

CHORALE HANDBOOK



Lafayette
Master Chorale

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Singers Handbook

Updated August 2023

SINGER GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are 7:00-9:30 p.m. Mondays at the Rohrman Performing Arts Center at Jefferson High School, 1801 S. 18th St., Lafayette.

Attendance Policy

Singers are expected to attend all rehearsals, as regular attendance is essential to the success of a performing group.

A signed contract serves as the agreement between each member and the artistic staff, assuring that the commitment level of each singer is understood.

Any changes to a singer's commitment due to unforeseen circumstances will be made known in advance to the artistic staff.

Attendance at dress rehearsals is required.

Dues

Dues for the concert season are \$150.

Singers who are financially able are expected to pay dues in full. No singer will be excluded from singing in the Lafayette Master Chorale for financial reasons. For scholarship assistance, contact the office: admin@lafayettemasterchorale.org or 765-429-5151.

Concert Dress

Men: Dark suit, white shirt, black bow tie.

Women: Black floor-length dress, skirt or slacks suit with at least cap sleeves and modest neckline. Jewelry should not sparkle in the stage lights. *Please refrain from wearing fragrances!*

Membership and Auditions

Auditions for new members are held at the discretion of the director.

The director evaluates each singer's 1) vocal ability, 2) ability to read music, 3) ear (ability to sing in tune, etc.), and 4) general musicianship.

The director and/or the audition committee will be responsible for informing prospective members of their status after their auditions. Singers not accepted are not necessarily disqualified because of lack of ability, but in some cases because there is no opening in an appropriate section.

Individuals inquiring about membership after scheduled auditions are completed, or after rehearsals have begun, will be asked to wait until the next round of auditions is announced.

Individuals must be auditioned and accepted as singing members before they are allowed to participate in a rehearsal.

Singing members of the chorale may be re-auditioned at any time at the artistic director's discretion.

OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

Every member of the Lafayette Master Chorale is expected to:

1. Attend ALL performances;
2. Prepare the concert music to an acceptable level for each performance;
3. Attend rehearsals an acceptable number of times;
4. Rehearse music as expected between rehearsals;
5. Demonstrate appropriate rehearsal and concert etiquette;
6. Notify the appropriate person of any absence from a rehearsal PRIOR to the rehearsal except in case of emergencies;
7. Volunteer to help the organization run smoothly.

Leaves of Absence

It may be necessary for a member to take a leave of absence from the Lafayette Master Chorale. By doing so, the member will be given inactive status and may need to have a vocal placement interview to rejoin.

Soloists

The artistic director is given the artistic discretion to appoint and hire the necessary vocalists when appropriate.

Rehearsal Decorum

1. Be prompt! Please be seated and ready to sing by 7 p.m. sharp. When rehearsals are held at an alternate site, allow ample time to arrive and get organized.
2. Keep a pencil in your folder.
3. Pay attention to the director; remain attentive.
4. When the director is working with a section other than your own, listen to the instruction the director is giving and follow your own part in the score.
5. Each singing member is responsible for marking his/her own score. When a member is absent, he/she must obtain the director's markings from someone within the section.
6. Good posture is essential to good vocal production.
7. Please be courteous to those sitting around you. Refrain from wearing perfumes, colognes, etc., to rehearsals or performances. If you're not well, fill out the absence form link and remain home until you are well.
8. Announcements will be made by board and committee members of the LMC. With permission, other brief relevant announcements will be permitted.

Concert Decorum

1. Keep your eyes on the conductor and out of the music!
2. During solo passages, turn ahead in the music and watch the conductor, not the soloist's vocal part.
3. Be sensitive about page turns. Don't spoil a quiet moment in the music with a noisy page turn.

Vision Statement

The Lafayette Master Chorale is an educational and artistic organization dedicated to enriching the intellectual, philosophical and spiritual quality of life for our community for this and future generations, through the study, practice and performance of choral music.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Lafayette Master Chorale is to:

- Promote, support and sustain interest in choral music by providing opportunities for singers of all ages to learn and perform under the direction of professional musicians.
- Inspire the citizens with programs featuring great choral repertoire performed at the highest artistic level.
- Educate future generations by providing music education opportunities for youth in our community.
- Enrich the lives of singers and audiences by linking them to diverse musical heritages.
- Lead the arts community by creating opportunities to incorporate various art forms in our performances and to collaborate with other arts groups.

Artistic Director

Artistic Director and Conductor Michael Bennett is the seventh person to hold this position in the Chorale's long history. Bennett is a music educator, choral director and keyboard artist. He is the director of choral activities at West Lafayette Junior/Senior High School. Bennett directed the award-winning Jefferson High School Varsity Singers, who were state champions at the 2018 Indiana State School Music Association concert finals. In 2014 he was recognized for his excellent teaching by the Greater Lafayette Commerce as a Golden Apple Teacher, one of the newest teachers to the profession to have received the award.

Bennett is the director of music at St. John's Episcopal Church, Lafayette, where he serves as organist for all services, oversees the parish's musical offerings, directs the choir program and administers the concert series.

In his position with the Lafayette Master Chorale, Bennett provides artistic vision and leadership in all areas relating to the artistic and educational purposes of the organization. He is responsible for planning and supervising all concert series, including special performances, and has final decision-making authority in all aesthetic matters. The chorale's concert season spans

the gamut of choral literature from *a cappella* to fully orchestral works, Renaissance to Modern. Bennett leads in the selection of instrumentalists and soloists and in all aspects of season program planning.

A native of Roanoke, Va., Bennett is a graduate of the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where he received his bachelor's degree in organ performance and his master's degree in organ performance and choral conducting. His primary instructors there were William Jon Gray, Marilyn Keiser and Larry Smith. Bennett is a member of the American Choral Director's Association and the National Association for Music Education and serves on the Board of Directors for the Indiana Music Education Association.

As a concert organist, Bennett has performed extensively across the Midwest and East Coast, playing in cathedrals and for chapters of the American Guild of Organists in more than ten states. He also can be heard in recording with the choirs of Vassar College, where he made his discography debut in a live performance of Mozart's *Requiem* with solo organ accompaniment.

From 2004-09, Bennett was the Assistant Conductor and Youth Chorus Director for the Bach Chorale Singers. As the chorale's primary conductor for the 2006-07 season, he was privileged to direct both choruses while on tour in Washington, D.C., at the Washington National Cathedral and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

History of the Bach Chorale Singers

Today the Bach Chorale Singers, Inc. consists of approximately 60 singers from the greater Lafayette and surrounding area. Members come from all age groups and represent a variety of occupations. Membership in the group is gained through audition. Although many singers have had formal music training, some have not. All are bound together by a love of choral music.

In 1964, the Bach Chorale Singers began when a small group of people started meeting on Sunday evenings, at the home of Pastor Raymond Geist, to sing Bach chorales. Later they took turns meeting in their homes. Gene Goodson, a member of the group, became its first music director. The group became incorporated in 1965 and performed its first public concert in 1968. Over the next few years it grew from the original few to 60 singers.

When Dr. Goodson left the Lafayette area in 1973, the chorale looked outside the community for a new director. The next three music directors were doctoral candidates in choral conducting from the Indiana University School of Music, and all successfully completed their

degrees while employed by the Bach Chorale: Graeme Cowen, 1973-76; Paul Krasnovsky, 1976-88; John Yonkman, 1988-94; William Jon Gray, 1994-2010; and Michelle Louer, 2010-16.

In the beginning, two concerts were performed each season, one each in the fall and spring. Gradually other programs were added to the concert season, among them a Messiah “Sing Along” in 1973, a summer program in 1978, and “Lessons and Carols” in 1985. Over the years, the repertoire has expanded to include music of various styles and period.

A number of special events have occurred during the past 56 years: a concert with the Paul Winter Consort; joint concerts with the Lafayette Symphony, the University of Indianapolis Chorus, and Purdue's Symphony and Symphonic Band; performances in Crawfordsville, Frankfort, Indianapolis, Monticello and Bloomington; several summer music camps; a concert tour of Europe in 1986; a 1988 Marquis de Lafayette Award in the major arts; performances with the Tippecanoe Youth Chorus; a 1992 performance of Bach's St. John Passion featuring acclaimed tenor, David Gordon; the release of a compact disc recording of Christmas Fanfares: A Festival of Lessons and Carols; and completion in summer 1998 of a compact disc recording featuring choral and organ works of Zoltan Kodaly. A new “Family Carols” C.D. was released in fall 2004.

Of particular significance to the continuing growth of the chorale was an organizational change in 1984 from an “all-singers” board of directors to a “community participation” board. Under the inspiring leadership of Artistic Director William Jon Gray, Bach Chorale Singers, Inc. is committed to artistic excellence, community service and music education.

In June 1996, an education component was formally added to the organization when the Tippecanoe Youth Chorus merged with Bach Chorale Singers, Inc. to form the Bach Chorale Youth Chorus. The chorus has performed at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C., in Chicago, St. Louis and most recently in June of 2003 in New York City.

In June of 1999, the Greater Lafayette Children's Choir was formally added to the Bach Chorale Singers, Inc. as the Bach Chorale Children's Choir. This group trains young singers ages 8 to 11. In 2016, the group adopted the name Lafayette Children's Choir; in 2017, the organization adopted the name Lafayette Master Chorale & Children's Choir.