



# Welcome to A Cappella Spring Fest 2019

This prospectus gives you all the information you need to register for our 8<sup>th</sup> annual A Cappella singing festival. As usual, there are choices to make so please read all the information carefully before you pick your sessions.

After a year off, the team have brought together a wonderful set of tutors who are going to provide all participants with a memorable experience. There are some familiar names in the team, including one from a few years ago, and one new face. Together they have a breadth and depth of experience that will ensure participants have a productive, and fun, day.

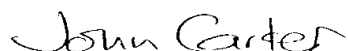
In many parts of the globe, music and song is an aural tradition, passed down the generations by ear, not written down. This includes harmonised songs. This year, we are joined for the first time by Chris Rowbury, a specialist in teaching such music. His afternoon choral group will learn, not one, but two songs from two regions. If you're keeping up, you will realise that unlike every previous Spring Fest song, there will be no advance music or tracks for this choral option. A different sort of challenge!

As before, with limited space in some classrooms, we are asking you to pick a first and second choice for each session. The sooner you register, the better chance you have of getting your first choice. If you have any problems with understanding the registration process, please do get in touch, by phone or by email. And don't forget to tell all your friends.

After classes in the morning and choral groups in the afternoon, the day finishes with performances by each choral group – plus the Fest Song of course. This Finale is always a great climax to the day and, as before, will be recorded. CDs can be ordered when you register and on the day, for £5 each, and will be sent out as soon as they are produced, usually in April.

This year the cost will be £49.50 per person which we know is excellent value for money. Please note – if 10 or more people sign up together the cost will be £44.50 per person. Everyone will receive downloadable music and learning material for their chosen choral stream. There is an additional cost of £6 if you would like the music and learning material posted to you as well as receiving it electronically.

We look forward to receiving your registrations and greeting you on the day.



John Carter  
On behalf of the organising team.

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## The Venue

We are very pleased to return to the Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot. The 200 seat auditorium and different sized classrooms has proved ideal for the format we have adopted. The Cornerstone hosts many different types of arts events and the Centre has very experienced staff, aided by their wonderful volunteers who make sure people find their way around the three-story building. We would like to extend our thanks to the whole Cornerstone team for their support before and during the event.

One of the main reasons for choosing the Cornerstone is its accessibility. Didcot is easily reached from the A34 and we are pleased to say that there is free parking available all day within a 5-minute walk in the car park adjacent to the nearby Sainsbury's store. The Cornerstone is also a short walk from Didcot Parkway railway station, although services on Sunday mornings are limited. The postcode of the theatre is OX11 7NE, but note that there is no direct road access to the theatre entrance. Full details of the venue, including a map, can be found at: <http://www.cornerstone-arts.org>. GPS coordinates of the car park next to Sainsbury are 51.6087, -1.2378 (some Sat Navs require this to be entered as N51.6087, W1.2378).

Tea and coffee will be provided during the course of the workshop. There are a number of options for lunch in the area, including several sandwich outlets, as well as opportunities to book lunch at the Cornerstone's own cafe.

For anyone wishing to travel the day before, there is a Premier Inn located very conveniently at the turn off to Didcot from the A34.

## The Cornerstone Arts Centre



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## Choral Directors and Class Leaders



**Jo Sercombe** works in Bath and nationally as a vocalist, Musical Director and workshop leader and is particularly keen to make singing accessible to all, regardless of skill or experience. She loves to encourage creativity in others; working with adult singing groups, community choirs, schools and colleges, businesses, and even on cruise ships! Closer to home, Jo founded and directs the Bath Community Gospel Choir and the Sunrise Gospel Choir and teaches 'Singing for Actors' at Bath Spa University. She is also the Gospel Workshop specialist for The Ambassador Theatre Group in London's West End.  
*Facebook: Jo Sercombe Vocalist*



**Chris Rowbury** has 30 years' experience as a patient, charismatic teacher with a relaxed style laced with plenty of humour. He will get you singing in wonderful harmony in a matter of minutes! Chris has worked all over the world as a teacher, director and performer. He has taught at the Royal Festival Hall in London, at several well-known UK drama schools, at music festivals and for major corporations. He runs regular world music singing groups and community choirs and teaches a cappella harmony songs from a wide range of traditional styles (e.g. gospel, Eastern European, African).



**Anna Shackleton** graduated with first class honours in Vocal Studies from Birmingham Conservatoire, under the guidance of Christine Cairns and recently completed a postgraduate diploma in vocal pedagogy from Cardiff Metropolitan. She has appeared as a soloist with various orchestras and choral societies around the UK, including regular engagements with the Orchestra of St John's, directed by John Lubbock. Anna has established a thriving private singing practice based at the Matrix Music School, Sutton Courtenay and also coaches the choristers of St Giles' Academy, Oxford. She is MD of local barbershop chorus, Oxford Harmony.



**Bernard Soper** is a qualified and experienced school teacher and has been a very successful Subject Leader for music for many years in several schools throughout the country. He is an experienced choral director who has led successful school choirs, has been Musical Director for Crawley Operatic Society and Maiden Erlegh Gilbert and Sullivan Society and then as Earley Community Choir. He has led Thames Vale Singers and now leads the a cappella group, 'Crescendo'. Bernard has a wide interest in all kinds of choral music with a special interest in the physical and emotional well-being that simply having fun with music can enhance. He now works in Reading, Berkshire as a freelance accompanist, piano teacher and general music teacher.

## Fest Song

*Groovin'* (Felix Cavaliere/Eddie Brigati Jr., arr. Kirby Shaw)

Since the second Spring Fest in 2012 we have had a 'Fest Song', a straightforward song that everybody can at least be familiar with, and then sing at various times of the day – maybe around the corridors as well – just for fun.

Groovin' was an instant hit for the Young Rascals in May 1967, reaching No. 1 in the States, although only No. 8 in the UK. The slow, relaxed rhythm and the lyric "*Groovin' ... on a Sunday afternoon*", seems to fit the Spring Fest vibe really well. This arrangement, from the prolific Kirby Shaw, perfectly captures the mood of the song and isn't difficult. Everybody gets the music and tracks for this song and we're sure you'll want to give it a try.

There are no plans this year to perform the Fest Song in a public 'Flash' event but everybody will sing it at the end of the morning warm-up, just before the lunch break and again during the Finale. Also, Jo's 'Show Choir' class will build their performance around the song. Of course, if the weather is lovely, there's no knowing what might happen on the steps outside the Cornerstone at the end of the day...

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## Your Choices For The Day

The two class sessions are both held in the morning leaving the whole afternoon, with a short break, to perfect your choral piece. As usual, you can mix'n'match any class from Session A, any class from Session B, plus a choral option to make your ideal workshop day.

For the choral sessions in the afternoon we are offering genres of:

- ❖ Gospel
- ❖ World Songs
- ❖ Mixed Barbershop
- ❖ and Madrigal.

Numbers for each class and choral choice are limited so we ask you to provide a backup second choice when you make your booking. Of course, the sooner you book, the less likely it is that we have to use your backup choices. Read through the descriptions below, make your choices and make your booking! You can do this on-line (we prefer this) or use our paper form. The details are at the end of this prospectus.

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## CLASS SESSION A · 10:40AM – 11:30AM · CHOOSE ONE FROM:

### Better Harmony By Using Your Ears

**Tutor: Chris Rowbury**

**Book: Harmony**

If you're used to reading music for much of the time, it's all too easy to forget that creating harmonies is all about the ears! Using simple song arrangements, Chris will guide you through the slow build-up of a harmony song by learning one voice to a part, 'duetting' parts together, and generally refining your listening skills. If you're not used to learning by ear, this will be a good introduction (and challenge!).

### Breathing and Support

**Tutor: Anna Shackleton**

**Book: Breath**

We will be looking at vocal anatomy to demystify the term 'support' and use various tricks, tips and exercises to make breathing and singing long phrases much easier, which we will all try. These exercises will help you identify how and where you 'lose air' and will help you improve your breath management and find your 'support'. We will also be looking at ways to improve how you breathe in, how to improve vocal control and breathing by singing with good legato and how to reduce breathiness to avoid excessive air loss. Expect to sing in groups, pairs and individually.

### Sight Singing Tricks

**Tutor: Bernard Soper**

**Book: Sight**

If you find sight singing difficult, you **CAN** learn, but it takes time and careful work to train the 'inner ear'. You must develop the inner 'aware' ear to outer vocal coordination and develop a real time understanding of the 'pictures' on the page and how they become the rhythmic and pitch movement that is music. In this class, I cannot 'teach' anyone to sight sing, but I can give you exercises, insights and occasionally a few tricks that you can use to help yourself. Regular focussed practice, even for just a few minutes a day, will dramatically improve your sight singing skills and in a few months you will be sight singing like a pro!



*...Mix'n'Match class session B choices begin on the next page*

**CLASS SESSION B · 11:50PM – 12:40PM · CHOOSE ONE FROM:**

**Total Warm-Up**

**Tutor: Chris Rowbury**

**Book: Warm-Up**

Many warm ups are simply vocal exercises ('vocalises'). But we also need to 'warm up' our imagination, ears, breath, bodies, group awareness, focus and much much more. Drawing on his theatre background and 20 years of leading choirs, Chris will demonstrate how to create total warm ups that can energise and prepare any group of singers. You will then build your own engaging and fun warm ups to share with the rest of the group.

**Show Choir Masterclass**

**Tutor: Jo Sercombe**

**Book: Performance**

Thanks to Glee and the Pitch Perfect movie franchise, American show choir-style performances continue to be popular on the British a cappella scene; particularly with high school and university vocal groups. Bringing a song to life through movement can be a lot of fun and we're going to try turning our Fest Song into a show choir number; complete with simple choreography, staging, and plenty of 'pzazz'! If you like to move and are comfortable singing from memory – this is the session for you! Please wear comfortable clothing and have learnt your part for 'Groovin' off-by-heart in preparation for the class.

**Vocal Colour and Resonance**

**Tutor: Anna Shackleton**

**Book: Colour**

The voice is highly flexible and by learning about our vocal instrument in more depth we can understand how to make a freer, more resonant tone. We will begin by listening to some of the extraordinary sounds that can be made by the human voice followed by a brief introduction to vocal anatomy using pictures and videos.

We will then focus on larynx position, the soft palate and the tongue to understand how to get the best sound for ourselves as well as looking at posture and alignment. We will all have a go at singing a phrase or two individually and in pairs to put what we've learnt into practice.



*...Choices for the afternoon choral sessions begin on the next page*

## SINGING SESSIONS · AFTERNOON

Choose one of the singing sessions below. To make the most of the experience, you are expected to become thoroughly familiar with the song **before** the workshop, using the music and audio learning materials provided well in advance of the event. The only exception to this is 'World Songs' where Chris will teach the songs from scratch. To help you choose, you will find a sample recording of each song on the A Cappella Spring Fest website.

The email providing you with links to the music and audio learning materials will also direct you to an on-line poll where you can see how many people in your group have opted to learn each part. If your range is wide enough to be able to sing one of several parts and the poll shows one of those parts is down on numbers, please pick that one to learn so the group has a good harmonic balance on the day. Also please check the progress of the poll a few weeks later to see if the balance has shifted radically and whether you can help out by moving to a different part.

### Gospel

**Tutor: Jo Sercombe**

**Book: Gospel**

*The Storm Is Passing Over* (C A Tindley)

Although many traditional gospel spirituals speak of hardship and suffering, there are also songs that articulate hope in the midst of great difficulty. This year, we'll be working on a zesty, rhythmic setting of the well-known spiritual 'The Storm is Passing Over' that will help us hone our syncopation skills as well as inspire us to be bold and courageous!

### World Songs

**Tutor: Chris Rowbury**

**Book: World**

*Hlonolofatsa* (South Africa) and *Mravlazamier* (Republic of Georgia)

Chris's work focuses on traditional songs from across the globe. From cultures where singing (and dancing!) comes as naturally as talking. Where songs are never written down but are passed down aurally from generation to generation.

You'll be surprised at how well and quickly you can learn, embody and remember a song when it's learnt by ear – even in a foreign language. Chris will teach two songs: one from South Africa and one from Eastern Europe, entirely by ear – no sheet music or written lyrics. Don't worry though, Chris guarantees that it will all work out in the end – trust him, he's a choir leader!

Neither of the songs will have huge ranges. Traditional songs tend to be sung in the chest voice, so there won't be any really high soprano parts. Tenor parts will be able to be sung by low women as well as high men.

### Mixed Barbershop

**Tutor: Anna Shackleton**

**Book: Barbershop**

*I'm Sitting On Top Of The World* (Ray Henderson / Lewis and Young, arr. Boston Consort)

The song was first published in 1925 and has been covered by many notables including both Bobby Darin and Aretha Franklin. This arrangement comes from talented barbershop quartet 'Boston Consort' and was largely formulated from a woodshedding (improvisation) session



before a concert in 1984. The arrangement was tweaked a bit at their next rehearsal still by ear, and was later committed to paper for the benefit of the rest of us. It became better known when performed by 1989 international quartet champions 'Second Edition'.

Although originally intended for male voices, the arrangement has been transposed for A Cappella Spring Fest to make it suitable for mixed voices.

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◆ Madrigal ◆

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Tutor: Bernard Soper

Book: Madrigal

*It Was A Lover And His Lass* (Thomas Morley) – It shouldn't be a surprise that most madrigals are obsessed with love! Well it is the most important, perhaps the only important, aspect of our daily lives. And what brings love to life? The Spring! Thomas Morley's famous celebration of love with its clear harmonies, dancing rhythms and lovely refrains, depicts the birds singing and is a truly exuberant expression of the joys of love. But amongst all the jollity, there is a darker warning that 'life is but a flower' and does not last, so grab love while you can! Do join us in working on one of Morley's finest works.



# Timetable

9:00am	to	10:00am	Check-In
10:00am	to	10:10am	Welcome and safety briefing
10:10am	to	10:35am	Warm up and Fest Song
10:40am	to	11:30am	Class Session A
11:30am	to	11:50pm	Tea and Coffee
11:50pm	to	12:40pm	Class Session B
12:45pm	to	1:00pm	Fest Song plus performance from Jo's Show Choir
1:00pm	to	2:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm	to	2:50pm	Singing Session
2:50pm	to	3:10pm	Tea and Coffee
3:10pm	to	4:00pm	Singing Session
4:05pm	to	4:45pm	Workshop Finale and Fest Song
4:45pm	to	5:00pm	Wrap Up and Feedback

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## Registration

Having read the descriptions of the choral and class sessions, now is the time to register for A Cappella Spring Fest 2019 and make your choices.

**On-Line Registration Is Available At:**

<https://acappellaspringfest2019.eventbrite.co.uk>

We would prefer you to use our on-line registration as it saves us some work and ensures that your details and choices are recorded accurately. You can pay by credit card and of course, it saves you a stamp too! If you are unable to register on-line, then please use the booking form on the following two pages.

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# Booking Form

Use this **ONLY** if you are unable to register at <http://acappellaspringfest2019.eventbrite.co.uk>).

Having read the descriptions of the courses and class sessions now is the time to complete the booking details and make your choices.

Please print out this page and the singing and class session page that follows. Complete **BOTH** and send your cheque to:

John Carter, 38 Truelocks Way, Wantage, OX12 7EF

If you have any queries or questions please call John on 01235 764810 or email him at [registration@acappellaspringfest.org.uk](mailto:registration@acappellaspringfest.org.uk)

The cost of the workshop is £49.50 and cheques should be made payable to 'Oxford Harmony Workshop'. Add £6 if you require learning materials to be posted to you. Add £5 to pre-order a Showcase CD.

**Title:** ( Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss ) Please circle

**Family Name\*:** .....

**First Name\*:** .....

**Address:** .....

**Telephone Number:** .....

**Email:** .....

**Mobile Number:** .....

**Current Choral Group\*:** .....  
(If applicable)

**Usual Voice Part(s) (circle those appropriate) (BS = barbershop)**

Soprano / Alto / Tenor / Bass / BS Tenor / BS Lead / BS Bari / BS Bass

\*Please indicate Names and Current Choral Group as you would like it to appear on your name badge

Tick for posted learning material (add £6)

Tick to pre-order Showcase CD (add £5)

For Office Use – Chq No.: .....

...Booking Form continues on next page

# Singing And Class Session Choices

Family Name: .....

Initials: .....

## *How to Fill In The Table Below*

Put a '1' underneath your 1<sup>st</sup> choice and a '2' underneath your 2<sup>nd</sup> choice in each of the three colour coded pick'n'mix columns. We hope to be able to give you your first choice for each column but be aware that allocations are made on a first-come-first-served basis so do book early.

Class Session A 10:40am to 11:30am	Class Session B 11:50pm to 12:40pm	Singing Sessions 2:00pm to 4:00pm
Harmony	Warm-Up	Gospel
Breath	Performance	World
Sight	Colour	Barbershop
		Madrigal