

Music making at Birmingham

The University of Birmingham enjoys one of the liveliest music-making scenes of any campus with a wide variety of ensembles organised by the Department of Music, [University Music Society \(http://www.uobmusicsociety.org\)](http://www.uobmusicsociety.org) and the Guild of Students.

Music Department Ensembles:

Birmingham University Singers

(Auditioned*)



Birmingham University Singers is a chamber choir of up to 40 auditioned singers run by the Music Department and led by [Professor Simon Halsey \(/staff/profiles/music/halsey-simon.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/music/halsey-simon.aspx), to rehearse and perform varied repertoire, ranging from Weelkes, to Britten to Whitacre. The choir usually gives two concerts per year in the new Elgar Concert Hall, plus a performance in Symphony Hall as part of the Projects Choir. Their annual Festival of Lessons and Carols at St Michael's, Tenbury, is also a highlight of the year.

In recent years BUS has sung in Tewkesbury Abbey, Worcester, Gloucester, Oxford Cathedrals, Clare College, Cambridge, the Royal Albert Hall as part of the First Night of the Proms and, most recently, Llangollen International Eisteddfod.

This year, BUS will perform Durufle 'Requiem' with Thomas Trotter, the annual University Carol Service, a lunchtime concert in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts and work with acclaimed vocal ensemble, Voces8.

Auditions for the Birmingham University Singers will be held in the first week of October. Please contact Charlie-Rose Terry (c.terry@bham.ac.uk) for further details.

University Women's Choir

(Auditioned*)



The University Women's Choir was founded by [Professor Simon Halsey \(/staff/profiles/music/halsey-simon.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/music/halsey-simon.aspx) in 2013 to accommodate and nurture the wealth of strong female voice at the University. Through its first year it is already made a name for itself with successful performances in the Elgar Concert Hall, Symphony Hall and Worcester Cathedral. UWC then went on to compete in the International Musical Eisteddfod, placing 1st place in the Female Choirs Competition and securing a place in the Choir of the World final.

This year they will perform alongside the University of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in a new composition to celebrate the recent organ build and also perform in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts.

Auditions for the University Women's Choir will be held in the first week of October. Please contact Charlie-Rose Terry (c.terry@bham.ac.uk) for further details.

Chamber Orchestra

(Auditioned*)

This small orchestra is run by the Department of Music but non-music students are welcome to join; the audition for the two main orchestras serves as the audition for this ensemble too. The Chamber Orchestra rehearses in two intensive weekends during the Spring Term culminating in a public concert. Recent music performed includes music by Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Grieg and Haydn.

Projects Choir

(Auditioned*)

The newly established Projects Choir has been created for the purpose of combined projects with the CBSO in particular. This choir will work towards one large concert in Symphony Hall in February alongside the CBSO, and will also rehearse towards a summer project such as competitions or the BBC Proms.

University Camerata

(Auditioned*)

The University Camerata is a choir of 16-20 voices, created to work with the MA Choral Conducting students under the supervision of Professor Simon Halsey. They rehearse once a fortnight, focusing particularly on singing and conducting technique and will perform at events throughout the year.

[BEAST \(/facilities/ea-studios/index.aspx\)](/facilities/ea-studios/index.aspx)



Birmingham ElectroAcoustic Sound Theatre (BEAST) is one of the leading international systems for the presentation of electroacoustic music. Relatively unique as a large-scale touring loudspeaker orchestra, BEAST is now capable of mounting systems with in excess of 100 discrete channels, and this year celebrates 30 years of innovating and leading in the field. BEAST is directed by [Dr Scott Wilson \(/staff/profiles/music/wilson-scott.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/music/wilson-scott.aspx).

[CEMPR \(/schools/lcahm/departments/music/research/cempr/index.aspx\)](/schools/lcahm/departments/music/research/cempr/index.aspx)

If you are interested in early music and would like to study on a period instrument or take vocal lessons with one of our specialist teachers, then you can join the activities of

the Centre for Early Music Performance and Research. With a focus on period performance practice,



CEMPR co-ordinates a number of ensembles (for Undergraduate and Postgraduate students) who receive coaching from some of the leading professional in the field, and give concerts in the Bramall Music Building and The Barber Institute of Fine Arts. For details about tuition and how to get involved please contact Dr Paul Rodmell (Acting Director of CEMPR) P.J.Rodmell@bham.ac.uk (<mailto:P.J.Rodmell@bham.ac.uk>).



New Music Ensemble



The department's New Music Ensemble gives regular performances of contemporary music, and performs student works in both concerts and workshop sessions. Recently performed composers include Reich, Boulez and Dallapiccola. This ensemble involves enthusiastic students from the Department of Music and some musicians from other departments.

Please note that NME auditions do not take place as part of the main audition process detailed below. Please contact [Christina Holmes](mailto:Christina.Holmes@bham.ac.uk) (<mailto:c.holmes@bham.ac.uk>) (details below) for more information.

Birmingham Ensemble for Electroacoustic Research

[\(/facilities/ea-studios/research/beer.aspx\)](/facilities/ea-studios/research/beer.aspx)

BEER was founded in 2011 as a research project within the Music Department to explore aspects of realtime electroacoustic music making. Particular interests include networked music performance and live coding.

University Music Society Auditioned Ensembles*

Big Band

This small auditioned ensemble gives at least two concerts per year in a mixture of formal and informal settings. It plays a wide variety of music from early jazz classics of the 1920s and 30s right through to recently composed and arranged numbers.



Birmingham Symphonic Brass (Brass Dectet)

A new addition to the Department of Music, this brass dectet offer symphonic brass players the opportunity to perform core repertoire and works with organ as part of the University Degree Ceremonies and at other high profile events. Annual auditions will be held for this ensemble and the ensemble will be coached by professional brass tutors. For audition information or to book the group for an event please contact Christina Holmes, C.Holmes@bham.ac.uk (<mailto:C.Holmes@bham.ac.uk>).

Philharmonic Orchestra and Symphony Orchestra

We run two full-sized orchestras of equal standing; each one gives one concert with the University Choir and one concert on its own, and is conducted by professional conductors and members of Music Department staff. The general standard of players is around Grade 7-8 but orchestral experience is just as important as an exam result.

University Music Society unauditioned ensembles*

Brass Band

The Brass Band is a student run ensemble which gives two concerts per year, often joint with the Wind Band. The band plays a wide variety of music, from traditional brass standards to film music and arrangements of pop classics.

Chamber Choirs



Chamber Choir nurtures two choirs – the mixed choir and the female choir. Both choirs are student led, with student conductors chosen by the choirs themselves. They perform a varied programme, this year looking at works by Brucker, Elgar, Stanford and Holst, and last year they performed new works by Howard Goodall in a concert attended by the composer himself.

Chamber Choir is an unauditioned ensemble, open to anyone interested in smaller choral works. They rehearse on Thursdays from 5-7pm in the Dome Rehearsal Room and perform one joint concert per term.

Saxophone Ensemble

The Saxophone Ensemble is one of the liveliest ensembles, playing a wide variety of purposely arranged and composed music. This group gives two concerts per year, not to be missed!

University Chorus



University Chorus is a large choir of between 150-200 singers. They perform large works for chorus, including a recent performance of Carl Orff's Carmina Burana alongside the University Philharmonic Orchestra in Birmingham Town Hall. The University Chorus has Professor Simon Halsey, Director of Choral Studies, as its Artistic Director and is regularly conducted by distinguished guest conductor Julian Wilkins. Rehearsals for University Chorus also act as a platform for the MA Choral Conducting students who will occasionally lead warm-ups or cover rehearsals.

University Chorus is an unauditioned community choir, open to singers of all experience levels. At present, the majority of the choir is made up of members of the local community and staff from campus. They rehearse on Tuesdays from 7-9pm in the new Elgar Concert Hall and perform two large works a year.

Wind Band

This is a student-conducted ensemble of brass, woodwind and percussion players, giving two concerts per year, often joint with the Brass Band. The Wind Band perform a diverse selection of music from Holst's Military Band Suites through to Harry Potter and Star Wars.

Chamber Ensembles

The Chamber Ensembles group is the newest addition to the UMS. It has been set up to get like minded musicians together to form small chamber groups. Informal platform sessions are held throughout the year, in order for groups to gain constructive feedback from their peers. There is one Chamber Ensembles concert each year, usually near the start of the Spring Term.

For more information on all UMS ensembles please visit www.ums.org.uk (<http://www.ums.org.uk>)

Other University music-making organisations:

The UMS and Department of Music are not the only people on campus devoted to music making: there are several more societies based in the Guild of Students, many faith groups organise musical activities and some other departments have their own ensembles.

Guild Music Theatre Group (<http://www.gmtg.org/>): A student-run group that stages two or three popular musicals a year.

Chamber Music Society: A society which enables students who wish to play chamber music, but who don't have a regular ensemble, to come together.

Jazz and Blues Society: A student-run society promoting both participation and appreciation of Jazz and Blues.

Summer Festival of Music (<http://summerfestivalofmusic.org.uk/>): A week long annual student-run festival including an opera production and concerts by various ensembles in collaboration with the UMS and Department of Music.

Information

*Auditioned Ensembles: Auditions take place in the first week of term. More information, and sign up sheets, will be available from the Bramall Music Building during the Freshers' Fayre or on the UMS notice board.

*Unauditioned Ensembles: If the ensemble is listed as unauditioned then please just turn up at the first rehearsal to register.

NB. All ensemble members will be required to sign an 'Ensemble Contract'. An example contract will be available for you to see on the UMS notice board.

If you have any queries, or require any further information, please contact Christina Holmes, University Music Administrator, at c.holmes@bham.ac.uk (<mailto:c.holmes@bham.ac.uk>) or on +44 (0)121 414 3280.

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