

Rockbridge Chorus Welcome Brochure

Our Mission

To engage singers and audiences in the performance of choral music and to encourage singers of all ages and experience to participate.

Welcome to the Rockbridge Chorus, a community chorus performing a wide repertoire of music ranging from Appalachian folk music to Mozart's Requiem. The information in this brochure will serve to introduce you to the Chorus and its operations. The Rockbridge Chorus is underwritten by



Introduction

Formed in 1976, the Rockbridge Chorus is a community chorus of amateur singers performing in and around Lexington in the lower Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Its performances are frequently augmented by professional instrumentalists and soloists from across the region and the country. The Rockbridge Choral Society is the parent organization for the Chorus, the Rockbridge Youth Chorale and the Rockbridge Chamber Singers. These groups bring to audiences an eclectic choral repertoire from the Renaissance to the Contemporary.

Season and Repertoire

The season begins with a holiday concert in early December and ends with the chorus's main concert event, usually in April of the following year. The season's finale typically includes a major choral work. From time to time, the artistic director will utilize this spring concert date for pops or opera repertoire, depending on the season.

Rehearsals

Chorus rehearsals begin in September and are held at our main rehearsal and concert venue – the sanctuary of the Lexington Presbyterian Church located at 120 S Main St. in Lexington. Regular rehearsal time is 7:30 PM to 8:45 or 9:00 PM on Monday evenings. Depending on repertoire and the chorus's progress as a concert date approaches, the artistic director may require additional rehearsals. These will be announced as the season progresses. Singers are routinely notified of rehearsal changes by email.

Section Leaders

Each choral section – alto, bass, tenor, soprano – has a section leader. Sections leaders will take rehearsal attendance each week and collect contact information and singers' dues at the first rehearsal of the season. See this season's Supplement, attached, to contact your section leader.

Tuition

The Chorus asks its singers to pay tuition for the concert season. Financial assistance is available through our scholarship program. Singers in need of this assistance can contact their section leader or the Rockbridge Choral Society Treasurer. Tuition is not tax deductible. Singers are encouraged to make charitable donations when able, and these donations to the Rockbridge Choral Society are tax deductible.

Music

Music for each concert is distributed at the first rehearsal for that concert and may be supplemented throughout the rehearsal period. Most music is free from our music library. Occasionally singers may be asked to purchase music at a reasonable cost. If purchase is required, the artistic director will notify singers prior to rehearsals beginning via an email from the chorus email communicator. As with tuition, financial assistance is available for music purchase. Contact your section leader or the treasurer for assistance. At concert time, singers may be asked to provide a folder for music. Typically, folders should be three-ring binder type and matt black in color. Professional music folders are also acceptable as long as they are black in color.

Singer Contact Information

The Chorus maintains an email contact list for all singers. This list is the primary means by which our email communicator reaches singers with rehearsal updates and concert information in a timely fashion. Singers will have an opportunity to update or confirm their contact information with their section leaders at the first rehearsal for a concert. Singers are responsible thereafter for keeping section leaders informed of any changes in email address during the season.

Learning Your Part

Rehearsals will be more efficient if singers are able to spend time outside rehearsal learning their parts. Often the artistic director will provide recommendations for listening to various works via YouTube or other on-line sources.

Helping the Chorus Get the Concert Word Out

Singers can help advertise upcoming concerts by distributing posters which will be made available from time to time either in print or electronically. Our Poster Coordinator volunteer provides printed posters at rehearsals prior to the concert date and maintains a distribution list for the posters. Singers can sign up to place printed posters at various locations throughout the community. Singers are encouraged to maintain a list of email addresses for persons they think would be interested in receiving notification of upcoming concerts. Electronic posters can easily be forwarded to friends and relatives who might not see a printed poster.

Concert Attire and Other Requirements

We do not require singers to purchase specific attire, however the following guidelines should be followed when obtaining concert attire.

Gentlemen:

- Black tuxedo
- White shirt
- Black bow tie
- Black socks
- Black footwear

Ladies:

- All black – no exceptions
- Ankle or floor length skirt or slacks
- Black stockings or socks
- Black footwear
- Full length or $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeves. No sleeveless tops please!
- No sheer or see-through tops

All:

- No cologne, scented hair products or perfume. Some singers and players are sensitive or allergic.
- No reflective or sparkly attire or jewelry

Volunteer Opportunities

The Chorus depends on its volunteers who coordinate many of the chorus's functions. These include ticket sales/distribution/management, poster distribution, concert venue set-up, music library maintenance, program production, newsletter production, special events planning, housing and hospitality for our guest musicians, and more. All help is welcome and singers are encouraged to volunteer to help with any of the chorus's activities. For current volunteer coordinators and their contact information please see this season's Supplement.

Communication and Publications

Singers are kept informed of chorus activities, rehearsal info, etc. via our email communications system. Singers should update their section leaders with changes in address, email address or phone number. See the Supplement for contact info for your Section Leader.

The Rockbridge Choral Society produces a printed newsletter which goes out to all our singers and donors three times per year. These newsletters are a primary fund-raising instrument for the chorus. The RCS also produces a monthly e-newsletter to keep our singers and donors entertained and informed about what is happening with the choruses and with music-related topics. The RCS is on Facebook and Instagram and maintains its website – www.rcs.org

Organizational Information

The Rockbridge Choral Society (RCS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization responsible for both financing and governing the three choral entities it supports – the Rockbridge Chorus, the Rockbridge Chamber Singers, and the Rockbridge Youth Chorale. The RCS is managed by a Board of Directors, which is responsible for the following processes.

- Long-term development of the choruses
- Stewardship of endowments
- Budget planning and supervision
- Fundraising and marketing
- Contracting with artistic directors and other chorus related staff as needed
- Contracting with and compensating professional instrumentalists and soloists as selected by the artistic director

The Choruses

1. Rockbridge Chorus, Artistic Director -William McCorkle. Auditions are not required.
2. Rockbridge Chamber Singers, Artistic Director - William McCorkle. Singers are selected by the artistic director. Auditions may be required.
3. Rockbridge Youth Chorale, Artistic Director - Lacey Lynch. Multiple subgroups make up this chorus depending upon the age of singers. For information on these choruses and their requirements, contact the artistic director at ryclexington@gmail.com

Artistic Director

William McCorkle is a graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy and Amherst College, where he also served as the first Graduate teaching Fellow in music and as acting Director of Choral Music. He completed a two-year fellowship in Paris, France with legendary composer, conductor and teacher, Nadia Boulanger and baroque music expert, William Christie. This work profoundly shaped McCorkle's musical talents and future as both a composer and conductor, and developed his love of improvisation. His research has centered on 17th- and 18th-century French and Italian vocal and keyboard styles, and he is well known for his expertise in keyboard realization. McCorkle has led the Rockbridge Chorus for more than three decades as he coordinates the choruses' musical endeavors. He has led the group in critically acclaimed performances of oratorios and choral masterworks by Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Schubert, Purcell, Britten, Poulenc, Duruflé, Honegger, and Copland, while also devising programs venturing into opera, folk, popular music, and musical theater. He has been the organist and Director of Music for Lexington Presbyterian Church since 1979 and continues this church's long tradition of outstanding music ministry to the community. Mr. McCorkle is a Lecturer in Applied Organ and Piano at Washington and Lee University.

Funding

Since 1999, the musical work of the Rockbridge Chorus has been generously underwritten by the Rockbridge Choral Society, formerly the Friends of the Rockbridge Choral Society, a qualified non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation with the principle charge of funding and organization of all the performing groups under its supervision.

Ticket sales and singer tuition generates approximately 50% of the annual budget. The rest comes from donors whose charitable contributions at all levels fund the choruses' endeavors. Donations may be made through our website, www.rcs.org as well as by mail. From time to time and depending on the season's concert offerings, the RCS promotes directed giving to underwrite soloists and other professional musicians. This program, our Adopt-a-Musician opportunity, allows donors to direct their gifts to support specific musicians. Endowment of chairs within an accompanying chamber orchestra or for soloists, music acquisition, Youth Chorale Interns, and underwriting a concert are just some of the opportunities for planned or directed giving. For more information on how you can contribute, contact an RCS Board member or the Board's Treasurer.

The RCS may plan special performance events for fundraising purposes and may call on chorus singers for assistance. Announcements about these events will be made by the Artistic Director or through the email communications volunteer. Singers should keep up-to-date on all chorus-related functions by monitoring email messages from rcsemailcommunicator@gmail.com.