



BACH CHOIR OF PITTSBURGH

CHOIR MEMBER HANDBOOK 2021-2022

ABOUT THE BACH CHOIR

The Bach Choir of Pittsburgh (BCP) was founded in 1934 to perform works of Johann Sebastian Bach. Since 2003 the choir has been under the leadership of Conductor and Artistic Director Thomas W. Douglas. During this time, the choir has expanded its repertoire and continues to evolve, developing a reputation for exploring the boundaries of choral music performance.

The Bach Choir of Pittsburgh (BC) is a membership organization. The following information will help you know and understand what the choir is all about, what you can expect as a member, and what will be expected of you. If you have any questions or concerns of any sort, please feel free to contact:

- Polly McQueen, the Choir President (pollysmcqueen@gmail.com)
- Graham Fandrei, the Executive Director (gfandrei@bachchoirpittsburgh.org)
- Penny Morel, the Chairman of the Board (morelpa@gmail.com)

Mission

The Bach Choir of Pittsburgh is dedicated to inspiring the highest levels of artistic excellence among its members and to building enthusiasm for choral performance in audiences across the Southwestern Pennsylvania region. We do this through:

- The bold leadership of our Artistic Director and team
- Our annual season of concerts presented in a variety of interesting and historic settings
- Communication with our loyal audiences and outreach to new audiences.

Vision

Over the next 10 years, the Bach Choir of Pittsburgh hopes to be widely-acknowledged, both locally and nationally, as a leading musical and cultural innovator. We will achieve this through:

- Production of unique and compelling performances
- Programming of broad musical contexts including traditional and contemporary choral works
- Collaborations with artistic and community partners.

Values

Guided by our Mission and Vision, we value:

- Excellence in musical technique and performance
- Innovation in programming and production
- Diversity of musical and cultural expressions
- The outstanding commitment and dedication of our members
- Collaboration with other artists and organizations
- An ethos of respect for each individual's contribution
- Continuous learning in music, technique, and genres
- Community and camaraderie
- Organizational and financial stability.

The choir functions with people in both paid and unpaid positions. Here is a listing of current personnel:

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

The Bach Choir 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 season-to-season or at the discretion of the Artistic Director. These singers will be introduced to you by the Artistic Director at a rehearsal early in the season.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Artistic Director/Conductor	Thomas W. Douglas	thom@andrew.cmu.edu
Associate Conductor	Jon Erik Schreiber	jonerikschreiber@gmail.com
Accompanist	Jim Burns	
Executive Director	Graham Fandrei	gfandrei@bachchoirpittsburgh.org
Operations Manager	TBD	

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

The Bach Choir has a volunteer Board of Directors that oversees the activities of the organization, takes fiduciary responsibility, and ensures fulfillment of its mission and vision. Committees of the Board focus on different aspects of organizational operations. 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., should be directed first to your section manager. If this person does not have an answer for you, he/she will direct you to the right person. If you are interested in joining the OpsCom, please let one of us know.

Operations Committee 2021-2022

OpsCom meets at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of the month

President	Polly McQueen	(412) 818-1991	pollysmcqueen@gmail.com
Vice President	George Libby	(412) 719-5918	glibby@verizon.net
Secretary	Claudia Broman	(724) 234-7996	giselabroman@gmail.com
Soprano Section Manager	Polly Swanson	(412) 953-9707	polly.swanson@gmail.com
Alto Section Manager	Ellen Stolpe	(412) 362-7342	erstolpe@verizon.net
Tenor Section Manager	Rob Schwartz	(412) 304-2486	rob.j.schwartz@gmail.com
Bass Section Manager	Matt Dooley	(412) 980-5940	matt@mattdooley.com
Auditions and Membership	Carter Wellons	(412) 466-3859	auditions@bachchoirpittsburgh.org
Music Librarian	Joan Cosgrove	(412) 521-2603	joanscosgrove3@gmail.com
New Member Liaison	Dan Reese	(412) 377-5797	mistro.dan@gmail.com
Choir Member at Large	THIS COULD BE YOU!		
Marketing Person	THIS COULD BE YOU!		

Bach Choir Board of Directors 2021-2022

Officers

Penny Morel	<i>President, Professor of Immunology, University of Pittsburgh, BC singer</i>
Robert Johnson	<i>Vice President, Attorney</i>
Christine Milcarek	<i>Secretary, Professor Emeritus of Immunology, University of Pittsburgh, BC singer</i>
Paul Block	<i>Treasurer, CPA, JD, Tax and Non-Profit Consultant</i>

Members

Randy Bryant	Professor Emeritus of Computer Science, CMU, BC singer
Anna Singer	FM Announcer & Music Programmer, WQED-FM; opera singer; artist

Ex-Officio Members

Polly McQueen	Choir President, Piano teacher & arts administrator (retired), BC singer
George Libby	Choir Vice President, Volunteer & engineer (retired), BC singer
Graham Fandrei	Executive Director
Thomas W. Douglas	Artistic Director

WELCOME TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE BACH CHOIR OF PITTSBURGH

REHEARSALS

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 participation in all rehearsals and performances for the season. The Choir's season runs from September through April.

*Please Note: In addition to the regular Tuesday night rehearsals there is a rehearsal scheduled for **Saturday, October 16th from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm** to prepare for the November 2021 concert. IF the Artistic Director feels that the choir has made sufficient progress at regular Tuesday rehearsals, this rehearsal may be cancelled. Rehearsal Location: Unity Presbyterian Church, 1146 Greentree Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15220.*

COVID PROTOCOL: All singers must be fully vaccinated prior to the first rehearsal and will have submitted proof of vaccination via a photo of their vaccination certificate emailed to the Choir President, Polly McQueen (pollysmcqueen@gmail.com). In addition, all singers will wear singers' masks at rehearsals and will sit apart from each other. Masks are available here: <https://www.mymusicfolders.com/product/resonance-singers-mask-with-disposable-biofilters/> or on Amazon from various sellers.

Attending rehearsals is the primary commitment you make to the Choir. You should expect to work on your music outside of rehearsal. On-line study aids will be provided to use to practice. *If you must miss a rehearsal, please notify your section manager in advance.* Contact information for all four section leaders is in the section above about the Operations Committee ("OpsCom").

ABSENCE POLICY: All rehearsals are required! However, this being said, please do NOT ATTEND rehearsal if you are experiencing any of the symptoms on the list for Covid.

All decisions related to concert attendance are at the discretion of the Artistic Director. If 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 Polly McQueen (pollysmcqueen@gmail.com) an email describing your circumstances and the dates you will be missing. She will work with Thomas on communicating his decisions about concert participation.

Independent Testing Session (ITS) Policy for 2021-22 Season

The purpose of the Independent Testing Session (ITS) is to ensure that choir members missing rehearsals are well-prepared to perform in the concerts. The ITS is generally held immediately before the Tuesday rehearsal in concert week.

- 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, on Tuesdays 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 but who **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 permitted to sing in the concert.
- Arriving late and/or leaving early equates to ½ an absence.
- The Saturday rehearsal scheduled for October 16th will count as half 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 Managing Director.

ABSOLUTELY NO PERFUME, COLOGNE, OR OTHER SCENTS AT REHEARSALS OR PERFORMANCES.

Some singers have scent sensitivity, so please be sensitive to them and follow this rule.

REHEARSAL LOCATIONS (See “Season Schedule” on p. 5 for dates, etc.)

All September rehearsals will be held in the Sanctuary at Eastminster Church at 250 N. Highland Avenue 15206. Enter the church through the glass doors on Station Street. Street parking is free after 6:00 pm and on Sundays. Metered public parking (enforced Monday through Saturday until 10:00 pm) is available in the lot at Sheridan and Kirkwood (enter from Sheridan). Parking in the Home Depot lot is at your own risk.

Rehearsals for the rest of the season will be held in Levy Hall at Rodef Shalom at 4905 Fifth Avenue 15213. Park **ALONG THE FAR WALL** of the Temple’s parking lot (enter from Morewood or Devonshire). There will be some Tuesdays when the Congregation holds large meetings, so you will need to park on the street. Please bring **ONLY WATER** into Levy Hall.

AUDITIONS

Normally all members re-audition each year, but for the 2021-2022 season, only new members are required to audition. Current core members (i.e. those selected for the 2019-2020 season) are not required to re-audition, *but they may do so if they wish*. (Auditions WILL be held for new core positions for 2021-2022, so membership in the core may change.) Contact Carter Wellons at auditions@bachchoirpittsburgh.org if you have any questions.

DUES AND REGISTRATION

All members must register online at www.bachchoirpittsburgh.org. Dues may be paid by check or credit card. A 4% service charge is automatically applied to all payments made online. **You can mail your check to the Bach Choir at PO Box 5253, Pittsburgh, PA 15206.**

Dues for the 2021-2022 season are:

- Regular member dues = \$195 (\$185 if paid by September 28, 2021)
- Senior (65+) & Student dues = \$165 (\$155 if paid by September 28, 2021)
- Need assistance with dues? Refer to the **Choir Dues Payment-Grant Policy** below. *All special payment arrangements will be kept strictly confidential.*

We have often been asked what we spend choir dues on. The annual expense for artists (artistic leadership and supporting artists), music, rehearsal and concert venues and concert production is about \$800 per choir member. If we were to break it down by member, it would look something like this:

Artists	\$500
Music	\$55
Rehearsal and concert venues	\$180
Concert Production	\$65

Dues cover just under 20% of the choir’s budget, and the rest comes from a combination of ticket sales, fundraising events, individual donations, sponsorships and grants. It’s a real team effort!

COMMUNICATIONS

- **Choir Member Hub:** The website has a member’s area with helpful links, updated information and a calendar. We rely heavily on email to distribute information to the membership. Please make sure to maintain a valid email address in your membership profile. You can access login and registration links at <https://www.bachchoirpittsburgh.org/singers/>. Once registered, the choir administration will manually grant you access to this area.
- **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.
- **Bach Choir private Facebook group:** There is 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:** Here you will find valuable information including rehearsal aids, electronic copies of concert posters/flyers and a choir member photo directory. The link to the Google Drive (and other useful info) can be found on the Choir Member Hub at bachchoirpittsburgh.org/singers.

SCORE PREPARATION

So that you can prepare for rehearsal, the Artistic Director often emails information regarding the pieces/sections of music he plans to work on. 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 (see below), check the "Rehearsal Notes" email and ask a core member in your section for specific markings. On-line tools and/or rehearsal CDs are often available and can be used to assist in your preparation.

FUNDRAISING AND MARKETING

We are a small non-profit organization supported by individual contributions, foundation grants and corporations. Our budget is lean with BCP staff continually looking for ways to cut costs without sacrificing quality. The Board is a working board and is committed to seeking increased funding opportunities within the personal and professional networks of both Board members and Bach Choir singers. If you are interested in volunteering with the Bach Choir in any way, please contact the Choir President, Polly McQueen (pollysmcqueen@gmail.com) OR Executive Director, Graham Fandrei (gfandrei@bachchoirpittsburgh.org).

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 attend our concerts. The best way to introduce people to the Bach Choir is through the music we perform. You can be a huge help by:

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

Choir Dues Payment-Grant Policy

Choir member dues comprise a significant percentage of the total choir income and are necessary for funding various aspects of the choir's operating expenses. Ideally, each choir member should pay their dues during the first month of the season.

The Operations Committee understands that an individual may experience temporary financial hardship and may require financial assistance. Here are two options for situations like this:

Payment Plans

If a singer finds him/herself unable to pay their dues in September, a payment plan can be arranged via email between the choir member and the Choir President, Polly McQueen (pollysmcqueen@gmail.com). For the current season of three concerts, the required remission plan will be three payments over the first three months of the season, i.e., by the end of November.

Grants (funded by contributions from other choir members)

If a singer finds him/herself completely unable to afford their annual dues, the singer should email Polly McQueen, Choir President (pollysmcqueen@gmail.com), outlining in specific terms the reason for the request. Grants should be requested no later than the second rehearsal and will cover one year's dues in their entirety.

CONCERT INFORMATION

Call time for concerts is typically 1.5 hours prior to concert start. Final call times are set during concert week. Saturday evening concerts begin at 8:00 pm and Sunday afternoon concerts at 4:00 pm. No water on stage, please. **BLACK FOLDERS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL PERFORMANCES.**

Concert Dress

MEN: black tuxedo with black bowtie; white formal or dress shirt, black socks and shoes. Sometimes in less formal concert situations, Thomas will ask the men to wear a black T-shirt with their tuxedo.

WOMEN: Solid black one-piece dress or top/skirt combination, floor-length, modest neckline, ¾ sleeves or longer. **NO PANTS** or sequins, shiny trim, etc. Black stockings and black shoes. Jewelry should complement concert dress.

Season Schedule 2021-2022

SEPTEMBER 2021

- Tuesday Rehearsals, 7:30-10:00
 - September 7, 14, 21, 28
 - Eastminster Church, 250 N. Highland Ave.
- New Member Orientation w/OpsCom & TWD
 - Tuesday, September 14, 6:30-7:15pm
 - Eastminster Church

OCTOBER 2021

- Tuesday Rehearsals, 7:30-10:00
 - October 5, 12, 19, 26
 - Rodef Shalom
- Saturday Morning Rehearsal, 9:00-12:00
 - October 16
 - Unity Presbyterian Church, 1146 Greentree Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15220

NOVEMBER 2021

- Tuesday Rehearsals, 7:30-10:00
 - November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
 - Rodef Shalom
- Dress Rehearsals: SPIRITUALS
 - Thursday & Friday, November 11 & 12, 7-10
 - Eastminster Church
- Performances: SPIRITUALS
 - Saturday, November 13, 8:00
 - Sunday, November 14, 4:00
 - Eastminster Church

DECEMBER 2021

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - December 7, 14, 21 (*tentative*)
 - Rodef Shalom

JANUARY 2022

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - January 4, 11, 18, 25
 - Rodef Shalom

FEBRUARY 2022

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - February 1, 8, 15, 22
 - Rodef Shalom
- Dress Rehearsals: OPERA CHORUSES
 - Thursday & Friday, Dates TBD, 7-10pm
 - Location TBD
- Performances: OPERA CHORUSES
 - Saturday, Date TBD, 8:00
 - Sunday, Date TBD, 4:00
 - Location TBD

MARCH 2022

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
 - Rodef Shalom

APRIL 2022

- Tuesday Rehearsals
 - April 5, 12, 19, 26
 - Rodef Shalom
- Dress Rehearsals: FRANKENSTEIN REIMAGINED
 - Thursday & Friday, Dates TBD, 7-10pm
 - The Oaks Theatre
- Performances: FRANKENSTEIN REIMAGINED
 - Saturday, Date TBD, 8:00
 - Sunday, Date TBD, 4:00
 - The Oaks Theatre

MAY 2022

- Annual Choir Picnic and Annual Meeting
 - Tuesday evening, May 10, 6:00-9:00
 - Location TBD
- Reauditions, Dates TBD

