



## Information Pack

***8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> June 2023***

***St. Barnabas Church, Southfields***

Welcome to the first ever Cygnet Proms!

This is a brand new project for Cygnets and we hope you will be as excited about it as we are by the time you have finished reading this information pack. So buckle up, hold on tight, and here we go...

### **What is it?**

If you know the BBC Proms concerts, you'll have an idea of what we're aiming for - a live orchestra, a chance to dress up, and wonderful music.

At the heart of the concept is the Orchestra. Normally stuck behind the scenery or in the wings, the band are a vital part of a musical. In this project, we want to put them front and centre. Cygnets are incredibly lucky to have such talented musicians playing for our shows – it's high time they got their turn in the limelight!

But of course, musical theatre songs usually have words as well as music, so we're going to be putting together a Chorus of singers to match the big sound of our show-stopping orchestra. If you've ever wanted to perform with a live orchestra, this one's for you!

Whilst Cygnets events are always classy (!), we are staging this as a concert, rather than a 'show', so we'll make the most of our opportunity to get out the suits, black tie, ball gowns, or whatever takes your fancy for a bit of high-brow glamour. And whilst it's not quite the Royal Albert Hall, St Barnabas Church is a beautiful venue to perform music in.

The theme is "A night at the musicals", so no prizes for guessing that we'll perform adaptations of well-known numbers from musicals throughout the decades. The concert format allows us to perform songs from shows that Cygnets would not ordinarily be able to stage, either because they are too large-scale or the amateur rights are not available. The programme we are designing will focus on big chorus numbers, but there will be solo lines and small group numbers too. We will also have some orchestra-only instrumental numbers.

If you're still struggling to picture what that all means, this is the vibe we are going for:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsTcuvuL5I8>

## MDs and Arrangers

We'll put together a team of MDs and arrangers to shape the music under the direction of our Music Supervisor, Ash. Arrangers will help source and arrange the music for our combination of instruments and singers; MDs will rehearse the orchestra and chorus, and lead them from the front on the night.

### MDs

Maybe you've always wanted to try your hand at MD'ing? Or maybe you've had a bit of experience conducting an orchestra but not singers, or vice versa? This is your chance! We're encouraging people to come forward if they've thought about MD'ing, but weren't sure where to start, or wanted to get more experience before committing to a whole show. You can lead one number, or a few, or just have a go at leading part of a rehearsal under the guidance of a more experienced MD.

For seasoned MDs, this is a chance to conduct a large band/orchestra – bigger than you'd usually find in a musical, and bigger than you'd be able to fit in most amateur venue orchestra pits! In previous shows, you might have had to lead the band whilst also playing keys, so this is an opportunity to focus on just waving the stick! It's also a chance to perform material from shows that are not on the amateur circuit at the moment. You can commit to leading as many numbers as you like.

### Arrangers

Finally, if you're one of those insanely talented people that can actually *write* music, we'd love to hear from you! This is a chance to arrange something for a full band and hear it performed. You can write something completely from scratch, or help us source appropriate materials and adapt them for our mix of instruments.

## The Production Team

This is a new type of event for Cygnets, so the project is being managed by the whole Committee team! If you don't know who we are, you can see our faces and read more about us on the website:

[www.cygnetplayers.com/committee](http://www.cygnetplayers.com/committee)

Joining us for this project is the very wonderful and talented **Ash Harvey**, who many of you will know from recent am dram shows in South West London. She is taking the role of **Music Supervisor**, providing the Committee with additional expertise and experience in all things music. She is overseeing the selection of MDs, arrangers, musicians, and the actual music that we will perform.

## Important Dates

- **Weds 29th March at 8pm** – Information Evening over Zoom
- **Sun 2nd April** – Deadline for completing interest forms and submitting audition videos
- **Thurs 6th April** – Notified of audition video outcomes by this date
- **Tues 2nd May** – Rehearsals start
- **Weds 7th June** – Dress rehearsal
- **Thurs 8th, Fri 9th and Sat 10th June** – Performances

## Information Evening

An information evening will be held on **Weds 29th March at 8pm** over Zoom. The Committee and production team will present their vision in more detail and answer any questions you may have.

Zoom details will be sent out to everyone who signs up using the interest forms (see below).

If you can't make the information evening, we will be recording the session and will make the recording available to everyone who has registered their interest by completing one of the sign-up forms (see below). If you want to submit questions in advance, please send them to [cygnetsproms@gmail.com](mailto:cygnetsproms@gmail.com) by Tuesday 21st March.

## Interest Forms

Please complete one of the forms below to register your interest for this project:

- Singers: <https://forms.gle/MDHffu7CJvasfop16>
- Band / MDs / Arrangers: <https://forms.gle/yFBNqM32sDWXG6Ag6>

After the information evening, all further communications will be emailed to people who have registered their interest, so make sure you sign up so you don't miss out on the next steps!

The deadline for completing forms is **Sunday 2nd April**.

## Auditions

### *If you have been in a Cygnets show before (on stage or in the band)*

If you have been in a Cygnets show before, there is no audition to join the Chorus. Similarly, if you have played in the band for a Cygnets show in the last year, there is no audition to join the Orchestra (unless you are playing a different instrument this time!).

### *If you are new to Cygnets*

If you're new to Cygnets – hi, great to have you! – we will ask you to send us a short video clip of you singing/playing:

- Singers – please choose a section of any song that allows us to hear your voice. You can use a backing track or accompanist, or sing unaccompanied – whatever you feel more comfortable with.
- Instrumentalists – please choose a short section of any piece which shows off your playing.

There's no need to learn the music off by heart, and don't worry about perfect camera angle, lighting, etc. Try and get the best audio quality you can though (i.e. avoid background noise, don't record in an echoey room like a bathroom).

If you are unsure or don't think you have anything suitable to sing/play, please email the team on [cygnetsproms@gmail.com](mailto:cygnetsproms@gmail.com) and we can advise.

Audition videos should be sent to [cygnetsproms@gmail.com](mailto:cygnetsproms@gmail.com) by **Sunday 2nd April**. Videos will be reviewed by Ash and the Committee and you will be notified by **Thurs 6th March**.

### Solos and small group numbers

Solo lines and small group numbers will be assigned once rehearsals have started. Anyone in the Chorus can put themselves forward for a solo/small group number and informal auditions will be organised during the rehearsal process.

### MDs and Arrangers

MDs and arrangers will be selected by the Music Supervisor and Committee in a similar manner to production team interviews for our usual shows.

## Rehearsals

Rehearsals will take place at **St Barnabas Church Hall, Lavenham Road, Southfields, SW18 5EP**, on **Tuesdays (7:30-10pm), Thursdays (7:30-10pm) and Sundays (2-6pm)**.

You won't necessarily be called for every rehearsal – for example, we will have some which are orchestra only and chorus only – but for the moment you need to keep the following dates free:

- Tues 2nd May
- Thurs 4th May
- Sun 7th May
- Tues 9th May
- Thurs 11th May
- Sun 14th May
- Tues 16th May
- Thurs 18th May
- Sun 21st May
- Tues 23rd May
- Thurs 25th May
- Sun 28th May
- Tues 30th May
- Thurs 1st June
- Sun 4th June

We have gone for a compressed rehearsal schedule to limit the time frame that you need to commit to. The flip side of that is, we really need everyone to make all the rehearsals that they are called for!

The interest forms ask for your availability for the above dates and we will take this into account when finalising the rehearsal schedule.

We are still confirming the bookings with the church and there are a few conflicts to resolve, so please be aware that there may be some changes to timings.

## Promoting the Show

Sadly, we do not have the resources to run large promotion and advertising campaigns to drum up audiences for our shows, so it's crucial that everyone involved with the show does everything they can to spread the word and encourage their friends, relatives, colleagues and acquaintances to buy tickets and come along. At the end of the day, we want big audiences to perform too and appreciate all the hard work that you've put in!

The Committee marketing team will coordinate efforts across our social media channels and we ask everyone involved to help by sharing posts, and capturing photos and videos in rehearsals that we can use for content. If you have a particular flare for insta stories and want to help further with the social media

campaigns, our marketing team will be very happy to hear from you! Please email the team at [cygnetsproms@gmail.com](mailto:cygnetsproms@gmail.com)

Closer to show week, we will organise some targeted promotional events, such as flyering in areas local to St Barnabas. These events are vital to ensuring we sell tickets, and we expect each member of the cast to attend at least one of these. More details on these events, including dates, will be given in due course.

## Shows

Show week at the Church is from **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2023**:

- Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June – Tech / Dress, 6pm-10pm
- Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June – 7:30pm performance
- Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June – 7:30pm performance
- Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June – 11am performance, 2:30pm performance, get-out

The Thursday evening, Friday evening and Saturday afternoon performances will all be the same.

The Saturday morning will be a 'relaxed' performance with a shorter programme, aimed at families with young children and anyone else who might find a less formal environment more enjoyable.

There have been a lot of new arrivals in the Cygnets family in the last few years, so we hope the next generation will be able to come along to be inspired, or maybe even watch their mums and dads perform!

## Show Fee

As an amateur group, we are self-funded and doing this for fun, so we ask participants to pay a show fee to cover all the costs of the show. We also rely on projects like this to help raise funds to allow the society to continue putting on high quality productions for many years to come.

As this is a smaller scale production than our usual musicals, the show fee will not be as high (currently ~£100) but we still need to cover costs. For this production, this includes rehearsal space, venue hire, music, sound equipment, insurance and lots more!

The show fee for this production will be **£30** for all performers (Chorus and Orchestra).

## Membership

As an on-stage performer, Cygnets membership lets you audition for all our productions (usually 3) in that year without paying an audition fee (normally £10 per show). It also gives you discounted members' rates to our social events and access to the dedicated members' Facebook group and mailing list. Importantly, as a member of the society, you are covered under our insurance.

Standard Membership is currently £35 a year if you pay as a one-off, or only £30 when you set up a standing order.

For this project, there will be a one-off Orchestra Guest Membership which covers the rehearsal period and performances for this project (i.e. membership will end after the final performance). This won't come with any specific benefits, other than ensuring you are covered under our insurance policy as members of the society.

The Orchestra Guest Membership for this project will be £10.

One of the ambitions behind this project is to grow our membership of instrumentalists. In future, we hope to have a dedicated 'Musicians Membership' category which has specific benefits for musicians, as well as the discounts, mailing lists, etc.

We'd love to hear your thoughts on this, so please speak to one of the Committee or email [info@cygnetplayers.com](mailto:info@cygnetplayers.com)

Of course, musicians are most welcome to become fully-fledged Cygnets members if they want to, with all the benefits that entails!

## **Payment Plans**

The cost of living has risen sharply recently and we don't want financial circumstances to be a barrier to participation. If you are concerned about the show fee or membership cost, or due to current circumstances you are unable to pay the full amounts upfront, please speak to the Cygnet Players committee in confidence to arrange a payment plan by emailing [info@cygnetplayers.com](mailto:info@cygnetplayers.com).

## **Accessibility**

The rehearsal and performance venue (St Barnabas Church) has two disabled parking spaces available immediately in front of the church next to the main entrance. On-street parking is available close by in the neighbouring roads. There is step-free access to the ground floor rehearsal rooms, Church and a separate accessible toilet on the ground floor that is wheelchair accessible.

The performance and seating area is ground floor only, and there is also space to park wheelchairs if they are not needed while in the Church. The Church also has a hearing loop installed. If you have more specific questions or requirements, please email [info@cygnetplayers.com](mailto:info@cygnetplayers.com).

## **Contact**

Please contact [cygnetsproms@gmail.com](mailto:cygnetsproms@gmail.com) with any questions about the Cygnets Proms project.

Please contact [info@cygnetplayers.com](mailto:info@cygnetplayers.com) if you have any questions about other projects or the society in general.

## About Cygnet Players

Cygnet Players is a young and vibrant company based in South West London. We rehearse in Southfields and put on shows in and around South West London. We perform two musicals and a play every year, as well as putting on various concerts and other events. We also have regular social events, which are great opportunities to meet and catch up with other Cygnets. We always welcome new members, so if this is your first show with us – welcome to the family!

For more information about the company in general, have a look at our website at [www.cygnetplayers.com](http://www.cygnetplayers.com) or email [info@cygnetplayers.com](mailto:info@cygnetplayers.com).

You can also find us on social media:

- Facebook – [www.facebook.com/cygnetplayers](http://www.facebook.com/cygnetplayers)
- Instagram – [@cygnetplayers](https://www.instagram.com/cygnetplayers)
- TikTok – [@cygnetplayers](https://www.tiktok.com/@cygnetplayers)

## Covid-19

We will adhere to all government guidance and rules on Covid-19.

We are currently able to meet, rehearse and perform indoors in large groups, without any restrictions. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and adapt accordingly if anything changes.

Please do not attend a workshop, audition or rehearsal if you are experiencing Covid symptoms or test positive for Covid-19.

## Diversity and Inclusion

Cygnet Players strives to create an accessible and welcoming environment for members and audiences. We are committed to diversity and inclusion within our casting and storytelling to ensure there are opportunities for all people, from every walk of life, to take part.

As part of this, we are committed to a conscious casting process; making conscious decisions about how a show can be cast, rather than following the “traditional” model that repeats whatever has been done before. We are always open to non-traditional casting, and conscious artistic decisions will be made whenever race, ethnicity, gender or other factors are a key component of the story or integral to the relationships between characters. Where this is the case, it will be clearly highlighted in character breakdowns.

Cygnets is a member of the South West London amateur theatre societies’ Inclusion, Diversity, Equality and Accessibility Group (IDEA): a group of five societies working towards improved diversity and inclusion in amdram.

We are open to feedback to improve our processes and create a warm and welcoming atmosphere that creates opportunities for people of all ethnicities, gender identities and physical abilities.

If you have any suggestions, feedback or ideas please speak to a member of the Committee or Production Team, or email [swamdramidea@gmail.com](mailto:swamdramidea@gmail.com). It will always be treated in the strictest of confidence but if you wish to provide feedback anonymously, please fill in [this form](#).