



BACH CHOIR OF PITTSBURGH

CHOIR MEMBER HANDBOOK 2018-2019

The Bach Choir of Pittsburgh was founded in 1934 to perform works of Johann Sebastian Bach. Under the leadership of Conductor and Artistic Director Thomas W. Douglas since 2003, the choir continues to evolve and has developed a reputation for exploring the boundaries of choral music performance.

Mission Statement

The Bach Choir of Pittsburgh presents unique and moving interpretations of choral works to engage and captivate arts-loving audiences across the Pittsburgh region.

Vision Statement

People will know we are the most interesting choral group in the region, setting the standard in innovation and music performance, because we:

- Produce compelling performances
- Inspire superior musicianship
- Attract large, loyal audiences
- Maintain a stable organization

Values

The Bach Choir of Pittsburgh is guided by these values, consistent in all that we do:

- Excellence in musical technique and performance
- Mix of traditional and unconventional works
- Collaboration with other artists and organizations
- Culture of respect for each individual's contribution
- Education in music, technique, and context
- Community and camaraderie
- Organizational and financial stability

WELCOME TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE BACH CHOIR OF PITTSBURGH

The following information will help you know and understand what is expected of you, as well as what the choir will bring to you, as a member of Bach Choir of Pittsburgh.

COMMITMENT

The success of this organization is dependent on your faithfulness and diligence. Upon acceptance to the Choir you are making a commitment to fully participate as a choir member through attendance at all rehearsals and concerts for the season. The Choir's subscription season runs from September through May. If you must miss a concert, prior arrangements are to be made in writing with the Artistic Director.

Attending rehearsals is the primary commitment you make to the Choir. You are expected to work on your music outside of rehearsal. Online study aids will be provided for you to use to practice.

*Please Note: In addition to the regular Tuesday night rehearsals there is a rehearsal scheduled for **Saturday, October 6th from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm** to prepare for the November 2018 concert. Rehearsal Location: Unity Presbyterian Church, 1146 Greentree Rd Pittsburgh, PA 15220*

AUDITIONS

All members are re-auditioned each year. All singers are expected to continually improve their musicianship, vocal skills, and knowledge. Contact Audition Coordinator Carter Wellons at auditions@bachchoirpittsburgh.org if you have any questions.

DUES POLICY

- Member dues for 2018-19 are \$185.00 for Individual Members or \$155.00 for Students & Seniors (65+ older). Core and alternate core singers are required to pay dues.
- If payment is made on or by September 4th, 2018, a \$10.00 discount is offered making the dues \$175.00 or \$145.00. Payment plans of three monthly installments are available.
- Payment may be made by personal check or credit card. Credit cards incur a 4% processing fee.
- Members joining after 12/31/18 pay prorated dues for the remainder of the season (\$100 Individual Member; \$85 Students/Seniors).
- Need assistance with dues? Refer to the **Choir Dues Payment-Refund Policy - Page 7** that outlines the payment plan options and/or opportunities for grants. Contact Bill Blackburn, Choir President at blackburn251@comcast.net or at (814) 233-4788 (cell). *All special payment arrangements will be kept strictly confidential.*

COMMUNICATIONS

- **Group email:** We rely heavily on email to distribute information to the membership. Please make sure you provide a valid email address. The office will send you a link to join the Google Group email distribution list.
- **Rehearsal Notes:** After each rehearsal the choir president will send a "Rehearsal Notes" email with information on what music was rehearsed in addition to any choir specific announcements made at that rehearsal.
- **Bach Choir private Facebook group:** In its second year, we have a private Facebook group for Bach Choir members called *Singers of the Bach Choir*. It is a place to communicate with each other on such things as carpooling, other concerts being offered in the area, etc. Shelly Parver is the group administrator. To join, visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bcpsingers/> and click "Join Group."
- **Bach Choir Google Drive Intranet:** Will contain valuable information including rehearsal aids, electronic copies of concert posters/flyers and a choir member photo array. The link to the Google Drive (and other useful info) can be found on the Choir Member Hub at bachchoirpittsburgh.org/singers.

- Activities of the Board will be reported regularly to the choir. Members are welcome to attend board meetings held on the second Monday of every other month from 7-9:00 pm at Rodef Shalom. If you are interested in attending a meeting, please contact the BCP office.

SCORE PREPARATION

The Artistic Director often emails information or “Love Notes” regarding the pieces/sections of music he plans to rehearse so that you can prepare. Familiarity with the music assigned is crucial. Bring a pencil to each rehearsal to mark your music. If you miss a rehearsal, it is your responsibility to attend the review session, check the “Rehearsal Notes” email and ask a core member in your section for specific markings. Online tools and/or rehearsal CDs are often available and can be used to assist in your preparation.

RENTED MUSIC

- Due to copyright and publishing laws, the choir will occasionally rent music for members.
- Rented or borrowed music may **only** be marked with pencil. No markings in pen or highlighter are permitted even if the score provided has them. Please notify the Music Librarian if your score is heavily marked, unreadable, or in poor condition.
- If a member does not return a rented score he/she is **financially responsible** for any charges incurred by the choir.

ABSENCE POLICY All rehearsals are required!

All decisions related to concert attendance are at the discretion of the artistic director. If you see that you have conflicts with rehearsals (such as work travel) that would prevent you from singing in a concert based on the criteria below, please send choir president [Bill Blackburn](#) an email describing your circumstance and the dates you will be missing. He will work with Thomas on communicating his decisions about concert participation.

ITS Policy for 2018-19 season

The purpose of the Independent Testing Session (ITS) is to ensure that choir members missing rehearsals are, indeed, well-prepared to perform in a concert set. To that end provide a weekly Review Session based on the previous week’s material rehearsed as well as an ITS if needed. Here is the policy:

- Choir members are excused from 2 rehearsals per concert set **ONLY** if they do the following:
 - The week after an absence the choir member will attend a Review session, led by Jon Erik, from 6:45-7:15 pm to review material from the previous week. **Choir members MUST attend the Review session the week following an absence.**
 - Choir members absent for more than 2 rehearsals, are required to have an ITS with Thomas, even if weekly Review Sessions have been attended.
 - Choir members absent from 1 (one) rehearsal that DO NOT attend a weekly Review Session are required to complete an ITS with Thomas.
- Members unable to attend both dress rehearsals will not be allowed to sing in the concert.
- Arriving late and/or leaving early equates to ½ an absence.
- The Saturday retreat is scheduled for October 6th and will count as ½ a rehearsal.
- The Artistic Director can excuse a member from performing if the member is not prepared.
- In the event of an unexpected absence, please call or email your Section Manager. Please do **NOT** contact the Artistic Director or the Office Staff.

ABSOLUTELY NO PERFUME, COLOGNE, OR SCENTED SPRAYS.

CONCERT TICKETS

The best way you can help support the Bach Choir is by increasing our audience. Be proud of what you are working on each week and invite your friends, family, co-workers, neighbors and others to the concerts or

ask them to purchase a season subscription. Concert tickets are available through Showclix: BachPgh.ShowClix.com. Group discounts are available and go through the BCP Office. The Artistic Director and/or BCP Office may provide incentives to choir members to sell tickets. Stay tuned for details!

FUNDRAISING AND MARKETING

We are a small non-profit organization that is supported by individual contributions, foundation grants and corporations. Our budget is lean with BCP staff continually finding ways to cut costs without sacrificing quality. The board is a working board and is committed to seeking increased funding opportunities within our personal and professional networks. If you are interested in volunteering with the Bach Choir at any level please contact [Bill Blackburn](#), choir president OR [Patricia Freedman](#), managing director.

Building our audience is the most important activity for choir members, outside of learning music to a high level. Consider your many networks – from church to school to workplace to social circles – and invite them to a concert. The best way to introduce people to the Bach Choir is through our concerts. Help out by:

- Posting about concerts/rehearsals on your own Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram accounts
- Refer people to our online/social media outlets:
 - Web: bachchoirpittsburgh.org
 - Facebook: facebook.com/BachChoirPgh
 - Twitter: [@bachchoirpgh](https://twitter.com/bachchoirpgh)

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

Bach Choir of Pittsburgh supports a professional core of 16 paid singers whose responsibilities include assisting with vocal leadership in their sections. These positions are open by audition, and membership is for a maximum of one season or at the discretion of the Artistic Director.

Professional Staff 2018-2019

Artistic Director/Conductor	Thomas W. Douglas		thom@andrew.cmu.edu
Associate Conductor	Jon Erik Schreiber		jonerikschreiber@gmail.com
Accompanist	Jim Burns		
Managing Director	Patricia Freedman	412-241-4044	patricia@bachchoirpittsburgh.org
Operations Manager	POSITION OPEN		

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

The **Operations Committee (OpsCom)** consists of choir members who volunteer their time to help with the day-to-day operations of the choir. They are your connection to the inner workings that keep the choir going. Any questions about rehearsals, concerts, venues, schedules, etc., can be directed to OpsCom members. If they do not know, they will direct you to the right person. If you are interested in helping support the choir by joining the OpsCom, please let one of us know.

Operations Committee 2018-2019

President	Bill Blackburn	814-233-4788	blackburn251@comcast.net
Vice President	Shelly Parver	301-807-0640	shelly.parver@gmail.com
Vice Pres. of Marketing	Liz (Elizabeth) Criss	412-889-0682	liz.criss@gmail.com
Vice Pres. of Production	Seamus Ricci		ricci.seamus@gmail.com
Vice Pres. Development	Shelly Parver	301-807-0640	shelly.parver@gmail.com
Financial Secretary	POSITION OPEN		
Recording Secretary	George Libby	412-719-5918	glibby@verizon.net
Membership Secretary	Carter Wellons	412-466-3859	cwellons@comcast.net

Audition Coordinator	Carter Wellons	412-466-3859	auditions@bachchoirpittsburgh.org
Music Librarian	Joan Cosgrove	412-521-2603	neil.cosgrove@verizon.net
New Member Liaison	TBD		
Choir member at large	Polly Swanson		cavavite@hotmail.com

Section Managers:

Soprano	Wendy Carson	724-713-1772	carson505@comcast.net
Alto	Peg Patterson	315-759-1089	pegmjpatterson@gmail.com
Tenor	Rob Schwartz	412-304-2486	rob.j.schwartz@gmail.com
Bass	Matt Dooley	412-980-5940	matt@bachchoirpittsburgh.org

BACH CHOIR BOARD OF DIRECTORS: 2018-19

Officers

[James P. Cassaro](#)
[J. Katherine Drabecki](#)
[Paul Block](#)
[Paul Tellers](#)

Chair, Head of Finney Music Library, University of Pittsburgh
Vice-Chair, Director, Cohen & Grigsby
Treasurer, Sr. Tax Manager, Donnelly-Boland and Assoc.
Secretary, Architectural planner, American Institute of Architects

Members

[Elizabeth \(Betsy\) Amato](#)
[Elizabeth Arkush](#)
[Julie Banks](#)

Finance Manager, PNC Bank
Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh
Development Associate, School of Computer Science, Carnegie Mellon University
Community Volunteer

[Christine Brockmeyer](#)

Ex-Officio Members

[Bill Blackburn](#)
[Shelly Parver](#)

Choir President, President, Blackburn Marine Distributing
Choir Vice-President, Senior Manager, Grantmaking & Allocations at Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh
Managing Director
Artistic Director

[Patricia Freedman](#)
[Thomas W. Douglas](#)

Bach Choir of Pittsburgh
2018-2019 SEASON-AT-A-GLANCE

All rehearsals are held from **7:30 PM – 10:00 PM** in **Levy Hall at Congregation Rodef Shalom** (4905 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213) across from WQED in Shadyside. Enter the building from the parking lot side.

Important information about our rehearsal space

- The ONLY “consumable” you can bring into Levy Hall is water. A resealable bottle is best.
- Please park only in the spaces along the back wall of the parking lot furthest away from the entrance. Spaces in the lot need to be saved for patrons attending other events. If parking along the wall is full, park on Morewood or Devonshire.

Program: Our 2018-2019 concert season is as follows:

- November 10 & 11: **Bernstein** - Katz Performing Arts Center, Squirrel Hill JCC
- February 9 & 10: **Bach** - St. Agnes Center at Carlow University
- February 24: **Beethoven 9th** - Carnegie Music Hall -
 - **approx 20-24 BCP singers, not entire choir**
- May 4 & 5: **The Beatles** - Mr. Smalls in Millvale

*Call time for concerts is typically 1.5 hours prior to concert start.
Final call times are set during concert week.*

CONCERT DRESS
Black folders are required for concerts

MEN

- Black tuxedo with black bowtie
- White formal or dress shirt
- Option of wearing a black collarless shirt
- Black socks (*no white socks, please!*)
- Black shoes

WOMEN

- Solid black one-piece dress or two-piece top/skirt combination
- Floor length
- Modest neckline
- ¾ sleeves or longer
- No pants, flowy or otherwise
- No sequins, shiny trim or distracting ornamentals
- Black stockings (*no nude stockings, please*)
- Black shoes
- Jewelry should complement and not distract from your black outfit.

Here are some ideas to help you with your search:

- <https://www.formalfashionsinc.com/>
- <https://www.rivars.com/>
- <https://www.stageaccents.com>
- <https://tuxedowholesaler.com>

Season Schedule 2018-2019

SEPTEMBER 2018

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - September 4, 11, 25
 - Rodef Shalom
 - ***September 18 rehearsal space will be elsewhere - location TBD**
- New Member Orientation
 - Tuesday, September 11, 6:30 - 7:15pm
 - Rodef Shalom

OCTOBER 2018

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
 - Rodef Shalom
- Saturday Rehearsal
 - Saturday, October 6, 9:00am–noon
 - Unity Presbyterian Church, 1146 Greentree Road, Pittsburgh 15220
- Annual General Meeting
 - Tuesday, October 30, prior to rehearsal
 - Rodef Shalom

NOVEMBER 2018

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - November 6, 13, 20, 27
 - Rodef Shalom
- **Wine Tasting - Fundraising Event**
 - **Thursday, November 1, 6:30pm**
 - **Dreadnought Wines, 3401 Liberty Ave., Pittsburgh, PA**
- Dress Rehearsals: BERNSTEIN
 - Thursday & Friday, November 8 & 9, 7-10pm
 - Katz Perf. Arts Center, JCC in Squirrel Hill
- Performances: BERNSTEIN
 - Saturday, November 10, 7:30pm
 - Sunday, November 11, 4pm
 - Katz Perf. Arts Center, JCC in Squirrel Hill

DECEMBER 2018

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - December 4, 11, 18
 - Rodef Shalom

JANUARY 2019

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - January 8, 15, 22, 29
 - Rodef Shalom

FEBRUARY 2019

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - February 5, 12, 19, 26
 - Rodef Shalom
- Dress Rehearsals: BACH
 - Thursday & Friday, February 7 & 8, 7-10pm
 - St. Agnes Center at Carlow University
- Performances: BACH
 - Saturday, February 9, 7:30pm
 - Sunday, February 10, 4pm
 - St. Agnes Center at Carlow University
- Performance: BEETHOVEN
 - Sunday, February 24 - details TBD - reminder that not all BCP singers will be involved in this performance but are encouraged to attend

MARCH 2019

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - March 5, 12, 19, 26
- **BCP Auction - Fundraising Event**
 - **Details TBD**

APRIL 2019

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
 - Rodef Shalom

MAY 2019

- Dress Rehearsals: THE BEATLES
 - Thursday, May 2, 7-10pm
 - Friday, May 3, 7-10pm
 - Mr. Smalls, Millvale
- Performances: THE BEATLES
 - Saturday, May 4, 7:30pm
 - Sunday, May 5, 4pm
 - Mr. Smalls, Millvale
- Annual Choir Picnic
 - Tuesday evening, May 14
 - Veterans Pavilion, Schenley Park

Choir Dues Payment-Refund Policy

Choir member dues comprise a significant percentage of the total choir income and are necessary for funding every aspect of the choir's operating expenses. As such, all choir members are expected to do their part in supporting the financial needs of the choir. Ideally, each choir member should pay their dues during the first month of the season in one or two payments outlined below.

The Operating Committee understands that an individual may experience a temporary financial hardship and require financial assistance. Two options are available to such individuals as outlined below. Preferably, the member and treasurer can establish a payment plan that suits the needs of both the member and the choir. Alternatively, the member can apply for a partial or full grant. Grants are underwritten solely by donations from other choir members and, therefore, are limited in number and amount.

2018-2019 season dues are \$185 (non-student) and \$155 (student & senior). Dues are required of core members. A \$10 reduction is provided for dues remitted by the first rehearsal. Furthermore, should non-core members desire to remit the annual dues in two payments, at least half of the dues (i.e., \$92.50 and \$77.50) may be remitted prior to the second rehearsal and the remaining dues may be remitted on or by the fourth rehearsal. Dues may be partially offset through the acquisition of advertisements.

Payment plans - Payment plans must be arranged in writing between the choir member and the treasurer. For the current season of three concerts, the required remission plan will be three \$60 (\$50 for students) payments over the first three months of the season, i.e., by the end of November. Until the first payment of \$60 (\$50 for students) is received, music for the first concert must be returned at the end of each rehearsal (up to a maximum of three rehearsals). Following the third rehearsal, no music will be provided for and the choir member will not be permitted to perform that concert. Should the remaining dues not be paid within the three-month period, no additional music will be provided to the choir member.

Grants

- To be considered for a grant, the prospective recipient must complete and provide a written application to the treasurer for consideration. Grants should be requested no later than the second rehearsal.
- Should the grant be provided, recipients will sign a form acknowledging the grant and stating that, in lieu of paying dues, recipients will be required to volunteer their time when asked or needed to work off the underwriting privilege. Arrangements for volunteering may be made through the treasurer or any other member of the Operating Committee. Examples of volunteering are helping in the choir office and setting up and breaking down before and after each concert.
- A choir member that is underwritten will be required to pay a minimum of \$25 per concert to help cover the cost of music. At the discretion of the treasurer, this may be waived for up to the first two rehearsals; however, the member must return the music after each rehearsal. Following the second rehearsal, no music will be provided for and the choir member will not be permitted to perform that concert.
- In an extreme case, a choir member may be underwritten for a maximum of two seasons. However, because of the limited number of grants each season, first-time requests will be given priority over repeat requests.

Failure to meet the outlined stipulations will result in an individual being unable to continue participation with the choir until such time as the necessary payment has been made.