



Background Information on Becoming a Singing Member of the Northern Virginia Chorale

1. Why do we sing?

The Northern Virginia Chorale is a community based chorale consisting of some seventy singers. Since its inception in 1975 (when it was known as the Springfield Chorale), the chorale has sought to enrich the community with the joy of choral music. Through our choral performances, we support the Northern Virginia community in the following four ways:

- ❖ **By bringing entirely new programs** of distinguished choral music to our audiences, drawn from a variety of exciting genres, at a reasonable cost, for each of our three annual concerts.
- ❖ **Enhancing the learning and development experience of students studying music, at the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) Annandale Campus**, who rehearse and perform with us as chorale members. Besides singing in our concerts, the students are eligible to sing with us as we augment the December Metropolitan Chorus performance, at the Kennedy Center's *Handel's Messiah Sing Along* concert.
- ❖ **Extending our outreach programs** which consist of monthly sing-along sessions at the Fairfax Nursing Center, the Leewood Adult day Care and Nursing Center, as well as our annual sing-along visit to the Veterans Administration Hospital, in Washington D.C.
- ❖ **Providing the opportunity for individuals** from all walks of life, ages, and musical backgrounds to come together as volunteer singers and through their performances, enrich the lives of our audiences (and their own in the process) — with the joy of choral music.



2. What is the “best part” of singing with the chorale?

Want to know the best part of singing in the Northern Virginia Chorale?

We asked our chorale members, and here were some of their answers:

The “best part” of singing in the NV Chorale is:

“Being with friends who speak the language of music.”

—Ina Berkey, Alto 2

“Discovering a beauty in music that I had never before heard.”

—Sue Bernstein, Soprano 2

“I get to perform beautiful choral works that I would not otherwise get to experience.”

—Blanche Powell, Soprano 1

“The special smile” that occurs on Bob’s face when he is conducting, and we know we have “hit it.” And: “Practice sessions are no chore. We all enjoy ourselves.”

—Gloria Page Hamly, Soprano 2

“Tuning out life’s stresses and focusing only on music!”

—Marge Jackman, Alto 1

“New friends, fun group, great director, beautiful and challenging music.”

—Regina Girouard, Soprano 2

“The opportunity to make fine choral music. It is both exciting and very satisfying to learn challenging choral works and to successfully present them to live audiences.”

—Bob Bell, Baritone

Experience the joy of choral singing from the inside out. Join us this coming season!

3. *Here is a note from our previous chorale President, Ted Cummings*

— published in our concert program of May 22, 2010:

Dear Audience Members,

In responding to those interested in joining our chorale as singers, I always end my emails with this thought. *“I am sure you will find being a member of the chorale a rewarding experience. You will be in good company and surrounded by fine voices.”*

It is true. We genuinely enjoy each other’s company and the opportunity to enrich your lives (and our own in the process), with the joy of choral music. The pictures of us at work or play in these two facing pages reflect that spirit.

We would love for you to join us and we thank you for your continued support. Have a great summer!

Ted Cummings
President,
the Northern Virginia Chorale
2008-2010

***Please view some photographs of us singing, below.
(Photography by, Dean Beasom)***



*An unknown humorous incident—possibly a singer’s pratfall on a slippery glissando—during our May 5th Concert of 2007.
— This is “Exhibit A,” proving we do have a sense of humor!*



After all the preparation, Bob Webb and the chorale receive kudos from the audience attending our May 5th Concert of 2007.



Our first dinner in Northern Italy, near Verona, after recovering from jet lag, in July of 2008. We performed six concerts in all with eight other chorales. It was sightseeing by day and singing by night. What a fun time we had!



"That is definitely not the note the composer intended!"



"Now you have it! That's beginning to sound pretty good."



We are letting our voices go like the bird in our opening song "It's a Grand Night for Singing." The lyrics read: "And somewhere a bird who is bound he'll be heard is throwing his heart at the sky." It is an amazing choral experience when we all let our voices go at just the right pitch, at just the right time, with just the right volume, with perfect diction and in rhythm. It is a joy to behold. In this picture, we were performing in our recent March 20th, 2010 Concert "Celebrating Haydn and Handel!" And like the bird, we were throwing our hearts at the sky...

4. *The Cost of Joining the Chorale:*

The annual cost per singer (who is not an NVCC music major student), covering a full season from late August through May, is \$265. This breaks down to \$185 for membership dues, \$60 for sheet music, and \$80 for the purchase of two season tickets. The details of these costs are explained below.

Dues and Fees:

Dues and fees for sheet music will be accounted for separately.

- ❖ The total full-year payment for each member is \$185, which includes dues set at \$125 and a flat sheet music payment of \$60. The annual dues and fees are due *no later than* the third rehearsal of the season.
- ❖ Members do have the option of participating for a half-season, at a modified cost: half-year amounts are \$75 for dues and \$50 for music, for a total half-year payment of \$100.
- ❖ NVCC students will pay no dues to the Chorale, but will pay the half-year sheet music payment of \$25, for each semester they participate.
- ❖ Members may pay their annual dues and fees of \$185 in a lump sum payment or in three installments over a three month period. You may use the online credit card system on our website to conduct such transactions.
Please see: <http://www.northernvirginiachorale.org/membership.html>.
- ❖ Except for the occasional piece of music borrowed from the St. Mark's or the NVCC library, all sheet music will become the property of the singer.
- ❖ Because the Chorale is an IRS approved tax-exempt, 501(c) (3), non-profit corporation, all dues payments can be considered tax-deductible donations to the Chorale. The fee for sheet music, however, is not tax deductible. Other donations and unreimbursed expenses, including mileage, are also tax deductible. If you require a statement indicating the amount of your tax-exempt contribution, please notify the Treasurer. Statements will be available after dues are paid.

Tickets Sales and Prices:

Each singer is **required** to sell or purchase **2 season tickets** of \$40 each, which affords the recipient to attend all three of our concerts. Singers joining the chorale for the second half of the season will be required to purchase at least two tickets for each concert.

Ticket prices for each concert are:

- Adult tickets are \$20.00 (in advance*) | \$25.00 (at the door)
- Student (ages 12–24 years) tickets are \$10.00
- Children under the age of 12 are free

*Advance ticket availability for each concert expires at 10:00 p.m., immediately preceding the day of the concert. In other words, there are no longer advance discount adult tickets available whether purchased by check, or on the website, on the day of the concert. Season tickets (for all 3 concerts) cost \$40. Any combination of tickets for two of the three concerts will cost \$28. Ticket prices are subject to change. You may use the online credit card system on our website to conduct such transactions. If you do make these payments online, let your section leader know.

5. *The Chorale Leadership's Expectations of Its Members:*

1. Attendance at Rehearsal: Attend all or as many rehearsals as possible. If you cannot make a rehearsal, let your section leader know of your absence in advance. If you are a section leader and cannot make a rehearsal, let the President or Vice President know about your planned absence. Attendance at the final dress rehearsal is mandatory. If you cannot make the concert's dress rehearsal (typically on the Friday evening before the Saturday concert) then barring extreme extenuating circumstances, you will not be allowed to sing in the concert.

2. Conduct during Rehearsal: At rehearsal, when we are working with the music, take notes and keep the side chatter to a minimum. Most questions resolve themselves as the chorale struggles through a particular section. If you have a burning question, raise your hand.

3. Rehearsing Your Music On Your Own: Rehearse your music on your own prior to each rehearsal to gain confidence, skill, and help contribute to the beauty of the collective choral sound. There is no magic number of hours required per week for home study due to the variables involved – namely, the level of difficulty of each piece, the singing ability of each of us, and the number of rehearsals before each concert. Having said that, even the most gifted and experienced singers in the chorale should practice at least one hour a week on their own, *which means most of us should practice a good deal more than that*. The chorale expectation is that each one of us regardless of our chorale singing experience, voice quality, and time availability, to the best of our ability will contribute to the beauty of the choral sound rather than defer that function to those around us. (Note: Rehearsal notes indicating what we worked on and what was stressed at the previous rehearsal are provided in the *For Singers Only* section of our website, (go to:

www.northernvirginiachorale.org, and select the *For Singer's Only* tab on the far right, and log into this area of our website.)

4. Paying Dues, Fees, and Purchasing Season Tickets:

Pay your dues and sheet music fees as well purchase two season tickets on time (NLT the third rehearsal of the season as a lump sum payment or in three consecutive monthly installments). You may do this online using your credit card or by check through your section leader. (Doing this online makes the accounting task easier for our treasurer, who is also a singer like you.) Finally, you are expected to let your section leader know if you have conducted these transactions on line.

5. Publicizing Each Concert:

Publicize each concert within your circle of friends and acquaintances. It is the primary means by which our chorale builds its core audience. *Example:* At the May 16th 2009 concert some singers recruited as many as 8 audience members. Each of us is expected to publicize each concert and invite others to enjoy the live full choral experience.

6. Recruiting New Singers:

Recruit new singers with good voices into the chorale and look for those opportunities on a continuing basis. While we have two scheduled auditions each year (one before the start of the season and one at the start of the March concert rehearsal period), special auditions can be held after each rehearsal by clearing this in advance with the section leader, president, and director.

7. Parking at St. Mark's for Concerts:

At each concert held at St. Mark's, use the Lynbrook Elementary School parking lot to the east of Backlick Road to park your car unless you use handicap parking. This frees up the limited parking space at St. Mark's for our audience's use.

8. Fundraising and Advertising:

Look for opportunities to attract monetary donations to the chorale by businesses and individuals interested in supporting the arts. Additionally, you should invite businesses and individuals to place advertisements in our concert programs and on our website. You can direct those interested in making a donation or placing an advertisement by doing this directly on our website using their credit cards. Doing this online, makes the accounting task easier for our treasurer. Additionally, if you or your friends are going to purchase products on line through Amazon.com, you are encouraged to access the Amazon.com website through the portal of our chorale website so the chorale can receive a small percentage of the profits from such a transaction.

9. Volunteering in Administrative Support Functions:

Support the chorale by volunteering for administrative support functions. There are a wide variety of support functions (stage management, publicity, publication of the annual brochure and concert programs, preparation of concert desserts, etc.) some of which require only a few hours of work per concert to those requiring a more substantial investment of your time and energy. The more people volunteer in supporting the chorale in these necessary support functions the less onerous the task for anyone individual. Moreover, it helps sustain the chorale as a viable and healthy organization over the long haul. See the classified section in the *For Singers Only* section on the vacancy list for volunteers needed for support functions. For those already filling administrative support functions, you are expected to cultivate a team of assistants/helpers so that you do not fall into the trap of being the indispensable person upon which the entire function depends. Building small functional teams can also serve as the vehicle for developing your successor to your position once you step down as its leader.

10. Communicate Your Joy (or lack thereof) in being a Chorale Member:

Communicate with the leadership of the chorale on issues that concern you, both positive and negative. The best way to do this is through your section leader or person in charge of a particular functional area, the president or vice president or the Board chairman. A lot depends on the issue that concerns you. If it is a policy matter, then speaking with a section leader and board member would be appropriate. If it is an operational matter, then taking it up with your section leader and functional officer or President/Vice-President would be advisable. If it deals with a purely musical question, then the first step would be to broach it with some of the more experienced singers in the chorale in your section if the issue was not settled by the director during rehearsal. If that does not answer your concerns, there is no one more knowledgeable than our director, whom you can take it up with, directly. Finally, you are expected to enjoy thoroughly your experience with being a member of this fine chorale. If this is happening or not happening, let the leadership know about it. We would expect you to take action to turn any negative chorale experience around.

We expect your experience with the chorale to be a challenging and rewarding one. Toward that end, the chorale leadership is dedicated to supporting your volunteer participation as a chorale member.

