

WELCOME FROM THE BCC Board

Welcome to the Brandon Conservatory Chorale! The Handbook will only be available on the website. Please read this handbook carefully; and refer to it throughout the year. Most questions can be answered from reading the Handbook from cover to cover!

We hope that you will find your experience with the Brandon Conservatory Chorale to be a 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.

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your acceptance into 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.

The sheer size of the Chorale makes it necessary for Dr. Grant to set out some rules of behaviour, and to request the assistance of the parents/adults in order to ensure the smooth operation of the choir. The purpose of this *Handbook* is to explain some of those rules and some of the organization that is required. **It should be read both by choristers and parents/adults.**

HISTORY

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:

Apprentice Choir	Grades K-3
Concert Choir	Grades 4/5 & up <i>(Grade 4's are placed in either the Apprentice or Concert Choirs at the discretion of the director.)</i>
Chamber Choir	The most experienced choristers regardless of school grade
Bel Canto	For adults (non-auditioned)

Criteria for Chamber Choir membership

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. highly motivated | 9. poise in performance |
| 2. good musicianship | 10. ability to blend |
| 3. good technical skills | 11. good social skills |
| 4. good voice | 12. self-reliance |
| 5. good ear | 13. sight reading ability |
| 6. good sensitivity to words | 14. prioritizing attendance |
| 7. ability to sing in tune | 15. needs of the ensemble |
| 8. disciplined in rehearsal | <i>[ie. More high sopranos]</i> |

All children choristers are selected for membership through auditions held in the spring/summer. Any student from Brandon and the Westman area is eligible. Previous experience and/or vocal lessons are not necessary.

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. Its hours are 8:30 to 12:00 and 1:00 to 4:30 Monday to Friday.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please see the Performances and Dates page on the website and mark on your family calendar items which affect your chorister(s). <https://www.brandonu.ca/bcc>

FEES

You will receive an invoice from Brandon University for tuition as well as a registration fee which is reduced if paid before Sept 1. We encourage you to register early. For more than one chorister in a family, it is possible to apply for a reduced registration fee. For more information, email Mary Jo Carrabre @ CarrabreM@ Brandonu.ca.

Please consult your registration form for payment details. These fees are used to cover the costs of salaries for the conductor, accompanists, rehearsal space and equipment.

REHEARSALS

When Chamber Choir practice falls on a recognized holiday, it is still held (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 Dr. Grant 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.

If your child will not be attending a rehearsal or performance, please contact Heidi Howarth at **204-728-4565** or **hhrhowarth@gmail.com**.

Choristers should exercise every possible precaution to stay healthy!!

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 to him or her 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.

CONCERTS/PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

A list of performances is found on the website. Additionally, other opportunities may arise for performances by the Chorale or one of the sub-choirs. These may include performances in church services, at seniors' homes, or at other festivals/conferences and workshops. These vary from year to year, and depend upon the availability of the group, and whether or not Dr. Grant can schedule them without conflicting with her other obligations. Again, you will be notified of these events in your email and on the website.

Here are some guidelines for performances: try to be well-rested, arrive in plenty of time, before "warm-ups", and avoid drinking milk or eating milk products such as cheese or yogurt for at least two hours before performances. Also, please maintain proper uniform dress at least until you are away from the performance location.



COMMUNICATION: EMAILS and WEBSITE

The Brandon Conservatory Chorale relies on a system of communicating with choristers, parents, and families, via an email from the President. The email will go to the parent/adult address. Please ensure that we have your correct email address in September. Information will also be posted on our website @ www.brandonu.ca/bcc . Please check this site if you accidentally delete your email news or want to check the latest BCC information from your home or workplace computer!

UNIFORMS

With respect for yourself, your director and your choir, please adhere to the exact requirements.

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

CHAMBER Long black crepe skirt
 White tuxedo shirt
 Red cummerbund [borrowed from BCC]
 Red bow tie
 Black pantyhose or knee-highs
 Black low-heeled shoes

Bel Canto Men Black long sleeved shirt
 Black dress pants
 Black shoes
 Red tie [borrowed from BCC]

Bel Canto Women Long sleeved black blouse
 Black dress pants or long black skirt
 Colourful scarves [borrowed from BCC]

Choristers will be charged for missing parts.

For school tours and other less formal performances, singers will be given a red "angel" t-shirt.

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 at the beginning of the choral year. Outgrown outfits or clothing from choristers who are not returning to Chorale are offered for sale

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising activities may be undertaken to assist with the costs of music, workshops, travel, and operating costs not covered by the Conservatory of Music. Activities vary from year to year, and may include: concerts, poinsettia sales, raffles and others. Any assistance with these projects is greatly appreciated. If you prefer for some reason not to be involved with these fundraising activities, we ask that you consider giving a cash donation to the Chorale in lieu of your work, so that contributions to the costs of operating the choirs will be equitably distributed among the families.

You will receive an income tax receipt for your donations to the Chorale if cheques are made payable to the Brandon University Foundation with a designation to the Conservatory Chorale

Information regarding any upcoming fundraising events will be found in the monthly newsletters. Please note any dates when orders or money must be turned in, or any pick-up dates for products.

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 parents/guardians can assist the choir by:

- Completing and submitting all forms on the date requested
- Attending parent orientation and other meetings
- Serving as a volunteer or on the Executive committee.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Each parent is requested to assist the Chorale in one chosen volunteer area.

There are many events throughout the year that require a "one-time" commitment to volunteer. Some of the jobs include:

- Staying backstage with the younger choirs during performances by the older choristers at concerts
- Selling concert tickets at the door
- Moving and setting up the risers for performances
- Driving choristers to venues for special performances

In addition, there are some Executive positions and many Parent Committees on which to serve:

1. The **Fundraising Chair** organizes all forms of group fundraising.
2. The **Concert Chair** consults with Dr. Grant and arranges for concert and performance needs such as arranging for the set-up of risers, organizing supervisors, purchasing gifts for guest performers, and getting food for receptions.
3. The **Music Library Chair** receives, numbers, and distributes all copies of music, and collects it after use, logging its return.
3. The **Uniform Chair** ensures that all choristers are provided with the necessary information to obtain a uniform, maintaining an inventory of borrowed items (bow ties, scarves, vests, etc.).

4. The **Archivist** collects and files pictures, videos, clippings, awards, etc.
6. The **Treasurer** is responsible for the paying of bills, the collecting and banking of receipts, and the investing of any large amounts of money. Monthly reports are submitted to the Executive Committee. (In the case of large trips, a second **Travel Fund Treasurer** is responsible for the accounts of choristers earning fundraised travel dollars.)
7. The **Secretary** takes minutes at the Annual General Meeting, and at the monthly Executive meeting. These minutes are distributed to all members of the Executive. In addition, the Secretary sends any correspondence from the Executive or Chorale.
8. The **Vice-President** attends all Executive meetings, and assumes the role of President in his/her absence.
9. The **President** oversees the functioning of the Executive, and is in frequent contact with Dr. Grant regarding any issues, questions, or plans for the Chorale.
10. The **Public Relations Coordinator** handles all the advertising for any Chorale events and also contacts the media when special awards or newsworthy events need to be brought to the public's attention. This person also spearheads recruitment.
11. The **Website Manager** posts updates to the website.
12. The **Bel Canto Chair** represents Bel Canto's interests at the Executive meetings.

In past years, there have also been positions for **Travel Coordinator**, **Travel Fund Treasurer**, **Grant Applications Coordinator** and **Corporate Sponsorship Coordinator**. These positions are vacant at the moment, and may be re-instituted if the need arises.

Dr. Grant is an ex-officio member of the Executive committee and should be informed of meetings and/or consulted regularly.

The Executive attends regular meetings. These are usually held on a Monday, started at 6:00 p.m. and ending at about 7:30 p.m.