

CHORISTER HANDBOOK

2017-2018



Pittsburgh
Boy Choir

Created and Implemented by the
Board of Directors and the Staff of the
Pittsburgh Boy Choir

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------|
| Mission Statement..... | 3 |
| Nondiscrimination Policy & Statement of Compliance..... | 3 |
| Executive Officers & Board of Directors | 4 |
| Staff Responsibilities | 4 |
| Rehearsal Location..... | 5 |
| Orientation | 6 |
| Schedule for the 2015-2016 Season..... | 6-7 |
| Time Commitments..... | 8 |
| Financial Commitments | 9 |
| Chorister Expectations | 10 |
| Parent Expectations..... | 11 |
| Membership Requirements | 11 |
| Discipline Policy | 12 |
| Enrollment Agreement..... | 13 |
| Need-Based Tuition Assistance Program | 14 |
| Need-Based Tuition Assistance Application | 15-16 |
| Referral Program..... | 17 |
| Intentional Growth | 18 |

MISSION STATEMENT

“Believing that music is a gift of God, the Pittsburgh Boy Choir provides a high level of musical education and a unique choral performance opportunity to boys in the Pittsburgh region.”

The Pittsburgh Boy Choir seeks to accomplish this mission in the following ways:

- To identify talented boys in the greater Pittsburgh region and to provide an environment in which they can develop their musical gifts by teaching them proper vocal technique and music reading skills.
- To provide local, national and international audiences a distinctive musical experience through the outreach of the Pittsburgh Boy Choir.
- To support good family values by reinforcing respectfulness, courteousness, personal responsibility, discipline, professionalism, time management, commitment and self-worth.
- To develop generations of future leaders who fully appreciate the value of choral singing, music, and the performing arts to our culture.
- To develop individuals who are capable of using music as an aesthetic means for expressing those thoughts, ideas, beliefs and feelings for which we have no linguistic means to communicate.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY & STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The Pittsburgh Boy Choir wishes to stress that it offers equal opportunities for audition and participation to all without regard to race, color, religion, disability, ancestry, national or ethnic origin.

The Pittsburgh Boy Choir maintains that all members and those seeking membership should be treated with dignity & respect.

Any accommodation needs should be communicated at audition time to the Artistic Director or the President of the Board of Directors.

Complaints or concerns of discrimination or harassment shall be addressed to the Vice President and/or the Treasurer.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE PITTSBURGH BOY CHOIR

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| President | Chris Young |
| Vice President | Tim Heavner |
| Secretary | Carolyn Pearsall |
| Treasurer | Daryl Rahenkamp |

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| June 2014 – May 2017 | Tim Heavner |
| June 2014 – May 2017 | Ted Rymarz |
| June 2014 – May 2017 | Chris Young |
| June 2015 – May 2018 | Carolyn Pearsall |
| June 2015 – May 2018 | George Pearsall |
| June 2015 – May 2018 | Daryl Rahenkamp |
| June 2016 – May 2019 | Tanya Hughes |
| June 2016 – May 2019 | Jack Longmore |
| June 2016 – May 2019 | Tracey Moses |

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR OF *BRAVO*: Craig G. Cannon

The Artistic Director will plan, recruit, organize, develop, and have overall responsibility for all ensembles within or related to the Pittsburgh Boy Choir (PBC). The Artistic Director works in conjunction with the Assistant Directors and Accompanists, and with the approval of the Board of Directors for the PBC.

DIRECTOR OF *DA CAPO*: Carly Tansimore

The Director of Da Capo will share responsibility with the Artistic Director in planning repertoire and conducting programs of the Pittsburgh Boy Choir. She will rehearse and conduct the Da Capo Choir. She will provide overall assistance to the Artistic Director in all aspects of the PBC.

DIRECTOR OF *CANTABILE*: Matthew McTeague

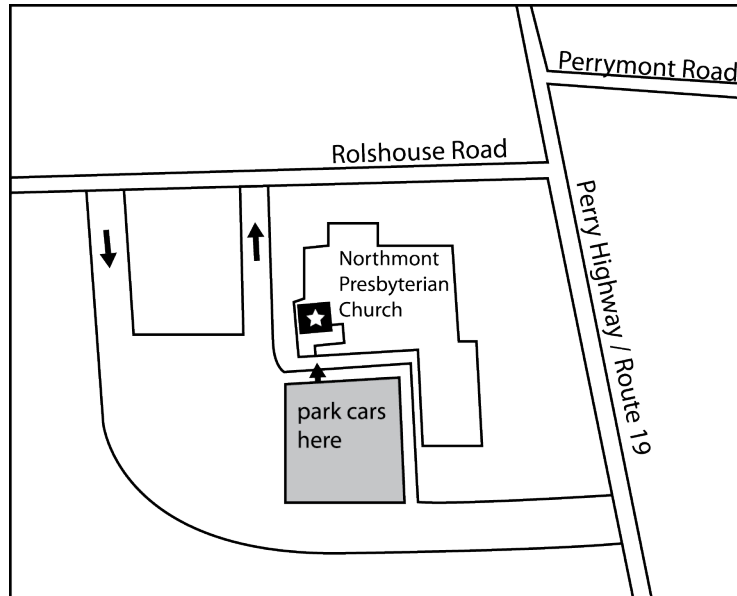
The Director of *Cantabile* will share responsibility with the Artistic Director in rehearsing and preparing the performing ensembles of the Pittsburgh Boy Choir. He will rehearse and direct the Cantabile Choir. He will provide overall assistance to the Artistic Director in all aspects of the PBC.

ACCOMPANIST: Sue Swick

The Accompanist will share responsibility for piano/keyboard accompaniment of the Pittsburgh Boy Choir (PBC). She will provide accompaniment for rehearsals and performances.

REHEARSAL LOCATION

All rehearsals and most events are held at Northmont United Presbyterian Church, 8169 Perry Highway, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. The rehearsal rooms are in the Goff Music Suite (lower level of the church) and the sanctuary (upper level of the church.) After dismissal, boys will not leave the church until their ride has arrived. When picking up your boy, park in the shaded area indicated below (this will keep boys from crossing the traffic flow at the exit ramp).



ORIENTATION

The orientation time at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 5, 2017 is a time to meet each other and start the year. At least one parent from each family should be in attendance.

SCHEDULE FOR THE 2017-18 SEASON

Attendance is required at all dress rehearsals and performances.

Rehearsals take place at
Northmont United Presbyterian Church unless otherwise noted.

This is a tentative calendar. Additions and alterations to this list are possible. Parents will be notified immediately, and with substantial warning, of any changes made to the schedule.

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Tuesday, September 5 | 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | Orientation meeting for parents & boys |
| Tuesday, September 12 | 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. 5:45 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | Rehearsals begin for <i>Da Capo</i> and <i>Cantabile</i> Rehearsals begin for <i>Bravo</i> |
| Friday, October 13 | 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Recruitment Tour boys & parents Richland, Hance and Glen Montessori Elem |
| Saturday, October 21 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Singing Saturday + Fun Day |
| Friday, November 17 | 5:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. | CBS Radio Santa Spectacular (Light Up Night) Point State Park – (Specific performance time TBA) |
| Saturday, November 18 | 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | Mars Craft Show – Mars Jr./Sr. HS 50/50 Raffle Fundraiser for PBC |
| Sunday, November 26 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Northmont Worship In-residence Contribution |
| Saturday, December 2 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. 1:30 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. | Dress Rehearsal Off-Site Promotional Performance (TBD) |
| Sunday, December 3 | 2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Call Time Winter Concert & Reception |
| Tuesday, December 5 | 5:00 p.m. & 7:15 p.m. | PBC Christmas Dinner @ Northmont and off-site performance to follow (TBD) |
| Saturday, December 9 | 7:30 p.m. (call: 6:15) | <i>Belle Voci a Natalé</i> with Belle Voci of Pgh. Northmont United Presbyterian Church |
| Saturday, December 30 | 5:30 p.m. | Sing @ Wedding of Sarah Jane Smith Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church |

— *Winter Break – December 12, 19, 26 & January 2: No Rehearsals* —

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Tuesday, January 9 | 5:00 p.m. | Weekly rehearsals begin again for boys |
| Tuesday, February 13 | 6:00 p.m. (call: 5:00) | “A Heart for Music” PBC Fundraiser Dinner |
| Saturday, February 17 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Singing Saturday with the “Bring a Friend to Boy Choir Day” |
| Sunday, April 22 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Northmont Worship In-residence Contribution |
| Tuesday, April 24 | 5:45 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. | Parent Meeting during rehearsal |
| Saturday, April 28 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Dress Rehearsal |
| Sunday, April 29 | 2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Call Time Spring Concert & Reception |
| Saturday, May 5 | 5:00 p.m. | Concert w/ Pittsburgh School for Choral Arts Spring Concert & Reception Call time: TBD |

We follow the North Allegheny School District cancellation schedule in case of bad weather.

TIME COMMITMENTS

1. Boys are encouraged to achieve perfect attendance in a punctual manner. Sporting events, social activities, and homework are not acceptable excuses for missing rehearsals.
2. Beginning of rehearsal time is the downbeat. At 5:00, boys should be ready to sing, not be walking in the door.
3. We are a performing organization; concerts are a critical aspect of the program. Choristers are required to attend every dress rehearsal and every performance. Missing a dress rehearsal may result in the chorister not singing in the concert.
4. If your child is unable to attend rehearsal, please contact the Artistic Director at (724) 405-7224 or director@pittsburghboychoir.com
5. Absences beyond those described in #1 above may jeopardize a boy's ability to continue singing in the group. If attendance or punctuality becomes a problem, the issue will be addressed first with a phone call; second, with a formal letter and meeting with the Artistic Director; and finally, by review with the Board of Directors. Consideration will be made for extreme circumstances, including death or extended illness in the family. Requests for these types of exemptions must be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors, in care of the Board President, Mr. Chris Young, 8169 Perry Highway, Pittsburgh, PA 15237.
6. **Special Events:**
 - Singing Saturday — This event happens once per semester. As a rehearsal scheduled in the morning, Singing Saturday allows the choristers a chance to sing with a mental freshness. The extended time gives the group a time for some fun activities and friendship building.
 - Singing at Sunday Worship Service — Once a semester, the Pittsburgh Boy Choir will participate in the worship service at Northmont Presbyterian Church. This is a time to practice the art of performance and to understand stage decorum in a context which requires fewer musical demands than a complete concert. Singing on a Sunday morning is also a way to thank Northmont Presbyterian Church for its support through our “In-residence” status.
 - Belle Voci of Pittsburgh's concert (*Belle Voci a Natale*) — A festive concert of traditional music of the Christmas Season, including audience sing-a-longs, presented by Belle Voci on December 10, 2016 at 7:30 pm. Belle Voci is a community-based intergeneration choir for women founded in 2012. This year's Belle Voci concert will feature the Giambelli String Quartet and the Pittsburgh Boy Choir as guest musical artists.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

Tuition

Fall 2017: \$325

\$175 on September 12 (second rehearsal of the Fall semester)

\$150 on October 3 (first rehearsal of October)

Spring 2018: \$400

\$200 on January 9 (first rehearsal of the Spring semester)

\$200 on February 6 (first rehearsal of February)

The PBC is more than a community singing group – we are a training program that provides a foundation in music theory, solfège/sightsinging, and vocal technique. In addition to supporting the overhead and administration of the program, the tuition helps to cover the cost of music, educational materials, curriculum books, and Act 33, Act 34, and FBI Clearances for Staff Members and Parent Volunteers. Boys will receive weekly group instruction as well as individual and small-group instruction.

Families with more than one child enrolled in PBC will receive a 10% tuition discount.

The PBC Board's annual budget is based on receiving semester tuition from all choristers. Should a chorister choose to withdraw from the choir, his family is responsible for fulfilling their financial commitment for that semester.

Uniforms

For the formal recitals and concerts, boys will be expected to dress accordingly:

Pressed collared dress shirt — white, button-down, regular cuffs, white/clear buttons

White undershirt

Black pants

Black belt with a metal buckle

Black socks

Black Dress Shoes — please no 'sneaker-style' dress shoes, lace or clasp shoes are okay

No need for a tie – we supply those.

CHORISTER EXPECTATIONS

1. The PBC acknowledges the primacy of the Judeo-Christian traditions as a core aspect of Western music. In approaching music, we realize that the best interpretation is achieved by understanding the musical, spiritual, artistic, and historical aspects of the piece.
2. **This is a semester-long commitment.** Creating music with a choir is a long-term process. The ensemble needs time to learn the music, refine their artistry, and establish a group dynamic and sound. As such, boys are requested to make a commitment to a full semester so that they can take part in the final performance. Also, new boys are admitted to the ensemble only during the first halves of each Fall or Spring semester.
3. **Attending the requisite number of rehearsals is of the utmost importance.** When students miss a rehearsal, they miss many detailed directions and score markings. They also miss the opportunity to reinforce their memorization and internalization of a piece. Additionally, the other members of their section are unable to fully develop their vocal ensemble and listening skills when their peers miss rehearsal. (*see Attendance Policy*)
4. **Rehearsal etiquette is important.** Rehearsal etiquette is a combination of good vocal production habits and attitudes of eagerness and diligence. Self-discipline and diligent attention to the instructor are important.
5. **Punctuality is essential.** Ten minutes early is on-time. By 5:00, boys should be in the music room, standing in their appropriate spot. By the beginning of rehearsal, boys should have used the restroom, checked in on the sign-in sheet, sharpened their pencils, and prepared their music.
6. **All music and teaching materials are provided by the PBC and are included in the tuition payment.** Choristers are expected to carry their music to each rehearsal and take it home with them for study. At the end of the semester, all choristers are expected to return their music to the PBC.
7. **Home study is required.** Choristers can expect weekly assignments that will include score study, listening, and memorization.
8. **All music sung in the concert will be memorized. Students who have not memorized a piece by the time of the recital will not be allowed to participate in the parts of the recital which they have not mastered.**
9. **Electronic devices are not allowed during rehearsal.** If seen in rehearsals, they will be taken from boys for the remainder of the rehearsal.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Help your son be prepared for rehearsal.** He should have a music binder, a water bottle, and a pencil. If your son has a phone or electronic device, make sure he leaves it in the car. During the week, encourage him to look at his music or complete memorization assignments a little bit each day.
 - 2. Be responsible for information regarding rehearsals, time, special events, and assignments.** All announcements will be communicated via e-mail and posted on the website at: www.pittsburghboychoir.com/members.html
 - 3. Encourage small victories.** Music is a discipline which requires the mastery of many physical and mental skills – encourage the many small steps needed to create the finished product.
 - 4. Communicate with the Directors.** We always appreciate feedback. It is hard to keep up with the status of each student during a rehearsal, so we encourage discussions outside of the scope of rehearsal. Just call or schedule an appointment to meet in person.
-

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Membership in the Pittsburgh Boy Choir is based on an audition and interview with the Audition Committee. Membership is currently open to all boys ages six through thirteen with unchanged voices. Members are chosen without regard to race, creed, religion or economic status. In addition to the audition dates posted on the website, auditions are held throughout the year. Auditions must be arranged by appointment with the Audition Committee by contacting the Artistic Director. One or both parents/guardians should be present. A certain level of musical ability must be evident for consideration as a member of the PBC. This does not mean there must have been prior musical training; it simply means that there must be a degree of musical talent evident, regardless of the degree of training prior to enrollment.

Membership is renewed by annual Enrollment Agreements. Choristers and their families must accept responsibility for tuition and all rehearsals and performances throughout the choir's Concert Season.

The Board of Directors of the PBC reserves the right to withdraw membership in the choir for any chorister who does not fulfill the responsibilities of the organization, based on the recommendation of the Music Directors and staff. This may include a lack of good rehearsal etiquette, repeated failure to regularly attend rehearsals, consistent tardiness to rehearsal, failure to comply with the financial obligations of the Choir, or failure to attend performances.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Like all team efforts, the Pittsburgh Boy Choir requires engagement and contribution from each chorister. Self-discipline is critical to the success of the PBC. Therefore, we must take every opportunity to teach and encourage the positive aspects and personal rewards of self-discipline.

We use “Boy Choir Bucks” to reinforce positive behavior and discourage negative behavior. During rehearsals, staff members can award “Boy Choir Bucks” to boys who exhibit good decorum: sitting correctly, having materials ready, or participating by answering individual questions. “Bucks” will be collected and held by the boys who receive them. The directors are not responsible for lost “Bucks.” Two rehearsals a month will provide an opportunity for the boys to cash in their “Boy Choir Bucks” for prizes at the “Boy Buck Store.”

It is difficult to anticipate the types of disciplinary issues that may arise in a classroom setting. If a boy’s behavior starts to significantly disrupt rehearsal or intimidate other choristers, we will address the problem with parents. Our primary goal is to have a positive environment allowing all boys will flourish, and we will work with parents to find a path for boys to mature through the experience of being in an ensemble.

PBC ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT (2017 – 2018)

I, _____, and my parents do accept my position as a member of the Pittsburgh Boy Choir and all of the responsibilities and privileges that go with it.

We agree to the following terms of membership:

- 1) Tuition: Fall Semester – \$325 (\$290 with Early-Bird Discount)
 Spring Semester – \$400

Tuition paid to the PBC is non-refundable.

- 2) We agree to accept the responsibility for all uniform requirements.
- 3) We agree to attend the required rehearsals per semester.
- 4) We agree to attend the required performances per semester.
- 5) We agree that should our ability to complete the terms of this contract be changed at any point within this Concert Season, we will discuss the situation with the Artistic Director before making any movement to terminate our membership in the PBC.
- 6) We are aware that membership in the PBC is based on a boy's ability to fulfill the musical and individual requirements of the PBC. If at any point in time a chorister fails to uphold acceptable standards of rehearsal etiquette, performance standards and/or attendance, the PBC reserves the right to review that chorister's membership in the PBC.

Chorister's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

PBC NEED-BASED TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

It is our belief at the Pittsburgh Boy Choir that no boy should be denied the experience to sing due to financial hardship. Families that have a need for tuition assistance are encouraged to apply for help with Tuition and Camp expenses by filling out the Need-Based Tuition Assistance (NBTA) application. The system is fairly formal, requiring a written application, with income documentation. The majority of applicants are typically approved for a 50% or 25% reduction. Music Fees or any other miscellaneous expenses are not covered by the assistance program.

The documentation will include a completed application along with a copy of Federal tax forms 1040 with the Schedule A, or 1040A or 1040EZ (please white out social security information, which is not needed).

The requests are reviewed twice yearly before the Fall Semester and Spring Semester and approved in confidence by the President and the Treasurer of the Board with input from the Artistic and Associate Directors. All documentation will be destroyed after review unless otherwise instructed by the applicant.



Need-Based Tuition Assistance (NBTA) Application

At the Pittsburgh Boy Choir we believe that no child should be denied participation in the Choir due to financial limitations. Families that require assistance in this regard are encouraged to apply for financial assistance, and every effort will be made to accommodate the need. Final decisions are made in confidence by the President and Treasurer of the Board of Directors with input from the Artistic and Associate Directors. NBTA reviews will be conducted twice yearly before the Fall and Spring Semesters and are valid for one year (two consecutive semesters) of adjustment.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Choir Member Name: _____

Birth Date of Member: _____

School (if applicable): _____

Grade: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____

Phone (home): _____

Work: _____

E-Mail: _____

Number of people in household: _____

Annual Income: _____

Please submit a copy of your most recent Federal Income Tax Form 1040 (sides 1 and 2 along with a Schedule A for deductions) or all of the Form 1040 and 1040 EZ. Please white your Social Security numbers before submission. All documentation will be destroyed after review unless otherwise instructed by the applicant. Incomplete forms cannot be processed. Submit completed application and supporting materials to: Pittsburgh Boy Choir – Treasurer, 8169 Perry Highway, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Present Employment Situation

- Father employed
- Mother employed
- Father self-employed
- Mother self-employed
- Father unemployed and looking
- Mother unemployed and looking
- Father unemployed and not looking
- Mother unemployed and not looking
- Father retired or disabled
- Mother retired or disabled

This is a NBTA request for:

_____ 25% NBTA (member pays 75% of the cost of a year of Tuition)
_____ 50% NBTA (member pays 50% of the cost of a year of Tuition)

Why are you asking for this assistance?

I understand that if I receive NBTA, I will be able to participate in the Pittsburgh Boy Choir. I am making a commitment to arrive on time for all of the rehearsals and to participate fully in the Boy Choir.

Member Signature

Date

As the parent or guardian, I will provide transportation or make arrangements for this student to attend rehearsals and performances.

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date



REFERRAL PROGRAM

While a small group of singers provides an ideal environment for giving each boy the individual attention needed for training and preparation in the early stages of musical development, it is in everyone's best interests to expand the numbers so that, as a mature organization, the Pittsburgh Boy Choir will be able to provide opportunities for success in a well-rounded and balanced program for boys at all stages of their development. We have enjoyed significant success to date; we want to build on that success and keep things moving in a positive direction. It is in everyone's best interests to have our Choir grow!

The Board of Directors recently approved a Referral Program to help encourage those within the PBC family to bring other interested and qualified young men into the Choir. The key elements of the Referral Program are as follows:

- If a new boy:
 - a. is referred to the PBC by a current family,
 - b. auditions, and
 - c. becomes a member in good standing within the group,the referring family will receive a tuition discount for the following semester.
- The amount of the discount will be twenty percent (20%) of the full-year tuition. At the current tuition rate, a twenty-percent discount would equal \$145.
- The discount is not for younger brothers within the same family. (There is already in place a discount for families with multiple members.)
- The discount would apply to *each new boy*, even if they are members of the same family. That is to say, if a current family refers another family with two boys, and both boys become PBC members in good standing, the referring family would get the discount for each new boy (in this case, the discount would total \$290).
- The amount of the discount cannot exceed the tuition due for the semester in question; however, any excess will carry over to the following semester. (For example, if a family should refer three boys, the tuition discount for the referring family would be \$435. In that case, the tuition of \$325 for the first semester would be fully discounted, and the additional \$110 would be applied against tuition for the second semester.)
- This Referral Program will expire on June 30, 2017, unless it is extended by the Board of Directors.

We encourage current families to recommend the Pittsburgh Boy Choir to their extended family and friends. Everyone benefits from a strong and growing organization.

INTENTIONAL GROWTH

The Pittsburgh Boy Choir looks forward to expanding as we establish ourselves in the Pittsburgh area. Immediate growth goals include forming a multi-tiered choir program, which we are beginning to implement during the 2017-18 season. The current advanced and developmental groups are meeting simultaneously, in different rehearsal spaces. This year we have created another advanced group that includes changing or changed voices.

Because our organization will change, the guidelines set forth in this handbook will change, too. The best support we can receive as we move forward is a flexibility and openness from all stakeholders in the organization. Parents can be assured that modification to the core structure of the program will be clearly communicated, and that the Artistic Director, Assistant Directors, and Board members are open to feedback and thoughts from existing families. All substantial modifications will occur between semesters — never at the midpoint of a semester.

As we look forward to all the different ways in which we can grow, we remain committed to our core vision of creating a premiere ensemble dedicated to the musical and personal growth of our choristers.