



Singers' Handbook

Revised 09-2015

Mission Statement

The Columbia Choral Society exists to stimulate interest and foster appreciation of the great choral masterworks through performance of this literature to the highest artistic standards in order to broaden the musical experience and knowledge of the choral arts for audiences in South Carolina.

This **Singers' Handbook** gives you a reference for essential information making your participation in the chorus as professional and artistic as it is enjoyable and rewarding. After all, we do enjoy singing; however, certain guidelines and policies are required to ensure we continue as the premier mixed choral ensemble in our state.

Questions, concerns, or suggestions regarding the Columbia Choral Society should be directed to the Music Director, chorus officers, or section coordinators.

www.columbiachoralsociety.org

Member's only section:

Member login user name: *choral*

Password: *1234music*

CCS Singers Handbook - Our Guidelines and Policies

Auditions

- Singers desiring membership must audition with the Music Director, who will then determine placement within the chorus. Auditions are typically held at the beginning of the season, but can take place throughout the year for those wanting to join after the season has begun. Members may also be re-auditioned at the discretion of the Music Director.

Attendance

- Attendance at all rehearsals and concerts is important and expected. A record of attendance will be taken for each rehearsal and concert. Members are expected to sign the attendance roster at all rehearsals and concerts. Section coordinators will verify the attendance record. If it is necessary to miss a rehearsal, you are responsible for contacting your section coordinator or the Music Director in advance.
- Performing to the standards expected of this chorus requires that you attend no less than 80% of regular rehearsals. If this is not possible, you may be asked by the Music Director to demonstrate proficiency of the music in order to perform in the concert. Additional rehearsals for the chorus or individual sections may be called at the discretion of the director, and participation is strongly encouraged.
- Dress rehearsals are mandatory. Specific schedules for dress rehearsals will be announced for each concert. If extenuating circumstances will prevent you from attending the dress rehearsals, you should consult with your Section Coordinator and /or the Music Director about specific requirements for that concert.
- Extended periods of absence for unavoidable circumstances are understandable. Singers in good standing (dues paid) should submit a written notice (letter or e-mail) to the director with expected date of return. Dues cannot be refunded, as they are a cornerstone of our organizational existence.

Rehearsals

- Rehearsals start promptly at the scheduled time. Singers are asked to be seated on time and ready to sing. Only a brief warm-up will be conducted prior to rehearsal.
- Water containers are permitted if the location rules allow. Food or gum may not be consumed at your seats.
- Respect for the Director and colleagues is expected with silence when not singing.
- Bring a pencil to every rehearsal. Marking musical scores as indicated by the director will not only help the overall expressiveness of the performance, but will reduce repeated rehearsal of the same sections of the score. You should check with others in your section to identify instructions from missed rehearsals.

- When rehearsing with paid musicians (i.e., instrumentalists and soloists), singers should remember that these musicians are “on the clock.” When the conductor is working with these musicians, the chorus is expected to be silent and allow them to work efficiently.

Music

- Singers must purchase their copies of all music performed. The music is ordered in bulk and you may purchase your copies from the Music Librarian at the beginning of each concert preparation cycle.
- In some circumstances, CCS will provide borrowed or rental scores, which you *must return in good condition* after concerts. Fees are assessed for damaged or lost scores. Pens, highlighters or other non-erasable markers must not be used on loaned or rented scores. Only pencil markings are allowed and should be erased prior to returning the scores to the Music Librarian.
- Singers must have black folders to hold the music during performances. Folders may be purchased through CCS, or on your own. For large scores, many singers find it helpful to have the score bound in black rather than using the folder for performances. Check with your Section Coordinator for more details and options.

Concert Attire

- **Women**
 - All women are responsible for the purchase of the approved concert attire. The concert ensemble consists of a plain black top with or without a collar, $\frac{3}{4}$ or longer sleeve, no sequins, glitter, etc., and not low cut. A skirt must be a black floor length, or long black pants.
 - A single strand pearl necklace is to be worn. (CCS has these available for sale)
 - Above-the-knee black hose and black closed-toe dress shoes, either flat or 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' heel or less.
 - Hair ornaments must be inconspicuous.
 - Small stud earring (gold, silver, pearl are acceptable), no loop or dangling earrings. Watches are allowed.
 - No other necklaces, bracelets, brooches or baubles, spangles or bangles are permitted.
- **Men**
 - Black tuxedo, cummerbund, standard bow tie, with black socks and dress shoes.
 - White tuxedo shirt with black studs (standard collar preferred)
 - No handkerchief visible in upper tuxedo coat pocket.

Fragrances of any kind are not allowed for regular rehearsals, dress rehearsals or performances.

- This includes the obvious elements of perfume, cologne, hairspray, after-shave, and scented deodorants. Many singers are allergic to fragrances, and hot lights and close quarters exaggerate the effects of these. Also, please do not use alcohol or tobacco or eat garlic which may be offensive to your seat mates.

Concert Decorum

- Audiences will be affected by our stage presence as well as our wonderful sound. Our image during performance is very important to the perception of our professionalism. Here are the standards we maintain:
 - Show your enjoyment in your smile, even when the music is difficult.
 - Be well groomed, with no extreme make-up or hairdos.
 - No fragrances, including perfume, cologne, hairspray.
 - Paperclip your score for multiple page turns to avoid the distraction of rustling pages.
 - Carefully note standing and sitting cues in your score and be prepared to move smoothly and quietly.
 - Follow Conductor's directions to raise and open your folder
 - Know your position on stage and listen carefully for your cue to go on.
 - Carry your music folder in the hand away from the audience as you enter and exit the performance.
 - Do not talk, chew gum, rattle wrappers, or otherwise distract others.
 - Keep eyes on the conductor as much as possible during the concert. No wandering eyes.
 - At the conclusion of the performance, when the Conductor turns to the audience to take a bow, close your folder and hold it in your left hand at your side.
 - Be seated when the Conductor leaves the stage, unless otherwise directed, and only if there are chairs.
 - Do not clap, shuffle or stomp feet for soloists or the orchestra; we are part of the performance.
 - Exit the stage, music away from the audience.

Columbia Choral Society Funding Sources

Tickets

One aspect of our mission is to perform great music to as broad an audience as possible. Our most effective way to accomplish this is by the sale of concert tickets. It is, therefore, the responsibility of each of us to sell as many as possible. It is desired that each singer sell a minimum of four tickets for each concert. By doing this, we expand our audience and help to provide for our successful future.

Dues

Membership dues are payable at the beginning of the fall concert season. Fulltime students are exempt from the dues requirement. Amount of the dues are approved by the Board of Director and may vary each year. Dues only partially support our concerts and other costs associated with a performance.

Advertisements

Ads in our concert programs are another source of revenue for the chorus. Members are asked to solicit ads from businesses they frequent using official forms provided for that purpose. Ad packets are available, and it is recommended that you take a previous program as an example to give the business owner an idea of the exposure they can expect.

Contributions

Contributions over and above dues and ticket sales are a way that members can provide additional support to CCS. Invite your friends and family to support this organization and come to hear you sing. These contributions are most welcome and are tax deductible over the value of the tickets. CCS is a 501 (c) (3) organization.

Patron Membership Categories

Fortissimo Arts Partner	\$5000	(16 complimentary tickets)
Mezzo Forte Arts Partner	\$2000 - \$4999	(14 complimentary tickets)
Conductor's Circle	\$500 - \$1999	(12 complimentary tickets)
Choral Sponsor	\$250 - \$499	(8 complimentary tickets)
Sustaining Member	\$150 - \$249	(6 complimentary tickets)
Associate Member	\$100 - \$149	(4 complimentary tickets)
Patron Member	\$50 - \$99	(2 complimentary tickets)
Friend	under \$50	

History of the Columbia Choral Society

The Columbia Choral Society was born in a spirit of service to the community. Organized as the Shandon Choral Society to compete in a 1930 Community Chest Drive contest, the group came to represent the entire city, and changed its name to reflect this. Working to stimulate and broaden interest in good music and to perform the world's great choral works, the group quickly grew from about 40 to more than 100 voices. The Choral Society sponsored and performed at an annual spring music festival in the city, which featured touring professional orchestras and soloists. Headliners in 1938 were the National Symphony Orchestra and the Philadelphia Symphony, as well as Nelson Eddy, the "idol of America."

The Choral Society has been blessed with strong directors of long tenure. First was Leonard C. Molz, who directed when founder Mrs. James Y. Perry was president. In 1949, Dr. Guthrie Darr arrived from California, where he was a member of the Robert Shaw Chorale, to join the music faculty of Columbia College, and became director of the Columbia Choral Society. During Dr. Darr's 40 years as director, the chorus became a full-season organization within the Columbia Music Festival Association, presenting three or more concerts per year. The annual production of Handel's *Messiah* became a Columbia tradition.

From 1990 to 2000, Dr. Larry D. Wyatt, Director of Choral Studies at the University of South Carolina, served as Music Director. In 1993, the Choral Society was selected to be the chorus of the South Carolina Philharmonic, while continuing to produce biennial independent concerts. The group also performed numerous times at Charleston's Piccolo Spoleto during this time period, gaining critical acclaim for its 1995 *a cappella* performance of Rachmaninoff's *Vespers*. The Choral Society has also performed Randall Thompson's *Peaceable Kingdom* and Bernstein's *Chicester Psalms*, works by Vierne, Britten and Perry, and in 1998, the Durufle *Requiem*. Other concerts have been in cities throughout the state and region, including Sumter, Hartsville, and Charlotte. The Choral Society performed as guest artist with the Charleston Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and at Hilton Head's 1997 *Feste Italiano* "Night at the Opera."

Dr. Tim Koch accepted the position of Music Director and Conductor in 2000. He holds degrees from Illinois Wesleyan University and the University of Illinois, and the Doctor of Musical Arts from the Eastman School of Music. During his tenure, the Chorale gave acclaimed performances of many masterworks, including Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Mass in C* and *Ninth Symphony*, and Ernest Bloch's *Sacred Service*. Koch and the Chorale have also ventured into the contemporary repertory in performances of music by Samuel Adler, Kirke Mechem, Petr Eben, Meira Warshauer, among others. It was also during Dr. Koch's term as Music Director that the chorus was renamed as the South Carolina Symphonic Chorale. The chorus reverted to its original name in the fall of 2005, and is again known as the Columbia Choral Society.

Dr. William Carswell was selected as the Music Director in 2005 and led the chorus during its 75th year, culminating in a magnificent 75th Anniversary Concert held at St. Peter's Catholic Church followed by a lovely reception at the Museum of Art. Dr. Carswell is Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Coker College in Hartsville, SC. In addition to directing the Coker Singers and the Coker Chamber Singers, he teaches conducting, voice and courses in music education. He holds degrees from Appalachian State University, Florida State

University and the University of South Carolina. His infectious enthusiasm for choral music and for volunteer choruses assured that every concert was a celebration of that enthusiasm.

Christopher Jacobson took up the baton of the society in the fall of 2011 and held this position until June of 2013. Mr. Jacobson holds the Master of Music degree in Organ Performance and the Sacred Music Diploma from the Eastman School of Music as well as the Associate diploma from the American Guild of Organists. He received his Bachelor of Music degree with distinction in Organ Performance from St. Olaf College. He is also a graduate of the American Boy Choir School where he was a treble chorister.

Dr. Matthew Caine joined the Columbia Choral Society as Music Director for the 2014-2015 season. He holds the Bachelor of Music in Church Music from Birmingham-Southern College, the Master of Music Education in Instrumental Music from Samford University, the Master of Music in Choral Conducting and Vocal Performance from the University of South Florida, and the Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the University of South Carolina. While a student at USC, Matthew also served as Director of Music at Grace United Methodist Church and became the Director of Music at Lyttleton Street United Methodist Church, Camden, SC. He has previously served on the faculties of Claflin University and Allen University and as conductor or assistant conductor of community, symphonic, and professional choruses.

Dr. Lillian Quackenbush, will be the Guest Conductor for the Columbia Choral Society's 2015-2016 season. She received her Bachelor of Music Education degree from Florida State University, and a Master of Music in Vocal Performance, and Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting from the University of South Carolina. In 1996, Lillian and her husband Dave founded and organized the Sandlapper Singers, a professional choral ensemble committed to presenting the music of American choral composers. She retired in 2009 from Columbia College, conducting the Columbia College Choir and serving as Chair of the Department of Music, and retired in May 2015 as Director of Music at Shandon Presbyterian Church. Her connection with the Columbia Choral Society spans nearly 40 years, singing in the chorus and as a frequent soloist under the direction of Guthrie Darr and serving as Assistant Director to Larry Wyatt. Most recently she has assisted as an interim director and has conducted the community's "Sing-Along Messiah" performances for the past 12 years.

Today the Columbia Choral Society continues its long tradition as a dedicated volunteer professional chorus of auditioned singers. During the 2011-2012 season, the Columbia Choral Society implemented a new young artist scholarship program. The CCS Guthrie Darr Young Artist Scholarship exists to encourage and assist young artists in the study of voice through private voice lessons. Two local high school students received scholarship money to pay for private voice lessons and the opportunity to perform at our March 2012 concert.

Through its history, the Columbia Choral Society has performed with a long list of accomplished organizations, including the South Carolina Philharmonic Orchestra, the Charleston, Long Bay, and University of South Carolina Symphony Orchestras, the Carolina Master Chorale, the

Charleston Symphony Chorus, the Bulgarian National Chorus, the West Yorkshire (England) Chorus, the Sandlapper Singers, the Palmetto Mastersingers, the University of South Carolina Concert Choir and University Chorus, and the Benedict Concert Choir. The Choral Society frequently makes guest appearances with the South Carolina Philharmonic singing such choral works as Haydn's *Te Deum for the Empress Maria Therese* (2009), Poulenc's *Gloria* (2011), Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* (2012) and Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky Cantata* (2013).

The Columbia Choral Society is a member organization of the Cultural Council of Richland and Lexington Counties and Chorus America.