

Reading Male Voice Choir HS2: Good Practice Document (Risk Assessment) - Concert Activities

2.1 Pre-Concert Planning

The Concert Secretary and the Concert Coordinator (Stage Manager) carry out a pre-concert visit to each venue. They assess and record the relevant information and any risks:

- Size of auditorium, ventilation, lighting levels, ease of access to the stage (any steps) from adjacent areas and distances;
- Space for staging and ease of access (level if possible) from the car park;
- Area for pre-concert and interval assembly, changing rooms and toilets;
- Accessibility for those with impaired mobility;
- Availability of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED);
- Local car parking.

In addition, they should assess the amount of preparation required for the stage area (in particular, movement of heavy items - stage blocks, furniture or pianos) before and after the concert. Where necessary they should increase numbers in the stage team in order to avoid over exertion or tiredness increasing the risk of injury. They may also decide to include a sack truck in the equipment list.

Where necessary the Health & Safety Officer should be involved in the visit or consulted. Any concerns regarding hazards should be resolved with the Concert Organiser or Venue Manager before the concert.

The Concert Secretary should inform choir members of any risks associated with the concert venue through the Concert Event Form and at rehearsals.

2.2 Movement of Staging and Setting up the Stage Area

2.2.1 Loading and Unloading (to/from) the Van

The staging and associated accessories are loaded/unloaded by the choir members nominated by the Equipment Moves Co-ordinator. The Van Driver should co-ordinate the actual loading and offloading. Protective gloves should be worn where practicable and the following additional guidance is applicable (see also Manual Handling Guidance (2.2.2)):

Nobody should attempt to lift or manoeuvre any object if he is in any doubt about his ability to do so safely. Assistance should always be sought before manoeuvring an awkward or heavy object. The staging has been designed with manoeuvrability in mind, each section being provided with wheels and a handle. However, it is heavy.

Lifting and loading the sections into the van is a manoeuvre that requires special care. It should not be undertaken by choir members single-handedly; **two men** should lift the sections from the ground, with a third man ready to receive and store it securely inside the van.

2.2.2 Manual Handling Guidance:

- Think before handling/lifting – plan route, get help, remove obstructions,
- Don't lift or handle more than you can easily manage - ask for help rather than over exert yourself,
- When carrying, keep the load close to your waist,
- Adopt a stable position - position your feet at hip width apart with a lead foot slightly in front of the other,
- Ensure a good hold on the load,
- Slight bending of your back, hips and knees (avoid fully flexing your back (stooping) or the hips and knees (full/deep squatting)),
- Lift with your thigh muscles,
- Don't flex your back any further while lifting,
- Avoid twisting your back or leaning sideways especially while your back is bent,
- Keep your head up when handling,
- Move smoothly - do not jerk or snatch the load,
- Put down first, then adjust, slide into the final position.

2.2.3 Arrangements by the Van Driver

Van Drivers are volunteers from choir members and should take their lead from the Transport Co-ordinator. They need to have a current vehicle driving licence which allows them to drive a long wheelbase/ high top van.

Unless a choir member has access to one, Van Drivers should hire a long wheel-base van in which it is possible to stand up for loading/unloading.

At the beginning of the season, Van Drivers should check and note the dates when they will be required from the schedule issued by the Equipment Moves Co-ordinator and Transport Co-ordinator. If any date is problematic, the Transport Co-ordinator should be informed to arrange a replacement.

Before the concert event, the allocated Van Driver should check the van loading/unloading rota and ensure that the nominated members know the times which have been agreed for meeting at the storage point for loading up and at the concert venue for unloading and loading back up. The driver must ensure that they have the school access key card from the Transport Co-ordinator and they must return the access card to him after use.

Van Drivers should lead the loading and unloading by ensuring that adequate lighting is available in the storage location and van, that items are loaded safely as in 2.2.1 and that items are stowed safely using straps as required. The Concert Secretary will list the van driver and the volunteer support teams for each concert in the Concert Event Form.

The Van Drivers' box is stored in the lock-up, which contains the light/torch, First Aid Kit and straps. This also contains a de-icer bottle and scraper for use in the event of very cold weather. The Van Driver should ensure that the box is loaded in the van and check that the torch is working properly.

When at the concert venue, where reversing is required, it is advisable to ask a competent choir member to act as a banksman, with the torch, if dark.

The Van Driver should check that all the items are in the Van Drivers' box, before and after the event, replace any used up and return the box to the lock-up during final unloading.

The Van Driver should ensure that all equipment is returned to its correct place in the lock-up after each concert. There are photographs displayed to show this.

2.2.4 Moving Staging Units and Preparation of Stage Area

In many concert venues, the staging has to be wheeled along the same route as the audience uses. To avoid collisions and/or delay, the transport in of the staging should be carried out well before any audience arrives.

Before moving staging units, walk the route and ensure that it is suitable for the units and that there is minimal risk from any hazards. In particular look for:

- Even, non-slippery surface, no cables,
- Avoid steps or steep slopes,
- Sufficient width for people and units,
- Adequate lighting,
- Remove/avoid trip hazards.

On arrival at the Stage Area, the area may need to be cleared and objects moved to allow the staging to be erected. The lifting or moving of extremely heavy items, e.g. a grand piano should not be undertaken. If required, arrangements for movement should be made before or during a pre-concert site visit.

Moving large and awkward objects can benefit from the use of a sack truck, which should be identified in the pre-concert visit and included in the Concert Event Form.

2.2.5 Assembly/Disassembly of Equipment

These activities have the hazards of finger/hand entrapment and impact on other body parts, if not carried out correctly. Also, back injuries could occur.

Assembly and disassembly should always be led by an experienced, trained and nominated leader. Choir members who assist in this activity should receive training in this from the Equipment Moves Coordinator and should wear protective gloves.

When 240-volt electrical cables are used, their routing under the metal staging should be avoided to reduce the risk of a section of staging being dropped and damaging the cable. If, for any reason, cables have to be routed under the staging, the dismantling of the staging should not commence until the power has been switched off and the cables removed.

In many concert venues the staging, has to be wheeled along the same route as the departing audience; it is therefore recommended that removal of the staging should be delayed until the exit routes have cleared sufficiently.

2.2.6 Mechanical Defects

As the staging needs to be in a sound condition, those involved in Assembly/Disassembly should look out for any obvious damage or defects. If found, these should be reported to the Assembly/Disassembly Leader who will decide if the item must be taken out of service. The Assembly/Disassembly Leader should then inform the Concert Coordinator (Stage Manager) and/or Health and Safety Officer of this.

A full inspection/routine maintenance of the staging should be carried out annually, before the first concert of the season, by the Concert Coordinator and Health & Safety Officer and a record made and passed to the Secretary.

2.2.7 Electrical Items

Electrical items in a poor condition can cause an electrical shock and/or fire. Some of the choir's electrical equipment has to be connected to the 240v mains. The leads and/or extension leads to this should be tested and inspected annually by a competent person. Other relevant electrical equipment should also be safety tested. Each item thus inspected should be marked and a written record made and passed to the Secretary and Health and Safety Officer.

13A sockets should not be overloaded and cables must be routed away from public walkways where they could present a tripping hazard. In practice this is not always possible, meaning that there will be a risk of damage caused by people walking on them or items being dropped on to them, thereby presenting a risk of electrocution. To reduce the risk of tripping, cables should be covered and secured by sticky tape.

2.3 Moving about and Standing on the Stage

There is a risk of tripping, stumbling and/or falling when moving about the concert venue. These risks can be amplified by impaired mobility, balance or eyesight. There is also a serious risk of fainting from standing still for a long time on stage. A hot environment increases this risk.

If any choir member considers that they may slip, trip or fall, or has other concerns about getting on and off the staging, he should bring it to the attention of their Section Leader and the Stage Manager(Concert Coordinator). Section Leaders should designate guides or escorts, as necessary, for those choir members at higher risk who may need assistance when moving about.

Members, who feel that they may not be able to stand on the staging for a long time, should speak to their Section Leader or the Stage Manager, who will make suitable arrangements to reduce the risk of this happening and ensure a chair is located close by.

The staging has handrailing at each side. The safest way to climb or descend from the steps of the staging is to hold the handrail. When mounting, climb to the required level and then walk along the row. When dismounting, walk along the row to the end then hold the handrail while descending. Designated members will be positioned to assist members when stepping between the floor and the staging at each side.

The Concert Secretary and Musical Director will try to plan concerts to avoid long periods of standing on stage, particularly when hot weather is expected. Where possible, sessions involving standing/singing for longer than 20 minutes will be avoided. If this is not possible, members at higher risk will be given the opportunity to sit on chairs positioned close to the stage. If the end of concert speeches/presentations are expected to extend the session longer than 20 minutes, the Stage Manager (with the agreement of the Musical Director) will arrange to take the choir off the stage to their seating.

The Stage Manager will:

- consult with Section Leaders before the start of the concert to ensure that they know where members at higher risk will be positioned on the stage and who has been designated to assist them, as necessary;
- ensure that chairs are available close to the stage for those who need to take a break from standing;
- discuss and agree these arrangements with the Musical Director, and as necessary the Chairman and Concert Secretary, ideally at the end of the pre-concert rehearsal;
- check with members at higher risk and Section Leaders at the interval and the end of the concert to see if any further assistance is needed.

Members are encouraged to:

- keep their Section Leaders aware of any assistance they might need during the concert;
- sit down, rest and take on food and water to keep up energy levels between the rehearsal and the concert;
- leave the stage at any time during the concert, if they feel unwell;
- sit out a session during the concert, if they need a break.

2.4 Other associated activities

2.4.1 Display Banner

At most concert venues the Choir will utilise a spring-loaded "roll-up" display banner for publicity purposes. Whilst not heavy, it does require the assembly of a number of awkwardly shaped components which if undertaken in an uncontrolled way could swing round or fall and pose a risk of injury to anyone standing nearby.

Erection of the banner should therefore be undertaken by two people and the area kept clear of bystanders until the operation is complete. Whenever possible the task should be completed prior to the arrival of the general public, and not dismantled until the area has cleared. Especial attention should be paid to the stability of the entire structure, in particular that the feet have been attached correctly. If possible, it should be attached to a more rigid structure, for example

a table which would increase stability considerably. Failure to do this presents a risk of the structure toppling over and conceivably causing injury to bystanders.

In windy and/or crowded situations this risk is increased considerably and these precautions should be considered mandatory. The feet do protrude a small distance from the main structure and therefore present a small tripping risk. Arranging for the structure to be against a table as outlined above will significantly reduce but not entirely eliminate this risk. Therefore, if it is not possible or practicable to exclude people from the immediate vicinity, Hazard Tape should be attached to the feet in order to draw people's attention to them.

Note:

Good Practice Guidance set out in **HS3: Good Practice Document for Rehearsals** should also be followed at Concert Venues, in particular for:

- Moving chairs, tables and other equipment,
- Tea and coffee making,
- Spillages,
- Car Parks,
- Electrical equipment,
- Tripping hazards.