



Working with Citizens of the World Choir

A Guide for External Producers and Bookers

Welcome! We're so glad you're here.

Who We Are

Citizens of the World Choir is the UK's leading refugee and allies choir—a professional musical organisation celebrating the artistry, heritage and humanity of people seeking sanctuary. Through music, we advocate for understanding, dignity and kindness.

Inclusive practice is simply good practice. It requires care, attention and resources—and it's worth all of that. We want to work with you in the best way for YOU. Please tell us what you need to do your best work. We may not be able to provide everything, but we always want to know what's important to you.

Working with Us

What You Need to Know

The choir: We're usually 40-50 members strong, so we need spacious setups with clear sightlines between piano and conductor.

Time: Everything takes longer when you're working across multiple languages, cultures and lived experiences—and that's a beautiful thing. Build in 4 - 5x more time than you might usually need for activities.

Language: English is often a second or third language for our members. Speak slowly, clearly, and give people time to process and respond.

Music: We always sing with a piano or keyboard, and sometimes other musicians (such as violin and drums) and our musicians need to stay in the conductor's eyeline.

What We Need to perform at our best

We always require a green room. Ideally, we ask for food and soft drinks to be provided (if it is possible, a place for members to make hot drinks goes a very long way to making them feel comfortable and welcome!). Our support team includes a Conductor, Pianist, Music Team, Rehearsal Manager, Pastoral Care & Community Manager, and Producer—all here to help make your session run smoothly.

And we're always available if you need guidance or have questions.

Support Needs

- **Cultural & Religious Respect:** We'd appreciate your awareness when members may be observing religious festivals such as Ramadan. Some members may value privacy for prayer, and please be especially gentle with those who are fasting.
 - **Costumes:** Our joyful choir colours are green, cream, yellow, purple & sparkles! Members wear clothing that beautifully represents their culture and heritage. If an event requires a specific aesthetic, we'd be grateful if you could provide those items or budget to help source them.
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Performance Requirements

Stage & Space

Minimum stage size: 6.5m x 4m

Maximum stage size: 8m x 6m

Need more information? Talk to us and see our [full tech spec](#).

Transport & Access

We'll need to discuss transport arrangements and access requirements for the venue. Within London our members do find their way to venues but it can take longer than you might expect and be more of a challenge than you'd anticipate so we need to factor this in when committing to bookings. Please reach out to coordinate these details.

Our Conducting Approach

The Citizens of the World Choir is led by a conductor in all performances and concerts. Our conductor uses a rich variety of approaches - drawing on samba signals, vocal painting, British Sign Language, grounding, breathing and emotional regulation exercises, and other alternative, non-classical systems such as step conducting to interpret musical language for our diverse choir.

While our ethos emphasises collaboration, we rely on a conductor for both the practicalities of performance and the co-regulation of choir members with particular vulnerabilities, histories of trauma, or access needs. We ask that you embrace and collaborate with this approach.

We are not a choir for hire without a conductor.

Communication Guidelines

Our Simple Rule

Don't ask inappropriate or personal questions. People share their stories when they're ready.

Questions That Work Well ✓

- "What's your name?" (be aware many members use Anglicised or chosen names)
- "What music do you love?"
- "Have you sung in a choir before?"
- "Tell us about music in your life?"
- "Where are you from and how did you end up in the UK?" (most people are happy with headline answers)

Approach with Care

If you're planning to ask more detailed questions, prepare them in advance and share them with our team.

Remember: trauma triggers are unpredictable. They could be anything from family memories to a line of poetry. Always allow members autonomy over what they choose to share.

Make space for joyful stories, not just trauma or "superhero" narratives. People are whole, complex, multifaceted humans.

Emergency Conversation Starter 🍲

When in doubt, ask about favourite meals. We all LOVE talking about food!

Practical Notes

Credits & References

- Please refer to us as "Citizens of the World Choir"
- We're a "professional musical organisation" (not a community choir)
- We'd be grateful if you could consult with us on press releases and photo credits before publication - this helps us safeguard our wonderful members

One More Thing

We're all human. This is a living document, shaped by our experience since 2017. Your feedback helps us learn and evolve our practice together.

We're thrilled to work with you and can't wait to see what we create together.

For further reading, we recommend: The Platforma Manifesto, Freedom From Torture's Messaging Guide, and the Refugee Week shared values document.