



Members' Resources: Your Sound Setup

This leaflet is to help you improve the sound you're able to hear when using the various rehearsal aids, which are discussed in a separate leaflet "**Rehearsal Aids**"

Your Own Hearing

Hearing declines with age. Many people have a hearing impairment without knowing. Most commonly, it's the high frequencies that are lost. The result is that one may struggle to make out what is being said even though the volume seems fine. If you do struggle little, you may be missing high frequency sounds like "th" "s" "p" "f/ph" etc, which make speech intelligible. For the same reason, if you're struggling to hear your TV, try increasing the treble rather than the volume. You may find that the sound becomes clearer and you may find that you don't need the volume so high! If you develop hearing problems, you should contact your GP. The NHS guidance on hearing loss provides more detail and can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hearing-loss/>

If you're speaking to someone with hearing difficulty, try to ensure they can see your mouth and speak clearly, rather than loudly. If you're using a microphone, remember those high frequencies. Most of us recall being unable to hear wedding speeches or announcements at train stations, despite good volume, on account of missing those high frequencies. Boomy bass sounds tend to go everywhere, whereas high frequency sounds are much more directional, only picked up well when people speak directly into microphones. Your position relative to the orientation of speakers may also affect what you can hear.

Listening To Music (CD, vinyl)

If you are playing a CD or record on a HiFi system, the situation is simple, adjust the **volume** and/or the **tone** (i.e. the balance between treble and bass). If your speakers are good, that should do the trick. If your speakers aren't so good, or you don't have the option of increasing the volume, a pair of reasonable quality headphones should work very well. Take good care, though, to follow the manufacturer's instructions re keeping the headphone volume down and avoiding prolonged use, in order to avoid damaging your hearing.

Listening To Music (YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music, MP3 or similar files)

For this, you'll be using a computer of some sort: desktop / laptop / ipad / smartphone (a smartphone is a computer). Some desktop computers have good built in sound systems, in which case, you won't need further amplification. Headphones, connected to the computer, using a jack of the correct size connected to the headphones port will suffice for most, but that involves being attached to your computer (unless both are Bluetooth enabled – see below).

A **smart-speaker** is a standalone speaker that is connected to the internet; it can be activated by voice commands.

The best option for many is a separate means of amplification. There are, broadly, 2 options for connecting your computer (including smartphones) to separate amplification:-

1. **A cable (wire) connection to your HiFi/sound system or separate amplifier.**
This may use a headphone jack at the computer or smartphone end and whatever connections are required at the HiFi AUX IN end on your HiFi / sound system / standalone speaker.
2. **A Bluetooth (wireless) connection to your Hi/Fi/sound system or separate amplifier.** Bluetooth devices are increasingly common.

If you need help with this, a relative or friend with a minimal experience of HiFi or computers or Bluetooth should be able to sort this out for you. However, if you are struggling, don't worry, just ask one of the committee members, who will direct you to someone within the choir who can help.

Tip: if you're using a cable, make sure it's made for this purpose and is a good length, say a few metres. These are available from some electrical shops, HiFi centres, many music shops or via the internet and are inexpensive.

Hearing Your Voice Part

Obviously, a soprano, trying to hear a soprano line, may prefer more treble/less bass, than a bass singer. The optimal sound for us as individuals depends on our own hearing, the equipment we're using and the sound we're looking for. So, do experiment and discover what works best for you!

This is one of a series of leaflets to help members. If you feel that this leaflet can be improved, or that a leaflet on another topic would be useful to some members, please let anyone in the committee know.

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