



MEMBER HANDBOOK

~updated August 2024~

WHO WE ARE

The Coquitlam Chorale Society is a community choir that has been operating in the Tri-Cities since 1962. We are a non-auditioned SATB group which welcomes members from all over the Lower Mainland.

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The choir's mandate within its constitution is to provide a community choir to give individuals the opportunity to sing a variety of choral music to perform in various community venues and to take part in choral festivals and competitions.

The Coquitlam Choral Society was founded in 1967 by Ray Thompson. Ray believed that there was a need for a choral group where people who love to sing could come together regardless of ability and share their music as a community service. We strive to honor and uphold that vision.

OUR CODE OF CONDUCT

Our choir has developed the following Code of Conduct for our membership. We strive to:

- > **Be respectful** of and show consideration to one another, to the Director, the Pianist, our Board Members, Volunteers, and our Patrons.
- > **Be welcoming** to all members and prospective members as this is a community choir where all are received as equals regardless of their abilities.
- > **Demonstrate patience** with one another and be accepting of our differences.
- > **Be encouraging and supportive** as we learn together. We will respect that each of us comes to the chorale with different skills and abilities.
- > **Give the attention and respect** necessary for a productive rehearsal environment. We will contribute to an atmosphere that upholds each member's right to participate without distraction.
- > **Be collaborative** as what we produce together as a whole is made up of many parts.
- > **Demonstrate tolerance to one another.** Our diversity is our strength and we will make every attempt to understand one another and to be respectful of and listen to each other's point of view.
- > **Take responsibility** for our words and for our actions. We may make mistakes. If we do, we will each take personal responsibility for them

We are a scent free group we ask that you do not wear any fragrances on your body hair or clothing to any choir gatherings --not only do we rehearse and perform in scent

free facilities, we can have members who are extremely allergic.

All individuals are expected to maintain personal hygiene standards that contribute to a clean and safe environment. This includes regular bathing, wearing clean and appropriate attire, and proper grooming habits.

OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Justin Maller is the third in a line of passionate artistic directors. He has been the artistic director of the Chorale since September 2004. A graduate of the UBC music program, Justin is an accomplished singer, performer, and theatre technician.

In addition to his work with the Chorale Society, Justin is a Fine Arts teacher at Gleneagle Secondary School in Coquitlam where he shares his passion for musical theatre with his students.

OUR RESIDENT ACCOMPANIST

Lorna Yates began her connection with the Chorale many years ago under the leadership of our founder Ray Thompson. She has been tickling the ivories for the Chorale since the early 2000s and her many accolades can be found on our website.

BECOMING A CHORALE MEMBER

The Chorale is open to everyone 16 years of age and older. No audition is required, and you don't need previous choir experience. With a choir our size, there's definitely safety in numbers for newcomers to find their singing voice. Membership in the choir is done on a yearly basis. We have two seasons each year, typically:

- > The fall season goes from September until December.
- > The spring season goes from January until late April or early May

REGISTRATION

Registration typically occurs during the first three weeks of each season.

We accept up to 70 singers each season; there are also limits for each section so we don't get out of balance. A waiting list for each section will be started once we reach any maximum allowed.

REGISTRATION CONFIRMATION

Once your registration has been completed, you will receive instructions on how to pay the season's membership dues.

WAITLIST

Though rare, there may arise that we have more member applications than available singing spots in the choir. In this case your name would go onto a waiting list, and should a member should withdraw for whatever reason,

the Membership Coordinator will reach out to you with an invitation to fill the vacancy.

The waitlist is discontinued as of the fourth rehearsal of the season.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Each member is required to pay a fee each year to cover the choir's operating costs, such as:

- > Artistic director, resident accompanist, and guest musician fees.
- > Rehearsal venue rental.
- > BCCF membership dues and BC nonprofit society fees.
- > Insurance and storage fees.
- > Sheet music purchasing and performance rights.

Fees are established and published in each year's rehearsal and concert schedule and are payable after your registration has been confirmed. Single season membership rates are 60% of the yearly rate. Instructions for payment are provided on the members only page of the choir's website.

To maintain your place in the choir you must pay your member fee no later than the deadline; otherwise, your place in the choir will be forfeited, and you may be replaced by someone on the wait list.

CREATING A PAYMENT PLAN

If you cannot pay your member fee on time, you will need to contact the president to arrange an acceptable payment plan. To be acceptable, your plan must have specific dates and amounts identified, and your fee must be paid in full by the 8th rehearsal.

APPLYING FOR A BURSARY

If you cannot afford to pay your member fee even through a payment plan, you may apply by e-mail to the president for a bursary to help pay for your member fee. You will be expected to pay at least half of the fee, and you must apply for a bursary before the payment deadline.

MUSIC DEPOSIT

Every member is required to submit a refundable deposit to cover their music and folder. Should a member leave the choir they are entitled to request a return of this deposit.

REFUND POLICY

Once paid, member fees are not refundable unless you are precluded from continuing to the end of the season due to a significant health issue or major unforeseen circumstance (either yourself or an immediate family member). In this case, we will refund the unused portion of your fees as of the date you advise us. Unused fees cannot be carried forward to a future session.

REHEARSALS

We hold a 2-hour rehearsal each Monday during the season, including holiday Mondays. A separate rehearsal and concert schedule is published each season to supplement this handbook, with the rehearsal and concert dates and venues, and other details about the season. As you enter rehearsal we ask that you sign your name in on the appropriate section sheet as we do track attendance.

There is a 10-minute break during rehearsals. If you want to eat a snack, be sure to eat it only in designated areas, and be aware there may be members close by with food or nut allergies. Please do not eat in the sanctuary! Only water may be consumed there.

During rehearsals we all wear lanyards style name tags which indicate not just your name but also your member status (new, from last season, or re-joined from a prior season). The titles for people who hold a position within the choir are also shown on their name tags, so you can quickly and easily tell "who's who".

Your name tag is your responsibility, please keep it in your folder when not at rehearsal and make sure to wear it while at rehearsal.

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

It is the responsibility of each existing member to make our new members feel welcome. If you are a new member feeling out of your comfort zone, please let the Membership Coordinator know, and they will help get you situated.

REHEARSAL SEATING

We do not assign seating during our rehearsals. We do, however, have a few guidelines that we ask you to follow:

- > We sit in SATB sections as designated during the rehearsals
- > Be flexible and welcoming as people are looking for a seat, especially our new and rejoining members.
- > Mix up your seating every so often to hear the song from a different perspective. Not only will you get to meet more members, but you never know who you may be standing beside during the concert.
- > Wherever you sit, be sure you can see the Music Director when we are seated. If you can't see them, move so you can. You can ask our membership coordinator for help in finding a suitable seat. Please don't just sit and grumble to yourself or others about not being able to see!
- > Please sit as far forward, and as close to other singers, as you are comfortable. The closer we sit together, the better you can hear other singers in your section to help you learn your part faster; it also helps our Music Director because we make a better sound together.
- > You are responsible for taking care of your personal well-being. If you need to sit or stand while others are doing the opposite, do so. If you'd rather stand during rehearsal you can do so along the side or at the back of

the sanctuary. If you need special seating arrangements, please speak with the stage manager.

SECTIONAL REHEARSALS/GETTING SUPPORT

Each season we hold one special sectional rehearsal, to focus on each section's parts, and one choir-wide workshop to focus on finishing touches of the pieces. These extra rehearsals are typically held on a Saturday morning.

If you find you need more help to learn your part, it is up to you to make it happen. There are a number of options available:

- > Listen to the Practice tracks available and read through the rehearsal summary in the members section of the website.
- > Contact your section leader and have them talk/sing through the problem area with you.
- > Get together with a few members from your section. For accompaniment you can use the rehearsal tracks found on the website if a piano or keyboard is unavailable. Use the choir directory in the member's only area of the website to make your invitations.
- > If you still need help, contact the Membership Coordinator.

ATTENDANCE

We ask that you make every effort to attend every rehearsal, sectional, workshop and performance of the season, as well as the AGM. We do, however, realize that life happens and this is not always possible. If you cannot attend a rehearsal (illness, employment demands, etc.), advise the Membership Coordinator. Your regrets will be recorded in the sign-in book.

- > If you miss a practice, find out what you missed from another choir member BEFORE the next rehearsal.
- > If you miss more than four rehearsals in a season, you must discuss your situation with the Director.
- > If you miss more than two rehearsals in the final four weeks of a season, you must discuss your situation with the Director

THE CHORALE'S WEBSITE

The member's only page of the choir's website, coquitlamchorale.com and the complementary Spaces by Wix app are your main source for the latest information and resources. They contain, among other things:

- > How and when to pay your member fees
- > Rehearsal recordings and rehearsal notes
- > This handbook, our code of conduct, constitution and bylaws.

MUSIC

The folder and sheet music given to you at the beginning of the season are property of the Society on loan to you. As such, we ask that you take care of the music. Please ONLY

MARK YOUR MUSIC IN PENCIL, this means no pen markings or highlighters for your part. If you need extra attention to mark your lines you can use post it tabs which can be removed and leave no residue. We would like our music to last for years to come.

A WORD ABOUT OUR REPERTOIRE

We sing a wide variety of musical genres and styles in our group, decided upon every season by the wonderful vision of Justin. Each concert will have a repertoire of approximately 15-20 pieces.

While every piece may not be your favourite, you are expected to learn the whole repertoire. If you have specific issues with a song selection, please bring your concerns to the President and do not grumble to your neighbour, as this can bring down morale of the group quickly.

CONDUCT DURING REHEARSALS

With a group our size it is *absolutely essential* for us all to be respectful of both our Music Director and our fellow choir members by being attentive at all times to the instructions being given. That means **NO TALKING OR CHATTING** with nearby members!

- > Nine times out of 10 when the Music Director is working with one section they are saying something that all sections need to learn
- > Many of us don't hear as well as we used to and unnecessary chatter interferes with what we can hear
- > Having to speak above the chatter simply wears our Music Director out; it takes a lot of extra physical mental and emotional effort for them to remain focused and be heard above unnecessary chatter.

Whenever the Music Director asks to have a particular section sing their part it is NOT an opportunity for you to sing your Part, too! Your singing a different part makes it much more difficult to identify problems, slowing our overall progress.

Cell phones should be turned off during the rehearsal, as even the buzzing of notifications can be a distraction for those around you. If you have an emergency in which you must use your phone, please be respectful of everyone and step out of the rehearsal space to use it.

Punctuality is key. Please arrive early enough so that you can do all that you need to do beforehand so you can be seated and ready to go on time at the start of each rehearsal. Also be mindful of the time to return from the break.

SOLOISTS

Our soloists come from within the choir, and solo parts require varying skill levels. Whether you are an experienced soloist, or you've been toying with the idea of giving it a try for the first time, this choir is the perfect place to share your talent.

Solo auditions will be set and conducted by Justin and communicated to the membership each season.

CONCERTS

At the end of each season, we produce two concerts with a dress rehearsal/soundcheck earlier in the week. We may also perform additional concerts within the community during the season.

It is each member's responsibility to promote our concerts and sell a minimum number of tickets as determined by the Executive. If you are unable to sell your ticket quota and the concert is undersold you will be invoiced for the required amount.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

In preparation for the concert place your music in order in the elastics in your folder, this will ensure that the music stays in your folder and will minimize music malfunctions. If you do not have enough elastics in your folder, please let the music librarian know and they will provide you with more.

When entering on stage carry your folder binding side down in your audience facing hand, proceed to your seat and remain standing with your folder at your side as the choir enters. Justin will indicate when to raise your folder to sing. We will typically sing one or two selections and then sit for the introduction of the next piece(s). While you are seated, please have your folder closed in your lap, you may want to place your hand in your folder between pieces to keep your place. Justin will indicate when to stand and sit throughout the concert.

If, during the performance, you make a mistake please don't let it show on your face; smile and have fun with your performance, it will make for a more enjoyable experience for the audience. Refrain from chatting with your neighbour during the concert.

When it comes time to bow, hold your folder, binding side down at your side and bend at the waist when prompted to do so by Justin.

Offloading the stage is typically done in the reverse order of loading, and again, please carry your folder in your audience side hand.

PERSONAL WELLBEING ON CONCERT DAY

We understand and appreciate that you may not be able to stand for our entire dress rehearsal and concert. You can sit as much as you need to in order to take care of your personal well-being. We would much prefer a sitting chorister to a fainting chorister.

While we encourage hydration backstage, we cannot have water bottles on stage as we perform.

CONCERT WARDROBE

Our standard concert attire is either a solid, matte all-black outfit, from the neckline to the floor, or a matte white

top with black bottoms. It is important that the black is not faded, navy, or grey, and has nothing shiny or glittery on it.

- > Ladies can wear a dress, or a blouse/top with either slacks or a skirt; sleeves should be no shorter than $\frac{3}{4}$ length and skirts must come to the ankle.
 - > Men wear a dress shirt and pants.
 - > NO jeans, yoga pants, leggings or T-shirts, please!
 - > Hosiery must also be black; **absolutely NO bare legs or toes**
 - > Shoes must be black and comfortable so that you can wear them throughout the performance
- Your outfit may be accessorized using Chorale owned scarves or broaches; these will be distributed at the concert and must be returned at the end of the performance.

LOST & FOUND

It is inevitable that, at some point during the season, things get left behind after a rehearsal, especially music folders and water bottles. Please put your name on everything you bring to rehearsal, and take a look around your space before you leave for items that may have slipped from view.

Items that we find while resetting the rehearsal space can be claimed at subsequent rehearsals from the welcome table (they are kept between rehearsals by either the Membership Coordinator or the President). For items we don't find, you will need to contact the rehearsal space directly.

If you forget something after a concert you will need to contact our Stage Manger or the concert venue directly.

PRIVACY

The personal information that we collect when you register is used to:

- > Track and support your participation in the choir.
- > E-mail you about choir activities (see our communications practices below).
- > Create a member directory that's posted on the members only page of the website, as a resource for choir members who are looking for support with learning their parts, carpooling, and social gatherings.

Every effort is taken to protect the privacy of all members. You like you have the option to withhold any or all of your personal data from the member directory.

Other than the uses noted above, information from the database is not shared with any other person, group or organization.

Any questions about privacy should be forwarded to the president.

COMMUNICATIONS PRACTICES

We regularly email our active members to keep them up to date about what is happening during the season and with reminders. Please make sure that

membership@coquitlamchorale.com is saved in your address book to avoid the messages going to junk mail. We expect all members to read these emails completely.

DEALING WITH BEHAVIOUR ISSUES

Disrespectful or offensive behavior, including bullying and harassment, is not tolerated. Intent does not determine whether behavior is acceptable; a person cannot excuse their behavior simply by saying they did not intend it. If you experience or observe any behavior that contravenes our code of conduct or member responsibilities as outlined in this handbook, you have the right to respectfully tell the other person that their behavior is unwelcome and ask them to stop. If they do not stop, we encourage you to report the situation to the president, providing as many details as you can.

Once a complaint is received, you can expect that it will be dealt with in a timely, sensitive, consistent, and confidential manner. No complaint will be dismissed or downplayed, nor will you be told to deal with it personally. A grievance committee will deal with your complaint reasonably and in good faith. They will interview you and any individuals who can provide relevant information about your complaint. Their investigation will be fair, impartial and focused on finding the facts, and, once they have made a decision, they will inform all parties. If their investigation substantiates your complaint, the grievance committee will determine the appropriate remedy. It may include a reprimand, requiring an oral or written apology to the offended member, suspension and/or permanent expulsion from the choir.

Any director who is alleged to have contravened our values must immediately take a leave of absence from the board until the matter is satisfactorily resolved. Any director who is found to have contravened our values must resign from the board.

No member is allowed to: interfere with the resolution of a complaint, retaliate against anyone for filing a complaint, or file an unfounded complaint.

LEAVING THE CHORALE

If something comes up that will prevent you from completing the current season, please take a moment to let the membership coordinator know. That way they won't continue to pester you with emails about the rest of the season and we can better plan our concerts by knowing how many members will be dealing with on stage. If you qualify, they will also issue a refund for any unused fees. If you don't plan to return to the choir you must return your choir folder and all sheet music and can ask for your music deposit returned.

CHOIR MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The choir is operated by the Coquitlam Choral Society, a nonprofit society registered under the laws of the province of British Columbia.

The directors are responsible for:

- > Ensuring that the society operates according to its constitution and bylaws, and the BC societies act.
- > Providing direction for the future of the choir, including special events.
- > Instituting and monitoring policies as required.
- > Recommending an instituting change to the bylaws when necessary.
- > Approving the hiring and release of contracted professionals (including the artistic director and resident accompanist), and participating in their evaluations, as needed.

The society's Board of Directors includes:

- > Four officers: the president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer; and
- > Up to 9 directors at large

RUNNING FOR & BEING A DIRECTOR

All choir members in good standing are eligible to stand for election as a director or officer at each annual general meeting. Nominations for new directors are accepted during the month leading up to the AGM. All nominated persons must, according to the act, provide prior written consent to their nomination, or if nominated at the AGM, be present and give verbal consent.

Being a director means that you are willing to:

- > Make a difference by volunteering your knowledge, wisdom, and time, providing leadership, and direction for the future success of the choir.
- > Bring a positive, collaborative and common-sense attitude to the table.
- > Attend director and general meetings.
- > Stay informed and current on key choir issues.
- > Serve on committees and assist where possible in getting the work of the board done.
- > Support special choir and fundraising events.

TERM OF OFFICE

Executive officers are elected for a term of four years, and all other directors are elected for a term of three years. It is anticipated that once an officer completes a term as vice president, they will then serve a term as president. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms as either an executive or director.

MEETINGS

Under our bylaws, there are three types of meetings:

1. An annual general meeting must be held at least once a year, to review the past years activities and financial results, and to elect new directors. Our fiscal year end is August 31st, and as such, we hold our AGM during the third regular rehearsal of our fall season.

2. General meetings are any other meeting involving members. These are held as needed during choir rehearsals.
3. Board meetings are typically scheduled monthly. Directors may also conduct business by e-mail or group chat.

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

The president is responsible for:

- > Providing leadership to the directors and the choir.
- > Managing the other directors and committee leaders.
- > Conducting performance evaluations of directors, resident accompanist, and artistic director as needed.
- > Chairing all board and general meetings, including preparing the agendas in collaboration with the other directors.
- > Orienting new directors, ensuring that they are familiar with the societies constitution, bylaws, policies, and practices.
- > Preparing a report to members to be included in the annual report each year.
- > Acting as an ex officio member of all committees that may be formed, and attending their meetings as needed.
- > Mentoring the vice president to ensure smooth succession.

ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

The vice president is responsible for:

- > Acting as president in the absence of the president.
- > Working closely with the president, providing support and council where possible.
- > Learning the duties of the president to serve a future term as president.
- > Orienting the successor vice president.

ROLE OF THE SECRETARY

The secretary is responsible for:

- > Ensuring directors and members are notified of meetings.
- > Taking and preparing the minutes of all director and general meetings.
- > Ensuring the society's records, correspondence, and by laws are properly maintained as required by the societies act.
- > Signing official documents as required.
- > Orienting the successor secretary.

ROLE OF THE TREASURER

The treasurer is responsible for:

- > Maintaining the society's financial activity, ensuring this society operates within its budget guidelines, maintaining sound financial practices and taking effective corrective action when required.
- > Established proposed budgets for approval by the board of directors with support of the executive.
- > Coordinate grant applications and fundraising activities as needed.

- > Ensuring that insurance and contractors are paid in a timely manner.
- > Signing official documents as required.
- > Orienting the successor treasurer.

PORTFOLIOS

There are 5 portfolios that individual directors or members may either take on or be assigned to:

1. Stage Manager
(stagemanager@coquitlamchorale.com):
oversees logistics of rehearsals and concerts
2. Fundraising
(fundraising@coquitlamchorale.com):
Oversees and coordinates the choir's fundraising initiatives.
3. Music Librarian
(librarian@coquitlamchorale.com):
Maintains the Society's music library and organizes distribution and collection of music each season.
4. Membership Coordinator
(membership@coquitlamchorale.com):
Oversees welcoming members each season, maintains attendance records and acts as first point of contact for the choir.
5. Concert Wardrobe
(wardrobe@coquitlamchorale.com):
Oversees concert dress selection and distribution of any extra uniform pieces.

DIRECTOR CODE OF CONDUCT

As a member on the Board of Directors for the Coquitlam Chorale Society, directors agree to comply with the following Code of Conduct throughout their term as a Board Member:

Participation:

- > Directors shall act honestly and in good faith and will not violate the trust of the Coquitlam Chorale Society members that they serve.
- > Directors shall demonstrate their commitment to the Coquitlam Chorale Society by demonstrating a high priority of participation in Board and Committee meetings through high levels of attendance.
- > Directors shall prepare themselves for all Board and Committee meetings by familiarizing themselves with the meeting's agenda and background materials to the greatest extent possible, with the goal of discussing the issues and business addressed at the meetings.
- > Directors shall focus on the discussions at hand and be prepared to deal with issues that may not be easily solvable.
- > Directors shall be members of at least one Committee of the Board.

Respect

- > Directors shall express their opinions, unencumbered, yet always with the goals of flexibility and compromise whenever achievable by remaining open to differing viewpoints.

- > Directors shall work with and respect the opinions of their peers and leave personal prejudices out of all Board and Committee discussions.
- > Directors shall display courteous conduct in all Board and Committee meetings toward each other and toward staff.
- > Directors shall not make erroneous or defamatory statements about the Coquitlam Chorale Society or any member or staff member of the Society.

Support

- > Directors shall support, in an affirmative manner, all actions taken by the Board, even when they may be in a minority position with respect to any such action.
- > Directors shall represent the Coquitlam Chorale Society and the Board in a positive and supportive manner at all times and in all places.
- > Directors shall exercise the duties and responsibilities of their position integrity, collegiality, and care.

Governance

- > Directors shall ensure that the Board performs its duties of governance.
- > Directors shall ensure that they understand their obligations to the Coquitlam Chorale Society and that they ensure those obligations are upheld.
- > Directors shall place the Coquitlam Chorale Society and its Board's interests before their own personal interests and will immediately declare any conflicts of interest which arise.
- > Directors shall remove themselves from situations where their continued presence on the Board may cause embarrassment to the Coquitlam Chorale Society or undermine the confidence of their peers and the membership.

Policy

- > Directors shall use their best judgement to balance the relative importance of issues to be determined by the Board in setting policies and avoiding operational matters.
- > Directors shall educate other Board members on those matters within their own area of expertise with a goal of having the Board make decisions collectively.
- > Directors shall uphold the vision statement as approved by the Board, as may be amended from time to time.

Confidentiality

- > Directors shall maintain, at all times, the confidentiality of all confidential information and records of the Coquitlam Chorale Society and must not make use of or reveal such information or records except in the course of performance of their duties or unless the documents or information become a matter of general public knowledge.
- > Directors shall comply with any Coquitlam Chorale policies and procedures that guide the storage, use and transmission of any information of the Society, including the use of computer data bases or email systems.
- > Directors shall treat Board discussions as a "safe haven" for the benefit of their peers and the Corporation's

Executive, and shall not repeat any discussions concerning the Society’s business and practices, or any discussions of a personal nature of their peers and the Board, in a public setting.

Property

- > Directors shall not misappropriate the Society’s assets for personal use.
- > Directors are entrusted with the care, management and cost-effective use of the Society’s property and resources.
- > Directors shall ensure that all Society property assigned to them is maintained in good condition, and shall be accountable for such property.

Directors who have breached or who are in a potential breach of this Code of Conduct may be requested to resign, or may request an exemption from any such breach or potential breach, by a determination of a special majority of the subject Director’s peers.

*“I don’t sing because I’m happy;
I’m happy because I sing”*

~William James
