

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Bennington Children's Chorus! Attached you will find a copy of our chorus handbook. This handbook should answer most of your questions. Please direct any others to me or other staff members of the BCC.

Please familiarize yourself with our policies regarding attendance and rehearsals found in the handbook. Chorus is a big commitment. It requires teamwork, patience, dedication, tolerance and a desire to learn. The results are well worth the effort. Every year, I am truly astonished at what children are capable of when they work hard toward a common goal. Please support your child's commitment by helping them to be prepared and on time. Ask to hear the songs or listen to the practice CD in the car – we often find families singing along during the concerts!

If you have not already done so, please complete the registration forms and submit along with the appropriate tuition payment. Once forms and tuition payments are up to date, we can then give your child his/her music folder.

I'm looking forward to a great year making music with your children!

Sincerely,

Kerry Ryer-Parke  
BCC Director

# **BENNINGTON CHILDREN'S CHORUS HANDBOOK**

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Bennington Children's Chorus is dedicated to giving children the opportunity to study and perform the finest choral literature written for the treble voice. While classical music is the basis of our program, children will be exposed to many styles of choral music, in many languages and genres.

We provide quality music instruction to develop each singer's vocal ability. We hope to create an environment where children can experience the joy of singing, develop confidence, and become a vital part of a musical team. Sharing our work in performance is an important part of the chorus experience.

The Bennington Children's Chorus is comprised of two ensembles:

## **THE JUNIOR ENSEMBLE**

Open to the less-experienced singer, ages 7-12 years (occasionally, very focused younger children may participate at the discretion of the Director). Children with no choral experience or private music instruction are placed in this group and acquire skills in singing and reading music before moving up to the Senior Ensemble. This group meets on Thursdays from 3:45-4:45 pm.

## **THE SENIOR ENSEMBLE**

Open to the more experienced singers, ages 10-17 years. Repertoire is expanded, including two and three part literature. Pitch-matching and some music-reading ability are expected. Our weekly rehearsal is held on Thursdays from 4:45-5:45 pm. Singers in this group also have the opportunity for solo and small group singing. Several workshops and extra rehearsals may be scheduled throughout the year.

Both ensembles sometimes collaborate with other musical organizations such as the Sage City Symphony, Green Mountain Youth Orchestra, Bennington County Choral Society, Williams College Choir, and the Battenkill Chorale.

## **TUITION**

**Junior Ensemble**      **Fall 2011 - \$115**  
   **Spring 2012 - \$180**

**Senior Ensemble**      **Winter 2011 - \$145**  
   **Spring 2012 - \$225**

\*\*\*We also offer a discount for multiple children from the same family. Monthly payment plans are available if requested. Please contact Deborah Teller as indicated below for more information.

Financial Aid/Scholarships: No child will be denied an opportunity to sing because of inability to pay. We may ask for non-monetary contribution of time or talents. A \$20 refundable music deposit is required. Please contact Deborah Teller for more information regarding scholarships.

You may either mail your tuition or hand it to Deborah at rehearsal. Please mark on your check your child's name and the month for which you are paying. If you have questions about tuition, please contact Deborah Teller at 484.432.5095 or DETNSC@aol.com.

Checks may be mailed to:  
Bennington Children's Chorus  
PO Box 335  
Bennington, VT 05201

## **ATTENDANCE**

Chorus members must be in attendance at all rehearsals and performances. Much material is covered in each rehearsal, and all aspects of our musical efforts are compromised when singers are missing. We will do our best to provide parents with an accurate schedule of events for planning purposes.

If your child must miss a rehearsal, please notify Kerry (802-442-3356) and Deborah as soon as possible before or on the rehearsal day. If your child has missed several rehearsals, they may be asked to demonstrate their knowledge of the piece before being able to perform. In the case of sore throats (of non-communicable origin), choristers should attend the rehearsal, but not sing. If your child decides to discontinue as a member of the chorus, please notify both Kerry and Deborah as soon as possible to avoid confusion.

## **REHEARSALS**

Weekly rehearsals take place at the Unitarian Universalist Church 108 School Street, Bennington, VT.

We ask singers to do the following:

- ❖ Please be ON TIME for rehearsals. “On time” means arriving five minutes early to find a seat, organize music, use the bathroom if necessary, etc. Children are welcome anytime after 3:30 pm as long as Chorus staff is present.
- ❖ Please be PREPARED for rehearsals. Chorus members are responsible for their folders and all music. Due to copyright laws, we often do not have extra copies of music during rehearsals. Listen to any practice CDs as often as possible prior to rehearsals.
- ❖ Please be RESPECTFUL of others. Singing well takes great courage and singing well as a group requires tolerance and respect of others’ differences.

Parents are always welcome, however, singers are easily distracted and for this reason we ask that **parents and siblings please refrain from talking during rehearsals.**

## **PERFORMANCES**

Your child is expected to participate in all scheduled performances. Please be on time for warm-ups and sound checks. Remember to notify Kerry and Deborah in case of illness as much in advance of the performance as possible.

Since we are dedicated to singing the finest of choral music, our repertoire includes both secular and sacred music of all styles and denominations. Our performance spaces are often within churches for acoustical reasons and occasionally we are asked to perform during church services of various denominations. If any child or parent is uncomfortable with a particular arrangement and/or performance locale/service, please talk to Kerry of your concerns as soon as possible.

## **WORKSHOPS**

Occasional workshops and special rehearsals may be scheduled throughout the year. Notice is given well in advance and attendance is mandatory.

## **CONCERT DRESS**

Choristers should arrive for performances and photo sessions (not “dress rehearsals” unless specified) in concert dress as follows:

GIRLS: White long-sleeved blouse, black skirt, white tights, black or very dark shoes.

BOYS: White long-sleeved dress shirt, black trousers, solid dark-colored tie, black or very dark shoes.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Tuition unfortunately does not cover all of our operating expenses. Our annual "Friends Letter" is our most successful and easiest way to raise money. A successful letter campaign enables us to keep the cost of tuition down and to avoid further fundraising efforts over the course of the year. We ask each family to provide several names of potential donors to the chorus on the "Friends List" form from the registration packet and gifts are tax deductible. Please let us know if you have any fundraising expertise or ideas you'd like to share to help the BCC thrive. The participation of chorus families is crucial to enable us to continue to bring high quality vocal instruction to our children and beautiful musical experiences to the community.

## **STAFF**

### **Kerry Ryer-Parke, Director**

Kerry has been singing professionally since the age of six and is a well-known soprano soloist and private voice teacher in the tri-state area. She has been working with the Bennington Children's Chorus since 1993 and has directed since 1995. Additionally, she is an artist associate of voice at Williams College and has been on the faculties of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Sonatina School of Music, The Bancroft School, and the New School of Music in Cambridge, MA. Kerry also teaches voice privately and is the lead singer in a rock band.

### **Gwendolyn Winseman, Accompanist**

Gwen has studied, freelanced and taught piano in New York City and has been a vocal and chamber music recitalist at the Aspen and Waterloo Festivals. She has been the BCC accompanist since 1999 and also teaches piano privately.

### **Deborah Teller, Production Manager & Music Librarian**

Deborah's professional life is rooted in theatre. She is an Equity stage manager and has been the executive director of the National Shakespeare Company in New York City and the production/company manager of The People's Light & Theatre Company outside of Philadelphia. She has been working with the BCC since 2007.

### **Lauren Gotlieb, Chorus Manager**

Lauren has played piano since she was a young child. She now has three young children of her own and her house is full of music - cello, drums, violin, saxophone, oboe, piano, recorder and voice!

## **Board of Directors**

Our chorus is run by a dedicated group of parents and staff. Please let us know if you are interested to serve on the board and as always, feel free to contact any board or staff member with suggestions or concerns. Board meetings are open to parents and we welcome your participation.

### **2011-2012**

Ed Gollin, President

Nancy Nardone, Vice President

Tierney Beck, Treasurer

Tammy White, Secretary

Betsy Burris, Cecilia Hirsch, , Kerry Ryer-Parke, Janneke van de Stadt, and Susan Trimarchi