

# BRANDON CONSERVATORY CHORALE HANDBOOK

## ***WELCOME FROM THE BCC BOARD***

Welcome to the Brandon Conservatory Chorale! We hope that all choristers will enjoy the benefit of the fine musical instruction that has been a tradition since the inception of the Chorale in 1981. We also hope that this will be the beginning of a lifetime of participation in, and enjoyment of, choral music.

We hope that you will find your experience with the Brandon Conservatory Chorale to be positive and rewarding. We need help from all adults if we are to provide the extras that make the Chorale special. We look forward to working with you.

## ***BACKGROUND***

Elizabeth Grant began the Brandon Conservatory Chorale in 1981 for a project for her Master's degree in Music. The original Chorale was composed of 14 youngsters. Over the years it has grown to over 100 choristers, and it has been sub-divided into four choirs, while the overall Chorale has been maintained. The choirs are:

<b>Apprentice Choir</b>	Grades K-3
<b>Concert Choir</b>	Grades 4 & up
<b>Chamber Choir</b>	The most experienced choristers regardless of school grade
<b>Bel Canto</b>	For adults (non-auditioned)

The Chorale operates through the Brandon University Eckhardt Gramatte Conservatory of Music. The office of the Conservatory is located in the Queen Elizabeth II Music Building on the Brandon University Campus. Office hours are 8:30 to 12:00 and 1:00 to 4:30 Monday to Friday. The Conservatory Director is Mary Jo Carrabre and can be reached at 204-727-7366 or [carrabrem@brandonu.ca](mailto:carrabrem@brandonu.ca).

## ***IMPORTANT DATES***

Please consult the website for performances and other events.

## ***REHEARSALS***

When Choir practices fall on a recognized holiday, notification will be sent if there will be a practice on the day. (e.g. Labour Day, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Easter Monday) Practices are usually not held during the Christmas school break and the school "Spring break". Dr. Grant occasionally calls special rehearsals of the entire Chorale before concerts or special performances; you will be notified of these extra session in an email and on the website.

## **ABSENCES**

It is imperative that your child's conductor be notified in advance of any absences due to illness, inclement weather, etc. It should be noted that the only acceptable excuses for being absent from practice are: severe illness, dangerous weather, exam schedules, and conflicts with other "acceptable" music activities (e.g. band concerts, school musical productions). Birthday parties and other social events are not considered to be reason for excused absences; the same holds true for slight illnesses such as colds. The chorister can still attend practice and listen to the instruction even if they are not able to sing. Absences can be reported to Heidi Howarth at 204-728-4565 or [hhrhowarth@gmail.com](mailto:hhrhowarth@gmail.com)

## **MUSIC**

Each chorister needs a sturdy black one-inch three-ring binder, marked clearly on the inside with her or his name, in which to keep the music that is issued by the Chorale. As well, the chorister needs to bring 3 pencils with erasers to each practice. Each chorister will be given a copy of each of the pieces of music that will be learned; the front of the music will be marked with his or her number. Choristers are also required to purchase a **Brandon Conservatory Chorale music bag**, to assist in keeping their music in one place and in good condition. These can be purchased from the Uniform Committee. **The chorister's name on their bag is essential.**

The music sheets are expensive and choristers are expected to take good care of their sets. Please make every effort to keep your music in good condition. Do not deface it with heavy pencil marks or "doodling", and repair any tears with clear tape. Music is expensive! Although it may look inexpensive at \$3.00 US per copy, it adds up when multiple copies of each song are needed, and each choir needs 12 - 40 songs! Therefore, please handle your music carefully; it is difficult, time-consuming and expensive to try to replace one or two lost copies of music. ***Chorister families are required to pay for lost music. This can be over \$100.00 if the binder is lost.***

## **UNIFORMS**

Please ensure that the choristers have the complete uniform for performances and concerts. The complete uniform requirements for each choir is as follows:

**APPRENTICE**      Red flared skirt with waistband and side zipper  
 Long-sleeved (boy's) white dress shirt  
 Beige nylons  
 Black low-heeled shoes  
 Red bow scarf for Apprentice Choir (borrowed from BCC)

**CONCERT**        Black dress pants  
 Long –sleeved white dress shirt  
 Black tux vest (borrowed from BCC)  
 Red bow tie (purchased from uniform committee)  
 Black socks or knee-highs  
 Black low-heeled shoes

<b>CHAMBER</b>	Long black crepe skirt White tuxedo shirt Red cummerbund [borrowed from BCC] Red bow tie Black pantyhose Black low-heeled shoes
<b>Bel Canto Men</b>	Black long sleeved shirt Black dress pants Black shoes Red tie [borrowed from BCC]
<b>Bel Canto Women</b>	Long sleeved black blouse Black dress pants or long black skirt or black dress with long sleeves Colourful scarves [borrowed from BCC]

Choristers will be charged for missing parts.

For performances, Chorale members are expected to look clean and neat and natural. If earrings are worn, they should be very small studs (never large or "dangly" ones). ***Hair must be kept off the face, and may be fastened with an unobtrusive fastener or elastic*** (never large ribbons, bows, or barrettes). No coloured nail polish!

Choristers may participate in a **uniform sale** held in the fall each year. Outgrown outfits or clothing from choristers who are not returning to Chorale are offered for sale.

### ***CHAMBER CHOIR INFORMATION***

The Chamber Choir is composed of the most experienced choristers. Being a member of this group requires more commitment, because the repertoire they sing is more difficult, and because they perform more frequently.

The Chamber Choir year begins with a music camp. It is imperative that all members of the Chamber Choir attend this camp, as the progress made at these rehearsals is the equivalent of about two months of regular rehearsals!

### ***THE ROLE OF PARENTS/ADULTS***

Being a member of the Brandon Conservatory Chorale requires a high degree of commitment, dedication and discipline from both the chorister and the family. Chorale family members are encouraged to assist the choir by serving as a volunteer or on a committee.