

CONCERT CHORALE

BIRMINGHAM



MEMBER

HANDBOOK

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WELCOME TO THE BIRMINGHAM CONCERT CHORALE!

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the information you need to become familiar with the Chorale and to inform you of the requirements for Chorale membership. It should be reviewed completely before you decide if membership is for you. Whether a new or returning member, paying your dues signifies your commitment to abide by the Chorale's guidelines.

Chorale personnel serving at check-in and Chorale Board members will be happy to answer any of your questions. Board members may be contacted via email by going to the Chorale's website: concertchorale.org.

Once again, welcome to the BCC!

CHORALE HISTORY

The Birmingham Concert Chorale was founded in 1966 as the Birmingham Civic Chorus under the direction of Bruce Tolbert of the University of Montevallo. In 1977, the name was changed to the Birmingham Concert Chorale. Past directors have included Hugh Thomas, Tom Gibbs, Timothy Banks, David Smith and Mark Ridings.

The Chorale enjoyed a long association with the former Alabama Symphony Orchestra. In 1997, with the rebirth of the ASO, the Birmingham Concert Chorale was formally designated as "The official chorus of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra." The Chorale currently enjoys several joint performances with the ASO every season, and often will stage at least one performance a season of its own.

In recent years, the Chorale has traveled to New York City for a performance in Carnegie Hall, and also to England to participate in the International Cathedral Music Festival. Such trips are planned well in advance, and are not mandatory for Chorale membership.

CHORALE MISSION STATEMENT

“The Birmingham Concert Chorale’s mission is to present artistically worthy and inspiring performances of great choral music that nurture the human spirit, preserve and foster our musical heritage, and enrich the cultural fabric of our community; and to be the indispensable partner of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra in jointly presenting a legacy of treasured choral/orchestral masterpieces. To accomplish these objectives, we will engage the most talented and committed chorale performers and fully develop their musical potential.”

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The Birmingham Concert Chorale is a community-based, equal opportunity chorus and as such is always seeking interested singers. The Chorale is open to new members at the beginning of the Chorale Season (usually August or September), as well as periodically during the season. Acceptance to Chorale membership is based on an audition before the Chorale Director. Auditions consist of matching pitch, demonstrating vocal range and simple sight-reading. At season intervals decided by the Chorale Board and Director, every current member of the Chorale will be required to re-audition in order to renew membership. This requirement is necessary to maintain the quality of the Chorale over time and allow the director to structure voice sections as necessary.

Because much of our repertoire is challenging, Chorale members are expected to spend time outside of regularly scheduled rehearsal to practice independently. Practice CDs and other aids may be made available during the season for a nominal fee, but are never mandatory.

The payment of Chorale dues as well as adherence to Chorale Guidelines regarding attendance, conduct and concert dress as set forth in this handbook are also required to retain membership. In order to maintain the Chorale's high standards, members who fail to comply with the Guidelines may be issued a warning by the Chorale Board or they may not be permitted to perform in concert. Persistent failure to comply can result in dismissal from the Chorale. Members dismissed for such cause are not eligible for refund of their dues.

Grievances regarding any aspect of membership may be submitted to the Chorale Board for review at any time. These must be submitted in writing by email, mail or personally to any Chorale Board member. Contact information for the Chorale Board can be found on the web at concertchorale.org.

LADIES CONCERT DRESS REQUIREMENTS

Dress: **Andrea style:** in black, from Tuxedo Wholesaler (a mail-order company). Please note: this is the only acceptable concert dress. Each member is responsible for placing her own dress order and should do so as soon as possible. Telephone toll free: 1-800-828-2802 ask for Shari or order on-line at www.tuxedowholesaler.com. The dress is shipped un-hemmed and should be hemmed three (3) inches from the floor, wearing concert shoes. Be prepared to give them bust, waist, and hip measurements.

Shoes: **Black pumps:** heel and toe in, comfortable heel, 1-2 inches. NO SANDALS.

Hose: **Semi-sheer or sheer black:** DO NOT wear flesh or natural colored hose. They can be seen from the audience!

Jewelry: **NONE:** no jewelry is to be worn during the concert. Exceptions will be made only for wedding rings.

Hair: **Minimal accessories:** sparkling or metallic clips and barrettes are not acceptable. If a clip or bow is necessary, choose one that is as inconspicuous as possible.

Fragrance: **NONE:** do not wear any fragrances. No scented hair spray, scented soap, scented deodorant, scented hand lotion or perfume.

- In order to maintain uniformity, the **ONLY** dress used by the Chorale will be the Andrea style from Tuxedo Wholesaler.
- **Concert dress requirements are mandatory.** A member must have proper dress to be eligible to sing in the concert.
- Registration and payment of dues indicate a member's agreement to comply with the dress requirements.

MEN'S CONCERT DRESS REQUIREMENTS

Suit: **Black tuxedo** with a solid white formal or dress shirt (wing or straight collar) and black bow tie. Most men wear a black cummerbund, but a black vest is acceptable.

Shoes: **Black** dress shoes.

Socks: **Black**, solid color.

Jewelry: **NONE**: no jewelry is to be worn during the concert. Exceptions will be made for watches if hidden under the sleeve and wedding bands. Avoid diamond or similarly sparkling tuxedo studs and studs involving colors other than silver, gold and black.

Fragrance: **NONE**: do not wear any fragrances. No scented hair spray, scented soap, scented deodorant, scented after-shave or cologne.

- **Concert dress requirements are mandatory.** A member must have proper dress to be eligible to sing in the concert.
- Registration and payment of dues indicate a member's agreement to comply with the dress requirements.

REHEARSAL ETIQUETTE

1. **Police your area:** We are guests at South Highland Presbyterian Church. Please place all trash in trash cans and clean up any spills before you leave rehearsal.
2. **Be prompt:** Arrive on time for rehearsal. We begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise instructed.
3. **Be prepared** with music and a pencil. Please do not use colored highlighters or mark in ink on loaned music. You will be charged for damaged music (marked in ink or highlighter) and music not returned.
4. **DO NOT TALK** when the director is talking to the group or working with an individual section.
5. **Be fragrance-free:** All members should refrain from wearing fragrances of any type during rehearsals. Many of our Chorale members have allergies or migraines and are bothered by scents, which affect the singing voice. Fragrances include scented hair spray, scented soap, scented deodorant, scented hand lotion, perfume, scented after-shave and cologne.
6. **No children:** Children are prohibited from all rehearsals.
7. **Observe rehearsal-site rules:** At least one stage on which we rehearse and perform, the Alys Stephens Center, does NOT permit water bottles or other beverages. Please be aware of each individual venue's rules for beverages and abide by these rules.
8. **Do not address the ASO conductor directly:** When in rehearsal with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, only the Chorale Director communicates with, or answers questions asked by the ASO Conductor.
9. **Silence cell phones and beepers** during all rehearsals. Also, recording devices are *strictly prohibited* when union musicians are present.
10. **Contact the Membership Committee regarding absences:** Check your rehearsal and concert schedule ahead of time. Missing rehearsals may disqualify a member from singing in a concert. Excessive absences are subject to review by the Membership Committee. Please DO NOT contact the director regarding absences. If you are unable to make a performance, let the Membership Committee know *as soon as possible*.
11. **Attend “Mandatory” rehearsals:** Certain rehearsals will be specified as MANDATORY on your rehearsal schedule. Any member who misses one of these rehearsals will not be permitted to sing in the performance.
12. **No alcohol or drugs permitted:** No member shall be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during any rehearsal or performance.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

1. **WATCH THE CONDUCTOR AT ALL TIMES!**
2. **DO NOT TALK** at any time.
3. **Stiff black folders or three-ring binders** are required to hold music unless otherwise instructed.
4. **Hold your music in your upstage hand** (the hand that is away from the audience) when entering or leaving the stage or choir balcony.
5. **Watch the conductor or designee for cues** for unison sitting and standing, or mark and follow designated cues in your score.
6. **Hold your music up and out** with the conductor in sight at all times and project your voice over the music into the audience.
7. **FREEZE when a piece has ended.** Do not move or turn your page to the next piece. When the conductor relaxes, then you may turn your page or sit, if that is the cue.
8. **Do not follow solos in your music** unless the conductor has instructed otherwise. Paper clip your pages together so you can easily turn to the next chorus entrance.
9. **Keep your music folder closed** in your lap with your finger or thumb marking the next entrance when seated between choruses. Do not tap your feet.
10. **Do NOT return to the stage** if you must leave during a concert. It is a one-way trip.
11. **At the end of the concert**, close your music as soon as you hear applause. Place it in your left hand and hold it down at your left side. Remain standing until the conductor exits the stage. Once the orchestra sits down, we sit down. Remain sitting until the conductor returns and acknowledges the Chorale, then the Chorale stands in unison. If the orchestra remains standing when the conductor exits the stage, we remain standing. *Be alert-and be flexible!*
12. **The Chorale DOES NOT CLAP** in acknowledgement of the conductor, our director, the soloists, or the orchestra. You may lightly tap your feet.
13. **No cell phones, beepers, or alarm watches** are allowed during performances. Recording devices are *stictly prohibited* when Union Musicians are present.
14. **Be fragrance-free.** Many of our members have allergies or migraines and are bothered by scents, which affect the singing voice. Fragrances include scented hair spray, scented soap, scented deodorant, scented hand lotion, perfume, scented after-shave and cologne.
15. **No alcohol or drugs permitted:** No performer shall be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during any concert.

CHORALE STAFF

Philip Copeland - Director

Dr. Philip Copeland began his tenure as Chorale Director with the 2008-09 concert season. In addition to his Chorale responsibilities, Dr. Copeland is Associate Professor of Music at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), where he has served since 2001. There he is Director of Choral Activities, conducts the Concert Choir, Chamber Singers and Women's Chorale as well as teaching classes in conducting, music education, music appreciation and methods courses for choral music education majors.

Choirs under Dr. Copeland's direction have distinguished themselves on the national and international stage. He recently led the Birmingham Concert Chorale and UAB choir members in a performance of Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* in New York's famed Carnegie Hall. And under his direction, the UAB Concert Choir recently won the *Heinrich Schütz Perpetual Trophy* for their performance of a work by the Baroque composer in the *Fleischman International Choral Competition* in Cork, Ireland. This was preceded by participation in the 34th annual *Florilege Vocal de Tours* in Tours, France. While on faculty at the University of Mississippi, his choir won the top award and gold medal at the first-ever Choral Olympics in Linz, Austria.

Other notable performances include a solo performance at the Southern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association in 2006, and recently presented sessions in technology at state, regional and national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association.

Dr. Copeland holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Master of Music Education from Mississippi College and a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Mississippi. He is married to Leigh and they have triplet daughters, Catherine, Caroline, and Claire.

Dale W. Reynolds - Accompanist

Dale holds the Bachelor of Music Education from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama and a Master of Music in Piano Performance from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. In addition, her post-graduate work was done at the University of Illinois where she studied with the internationally acclaimed Vocal Coach/Accompanist Eric Dalheim.

Dale has served as staff accompanist for the *International Cathedral Music Festival* in England for four years and the *Seminar für Klassische Musik* in Eisenstadt, Austria for three years. She has also accompanied seminars and masterclasses conducted by Robert Shaw, John Rutter, Sir David Willcocks, Richard Stoltzman and Yo-Yo Ma.

Dale is on the music faculty at the University of Alabama at Birmingham where she serves as Associate Chairman of the Music Department, as Accompanist/Coach and teaches music theory courses. She is also the organist at Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church and serves as organist, pianist and harpsichordist with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra.

CHORALE BOARD & COMMITTEES

The primary responsibility of the Birmingham Concert Chorale Board of Directors is to lead the Chorale in fulfillment of the Chorale's Mission Statement. Pursuant to this, the Board is responsible for the employment of the director, accompanist and any other professional help deemed necessary; fund-raising and working with the Chorale's staff to continually improve the quality of the Chorale. It also is responsible for the proper collection and dispersal of Chorale funds, and the necessary documentation of the same.

The Board consists of fifteen Chorale members, each serving a three-year term, with one-third of the membership rotating off annually. At the end of each concert season all members of the Chorale are encouraged to place themselves in nomination or nominate other candidates to replace outgoing members. Voting for Board candidates is open to all members in good standing. All nominees must agree to serve a full three-year term, faithfully attend Board meetings and be willing to give of their time and talents as needed in Board service. All Board members are expected to serve on at least one Chorale Committee.

Board structure includes the permanent positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer (Finance Chair). Other chair and committee designations are made at the Board's discretion based on the current needs of the Chorale. Chorale members are encouraged to seek opportunities for service on Chorale Committees. Please contact any Board member if you are interested in serving on one or more of these committees.

Membership	maintain a current roster of present and past members, monitoring member attendance at rehearsals and performances and contacting members with attendance issues
Fund Raising	plan and execute short and long term efforts to raise Chorale operating funds, both internally and externally
Social	plan and execute social gatherings for members or guests in post-concert receptions
Education/Outreach	develop and nurture Chorale opportunities for music education, both internally for improving the Chorale, and externally in seeking opportunities for outreach to schools and other groups to further music appreciation

Board business is available for review at any time by contacting the Board Secretary for meeting minutes, and Board meetings are most often open to other members, subject to request.

The Board will regularly conduct surveys of the Chorale and ask for periodic votes to be taken on issues facing the Chorale. Members are strongly encouraged to participate in this process and communicate their concerns and questions to Board members. Board members may be contacted in person or by email at concertchorale.org.