer, smoother, fuller sound. If you are a choir of 20, and sound like 200 voices on the recording because of production techniques, how will that be achieved live?

iv) Recordings should be unedited. By all means edit out noises before or after the recording, but editing individual phrases to make it sound as though the choir is coming in and cutting off together will not work in the choir's favour.

v) Sound effects - e.g. reverb etc/.... should be avoided – we are keen to hear the choir's natural vocal sound and reverb can mask this; other sound effects (delays, etc...) should also be avoided.