

# Singer Handbook 2013-2014



David Long, Artistic Director/Conductor

# Chattanooga Bach Choir Singer Handbook

## 2013-2014

### WHO WE ARE

**History:** Established in 1985 by conductor James Greasby, the Chattanooga Bach Choir provides an opportunity to sing lesser-performed choral works of the Baroque period and choral-orchestral masterworks and chamber choral music of all periods. The choir's repertoire includes over twenty-five of Bach's cantatas, motets and oratorios, including most of the early Bach cantatas, all six of the late Haydn masses, and numerous anthems by Henry Purcell and other English composers. The group has also performed masterworks by contemporaries of Bach such as Hammerschmidt, Telemann, Handel and the music of French composers, most notably Faure and Durufle'; its twenty-two year performance history comprises the works of over sixty composers. The Bach Choir performed with the Tennessee Chamber Orchestra in 2006, premiering a piece by Tennessee composer Christopher Tew, and sang as the featured choir at the Bach Festival in Rome, Georgia, in 2007. The choir draws members from diverse backgrounds and occupations: its ranks include teachers and attorneys, homemakers, music professors, church musicians, business managers, computer consultants and an engineer.

### OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### **Our Mission/Purpose:**

**The Mission of The Chattanooga Bach Choir (CBC)** is to perform the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, to promote and encourage appreciation of the aesthetic and spiritual value of Bach's music through education and performance, including performances of works by composers who influenced Bach or were influenced by him, and to strive for the highest standards of musical excellence.

#### **Our Vision for 2012-2015:**

By 2015, the Bach Choir will have grown through the achievement of four interdependent goals. We will simultaneously improve vocal quality and be able to handle the demands of the Bach masterpieces; build audience through educational outreach; achieve financial security through increased funding sources and doubling the endowment; and develop a higher profile in the Chattanooga region.

**Funding:** The Chattanooga Bach Choir is a federal nonprofit corporation with IRS §501(c)3 tax-exempt status. CBC is funded through donations at concerts, singer and board donations, selling of program advertisements, and grants. CBC singers and board members are expected to assist funding the CBC budget by promoting concert attendance, selling program ads, and participating in the Mardi Gras gala.

## **CHOIR MEMBERSHIP**

Singers in CBC are selected by competitive audition for all sections. The size of the chorus varies depending upon the repertoire for the season and/or concert cycle, and an attempt is made to maintain section balance. Auditions are held before the CBC Audition Committee, which include the Artistic Director, Accompanist, and one or two additional members of the Artistic Committee and/or the Section Leader. Singers must re-audition every two years. During a re-audition, the Director may discuss certain vocal issues with a singer, asking that singer to work on particular areas of vocal production over the following season; in such a case, the Director may request a re-check audition the following season.

**Provisional Membership:** Singers in their first year of singing with the CBC are considered to be Provisional Members. *Continued membership may be confirmed by a second (confirmation) audition* prior to the beginning of the next concert season, at the discretion and upon the request of the Artistic Director. In addition, a mid-year conference will be held with the Director, if requested by the singer or the Director.

**Full Membership:** Singers become Full Members after successfully completing the confirmation audition prior to the beginning of the next concert season. All Full Members must re-audition every second year.

**Probationary Status:** Singers who have missed more than the minimum number of rehearsals in a concert cycle are automatically placed on **probationary** status.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

YOU are an important part of the overall sound of CBC—that’s why the Audition Committee chose you. When you are absent, the ensemble sound is different. Consistent attendance at rehearsals is an integral part of creating the choral artistry of CBC.

CBC singers are expected to attend every event listed on your CBC Calendar. However, CBC is made up of volunteers who have work and/or family obligations, so absences will occur. Please plan your absences carefully. The Director will announce the absence policy at the beginning of each “concert cycle” (i.e., the rehearsals leading up to a particular performance).

The following absences **ARE EXCUSED** and incur no penalty:

- rehearsal absences that do not exceed those announced for the concert cycle
- two tardies per concert cycle (If warm-ups have started, you are tardy.)

When a singer has exceeded the above limits, the following actions will automatically occur:

- The singer is placed on probationary status.
- The Administrative Assistant will advise the singer of this change in status.
- At the same time, the Director will be informed of this change in status and may schedule an immediate conference to determine the nature and extent of the absences or tardiness at rehearsals as well as the singer’s plans to address the issue.

- The Director, with the help of the Administrative Assistant and Section Leaders, will continue to monitor this situation and determine if the problem has been resolved. If unresolved, the singer may lose membership in CBC prior to the end of the concert season.  
If, at the end of the concert season in which probationary status was invoked, the singer has demonstrated a cessation of the pattern of absences/tardies during the remainder of the concert season or if the Director ascertains that the extenuating circumstances causing probationary status have been eliminated or adequately addressed in a manner satisfactory to the Director, he/she will be returned to **full membership** for the following season.
- *Please note:* Recognizing that the lives of the adults who are members of CBC can be complicated by the singer's own health and employment-related issues as well as by similar issues of family members, it is possible that a member may, for any number of reasons, be placed on probationary status for more than one year in his/her CBC career. As long as the conditions of probationary status are continually met to the satisfaction of the Director, the singer may remain in CBC.

**What to Do if Absent or Late:** Please notify the Administrative Assistant if you know you will miss, be late, or must leave before the end of a rehearsal. Be sure to check with a member of your Section Leader regarding any organizational information or rehearsal notes that were missed in your absence. *For unforeseen problems with traffic or emergencies prior to rehearsals or concerts, call the Administrative Assistant, Dabney Carden, at 423/240-2123.*

## **REHEARSALS AND CONCERTS**

**Please be Prompt!** Regular rehearsals are held each Sunday of the concert cycle from 2:00 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. Special rehearsals will be announced. ***Please be in your seat and have your music ready by five minutes before any rehearsal.*** This includes announced breaks in rehearsal: be back in your seat five minutes before rehearsal is to resume.

The high quality of CBC performances requires consistent and punctual attendance at all rehearsals. In each concert cycle, the Director will announce the date in the cycle by which all singers are expected to know their parts. Please do not request that parts be played in open rehearsal; review of an individual section's parts is at the discretion of the Director. Take time to learn the music during individual practice time at home. The Director will use rehearsal time to work on interpretation and artistry.

### **Rehearsal Etiquette Reminders:**

- **Be respectful to the Director and the singers around you—please talk *only when necessary* during rehearsals.**
- **NO FRAGRANCES, EVER** in rehearsals or concerts!
- **Do not hum or sing parts *sotto voce* in rehearsals.** It is distracting to the Director and the people near you.
- **Direct your questions about notes, breath marks, pronunciation, etc., to your Section Leader during rehearsal break.**
- **Be respectful of our venues.** No drinks except water in closed-top containers.

## **SECTION LEADERS**

Section Leaders wear multiple hats in the CBC organization. **Know your Section Leader!**

- First, and foremost, Section Leaders are **supervisors of each section**. In conjunction with the Administrative Assistant, they carefully monitor and record the attendance, timely arrival, and early departure of each person in their section. Singers should contact the Administrative Assistant and their Section Leader **before rehearsal** if they will be absent or late. If unable to reach them before rehearsal, leave a message noting your planned absence. Members may expect a follow-up contact from their Section Leader if this notification is not made.
- Second, Section Leaders serve as **information centers** for singers in their sections. Any important handouts are distributed (and, in some cases, collected) by Section Leaders to members in their section. If you are absent, please check with your Section Leader to make sure you receive anything that has been disseminated or announced.
- Third, Section Leaders function as **communication facilitators**. Comments regarding musical questions should be directed to Section Leaders. Because rehearsal time is valuable, singers should carefully consider whether or not a musical question needs to be made to the Director. Any comments that can be handled before or after rehearsals should not be made during rehearsals.
- Fourth, Section Leaders are **liaisons to the Director**. Singers should bring problems with the music, other singers, or rehearsal procedures to the attention of the Section Leader, who will discuss them with the Director.
- Section Leaders are listed in Appendix A.

### **Music Folders:**

Upon registration, the Administrative Assistant will provide you with a music folder and music scores for the current concert cycle. Pencils and CBC forms may also be included. All music and folders are the property of CBC and must be returned at the conclusion of the concert cycle or immediately upon termination of chorus membership. If your music or folder are lost or damaged at the time of return, you will be responsible for the replacement cost of these items. The Administrative Assistant will have an extra folder of music available for one-rehearsal use by guests or singers.

**Always mark music with pencil only. DO NOT USE INK OR HIGHLIGHTERS.**

## **CONCERTS**

**Be Prompt!** Plan to arrive *15 minutes before the actual call time* so that you will be in place, ready to sing at the call time listed. This will allow us sufficient time to adjust to the different acoustics of each venue and make the most of each dress rehearsal and concert warm-up. *Always bring your black folder with all your music.*

Members will be notified if they are expected to arrive in concert attire or if adequate time and rooms are available for changing. The Administrative Assistant will provide maps (if needed) to concert venues the Sunday prior to all dress rehearsals/concerts and will also provide information about dressing areas, safe rooms for valuables, and available parking.

Singers are provided with a Calendar of Events at the beginning of each season. Refer to the calendar for information regarding dress rehearsal locations and times. *Please be aware that occasionally call times may change due to unforeseen circumstances.*

**Concert Attire:** Formal concert attire is required for all performances. If you need information regarding the purchase of appropriate concert attire, please contact the Administrative Assistant.

**MEN:** Basic black tuxedo, white tuxedo shirt with standard pleats (no ruffles) and wing or standard collar, black bow tie, black shoes.

## **WOMEN**

- Tops—Solid black long-sleeved scoop-necked tops, with the bottom of the scoop no more than 3 (or 4) inches below the base of the neck *and* devoid of ornamentation such as buttons, hand-sewn pearls/sequins/feathers/etc. that from the audience that might sparkle, could be seen as a different color, or otherwise draw attention to itself. No part of the garment should be see-through including but not limited to sleeves, backs shirt tails, etc.
- Skirts/Slacks—Solid black skirts or slacks that are full length, not skin tight and also devoid of ornamentation such as buttons, hand-sewn pearls/sequins/feathers/etc. that from the audience that might sparkle, could be seen as a different color, or otherwise draw attention to itself. No part of the garment should be see-through. If the skirt has a slit, it should be in the back or on the side.
- Stockings—Black stockings or tights should be worn. Socks could be substituted under slacks or skirts as long as bare leg cannot be seen.
- Jewelry—Small earrings, chains with a small pendant or a small strand of pearls may be worn. No bracelets that show outside the sleeve (i.e. watches or a small chain is okay but a bangle is not).
- Shoes—Solid black.
- Hair ornamentation—If used to fix hair in place, should be same as hair color (or close to it) and, from the audience’s perspective, not draw attention to itself.

## **LEADERSHIP**

- Leadership is listed in Appendix B.

## **IMPORANT TAX INFORMATION**

The Chattanooga Bach Choir is a §501(c)3 charitable, nonprofit organization. Many of the expenses associated with your participation in CBC are deductible if you file an itemized tax form. CBC will provide written acknowledgement of donations and gifts-in-kind. Your concert and rehearsal schedule is an excellent record to figure mileage. Remember that the deduction can be considerable. Please direct any questions to your tax advisor.

Deductible expenses include:

- Mileage to and from rehearsals, performances, and all public appearances

- Concert attire, including tuxedos and shirts, gowns, performance-only shoes, studs, cuff links and earrings
- Laundry and dry cleaning costs of concert attire
- Donations to CBC

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Section Leaders for 2013-2014**

<u>Section</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Soprano:	Brittany Duggan
Alto:	Laurie Cooper
Tenor:	Robert Sauser
Bass:	Ben Johnson

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Artistic Staff**

David Long, Artistic Director/Conductor  
 Karla Fowkes, Accompanist

### **Office Staff**

Dabney Carden, Administrative Assistant

### **Board of Directors**

Rachael Henderson, President  
 Karla Fowkes, Vice President  
 David Long, Artistic Director, *ex officio*  
 Martha Cartwright, Secretary  
 Thomas Alford, Treasurer  
 Rita Heckrotte  
 Khara Lounsbury  
 Merilee Milburn  
 Philip Newton  
 Sheri Peck  
 Mark Reneau  
 Robert Sauser  
 Sara Snider Schone

The Board of Directors encourages singers and others to volunteer their special talents and resources to assist with various projects and tasks; if you wish to volunteer, please contact any member of the Board.