



An invitation to choral singers

Join the Feast!



Rembrandt "Belshazzar's Feast", Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

We are recruiting a chorus to perform

Belshazzar's Feast

at the **Bristol Beacon**

on **4 April 2027**

in support of two wonderful music charities!

You could be part of a 200-strong choir who will join a professional soloist and experienced local orchestral players in this exciting one-off event.

If you are a choral singer aged 13 or over and you are confident that you can learn your own vocal line in Walton's great cantata *Belshazzar's Feast* in advance of the rehearsals, please read on.



We are the Belshazzar's Feast Project, a dedicated group of amateur musicians, and we want to:

- bring together hundreds of amateur musicians from local communities and further afield
- raise money in support of both young and professional musicians, and promote musical education across the area
- have fun making music together to a high standard

Here is everything you need to know about this opportunity, the commitment you will need to make, and what you need to do to sign up.

What's happening?

We will be performing Walton's epic cantata *Belshazzar's Feast*, and with it two world premieres specially commissioned for the event, by Liz Lane and Tom Green.

Belshazzar's Feast demands enormous instrumental forces - a very large orchestra, two brass bands, four percussionists and an organ - and it needs a choir to match! We have already booked Gavin Carr as baritone soloist and our conductor, Chris Hill, is raring to go.

Tom Green's piece will utilise the same vocal and instrumental forces as those needed for *Belshazzar's Feast*. And Liz Lane's piece will be for brass and percussion - continuing the flamboyant, brazen theme of our concert. And... to get every seat in the concert hall filled, we are exploring some very exciting ideas for an orchestral first half of the programme. We'll let you know more soon.

ALL the money we raise is going straight to our two charities (see below).

A generous donor has agreed to cover the costs of hiring the Beacon, as well as the cost of the commissions and soloists. This means that everything we make, and everything we ourselves donate, goes to our charities, contributing to a lasting legacy of music-making in the area.

Who is it in support of?

Help Musicians - a charity for professional musicians of all genres, both in work and in retirement. The charity provides help at times of crisis, but also at times of opportunity, giving people the support they need at the crucial stages that could make or break their career.

Bristol Music Trust - a cultural organisation promoting music and the arts. It's responsible for developing a vibrant programme of music and events at Bristol Beacon, and for supporting young people through music education activities in Bristol and the South West. The funds we raise will go to help the Trust in that latter aim, supporting young people through music.



What commitment do I need to make?

Belshazzar's Feast is not an easy work to sing - and we don't yet know how tricky and demanding Tom Green's piece will be! So we need to ask all chorus members to commit to the following:

- learning all the notes for your part (including the rhythms, which are challenging at times) before the first rehearsal - see below for a suggested learning aid
- acquiring and marking up your own Belshazzar score (see below for details)
- attending rehearsals on all of the following dates:
 - Sunday 8 November 2026 (all day)
 - Sunday 28 February 2027 (all day)
 - Tuesday 30 March 2027 (evening)
 - Wednesday 31 March 2027 (evening)
 - Saturday 3 April 2027 (all day)
 - Sunday 4 April 2027 (afternoon rehearsal and evening performance at Bristol Beacon)

All rehearsals (except on concert day) will be at Trinity Academy, Romney Avenue, Lockleaze, Bristol BS7 9BY. This is a wonderful venue, with a modern 400-seat concert hall, huge orchestra space and ample parking for all. It is very close to M32 junction 2, and is on the Number 24 bus route from the centre of Bristol. Here is a [link to Google Maps](#) showing its location.

We have to ask that any singer under the age of 18 must be accompanied to all rehearsals and the performance by an adult with parental responsibility, under whose care and supervision they must remain at all times.

What should I do next?

Involvement in this project is on a first-come, first-served basis, and we anticipate there will be a lot of interest - so please act fast! Bear in mind that we will need to recruit a balanced choir, so the conductor will take final decisions about participation.

If you haven't already done so, please complete an **application form**, which is available on our website - just go to the Sing page and click on Apply Now:

www.belshazzar.org

Please, if you have any particular needs, we ask you to **contact the Chorus Coordinator** choir@belshazzar.org before applying. For singers under the age of 18, we have to ask that the application is completed on their behalf by an adult with parental responsibility.



Once your application has been accepted and your voice part confirmed, you should:

- **Emblazon the rehearsal dates into your diary in letters of fire.**
- **Make a voluntary donation to the chosen charities.** We really hope that you can be generous so that we can meet the £10,000 target from participants. This averages around £35 per person for all the rehearsals and for singing in the Bristol Beacon, which is a bargain! Donating is very straightforward – all you have to do is follow this link: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/belshazzars-feast>
Please note that at this stage your donations will go to Help Musicians. We'll make a reconciliation after the concert so each charity gets 50% of the total amount we raise.
- **Get a Belshazzar score** - please acquire a **vocal score** for Belshazzar's Feast (OUP). The best one is the 2007 New Edition - ISBN 978-0-19-335954-3 as it's easier to read than earlier versions. It's readily available second-hand or from music suppliers. If you already have a score, please check that the bar numbering etc is compatible with the newer edition.
- **Mark up your score** - you will be provided with comprehensive notes which must be transferred to your score before the first rehearsal.
- **Start learning your part.** No doubt you have your own preferred way of learning parts, but we have found that Cyberbass provides a straightforward set of rehearsal tracks for each part: https://cyberbass.org/Major_Works/Walton_W/Walton_BelshazzarsFeast.htm
When Tom Green's work is available, we will circulate it as a PDF document by email, for you to print your own copy.
- **Watch out for emails with any updates** - if it's all gone very quiet, please check your junk or spam folders and don't hesitate to email your Chorus Coordinator with any questions or concerns.



Your chorus co-ordinator Chris Hall: choir@belshazzar.org

We look forward to having a fantastic time making music together!

**Belshazzar's Feast - A Musical Banquet –
Savour the Feast!**