



Singing City

Choir Handbook 2019-20

MISSION & VISION

Through Performance, Arts Education, and Fellowship, Singing City is a force for social impact, bringing people together and lifting the human spirit through the artistry of choral music.

People throughout the Philadelphia region find fulfillment and inspiration through music, fellowship, and service to their community.

Welcome to Singing City, a choir committed to excellence in music and to bringing people together through the choral art. Singing City has a diverse membership representing many occupations, races, religions, ethnic groups, educational backgrounds, and ages. Such diversity gives us a unique opportunity to learn from and share with each other, and to recognize these differences as enrichment for, rather than barriers to, communication.

Singing City prides itself on its high standard of musical excellence, professional attitude, and spirit of community among its singers. Being a member of Singing City means, in part, making a commitment to furthering these goals. The following handbook is intended to help all of us understand the nature of this commitment. Please read it carefully and keep it in your music folder for reference. Any questions you might have can be directed to Singing City staff or choir council members. We hope that your association with Singing City will be a long one and that you will find singing with this unique choir to be a richly rewarding experience.

SINGING CITY HISTORY

Singing City was founded as an integrated choir in 1948 in Philadelphia by Dr. Elaine Brown. The Choir was born out of the Fellowship House movement, and has been deeply engaged not only in creating a community of mind and purpose in Philadelphia, but also in other civil rights and social justice movements since the 1950s. For over half a century, Singing City has been Philadelphia's premier avocational chorus, committed to bringing people of diverse races, creeds and backgrounds together under the common purpose of music making.

In addition to its deep commitment to inclusion and community building, Singing City has consistently achieved the highest levels of performance practice and artistry. The chorus has performed with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Leningrad Philharmonic, and Israel

Philharmonic, and has to its credit a number of critically acclaimed national and international concert tours and festival appearances. The 80-member strong chorus is led by Artistic & Music Director Jeffrey Brillhart and continues to fulfill its original mission, which today encompasses an educational program for youth, T-VOCE (Teen Voices of the City Ensemble), and programs for under-served audiences.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

T-VOCE

In 2016, Art Sanctuary and the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts collaborated with Opera Philadelphia to launch Teen Voices of the City Ensemble, or T-VOCE (tee-VO-chay), a free, all-city youth choir for young adults. T-VOCE comes from the Italian word “voce,” meaning “voice,” because this choir is all about empowering and celebrating the voice of Philadelphia youth. T-VOCE is open to students ages 13-19 - no audition required - just a desire to learn and sing. Singing City is now a partner with Opera Philadelphia, and Play On, Philly! in making this a year-round program for Philadelphia’s youth. Directed by Rosemary Schneider, rehearsals take place on Saturday mornings from 10-12 at Friends Center.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHOIR MEMBERS

Musical Excellence

It is the singer’s responsibility to learn the music. Part of this learning takes place during rehearsals; however, much of it will be learned as you work on your voice part alone, not only for the mechanics of notes and rhythm, but also for the musical elements of phrasing, articulation and style. Most people have favorite composers and works. Our repertoire spans a variety of styles, centuries, cultures, and languages. Being committed to this diversity as well as to new musical ideas and new interpretations of familiar works is necessary. No matter how many times you have performed a work in the past, each new performance brings the opportunity for new insights, creativity, and spiritual expression.

Our concerts may take place at a major concert hall, at a house of worship, a retirement facility, a shelter, or at any of the many sites where Singing City can demonstrate its musicality and caring. Whether the concert takes place on the stage, in the park, or on the street, that “connection” with the audience happens only with our best performance.

Attendance

Consistent attendance and promptness are essential. Weekly rehearsals are held on **Tuesday evenings, 7:20 – 9:50 p.m., at Friends Center, 1501 Cherry Street in Philadelphia.** You should be in your seat by 7:15 p.m., ready to begin rehearsing at the scheduled time. Throughout the season there are also several required Saturday rehearsals scheduled from 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.; these rehearsals usually occur prior to major performances.

Your attendance at rehearsals is required not only to learn the music, but more importantly, to build a musical community which works together for a common goal. Given the importance of rehearsal attendance, Singing City members are not permitted to miss more than three rehearsals. If you need to be absent, you are required to call the Singing City office (267-519-5321) by noon on the day of the rehearsal or performance (or by Friday noon for a weekend activity). If your absence is to be considered an excused one, you are requested to give the Choir Administrator a note, phone call, or e-mail message in advance of the rehearsal. After an absence, check with your Section Leader to get markings for your music and any additional instructions which might have been given during the rehearsal. **Choir members are not excused from rehearsals in order to participate in other choral organizations.**

The status of any active member of Singing City may come under review of the Director for any of three reasons:

- **Absence for any reason from more than three rehearsals**
- **Absence from more than one concert**
- **Tardiness to more than four rehearsals**

If any of the above occurs within one concert season, a member may be required to meet with and/or sing for the Director to demonstrate concert-readiness. The Director, at his discretion, may terminate the active membership of the individual for the remainder of the concert season.

Rehearsal Etiquette—Technology

Cell phones, tablets and laptops are indispensable tools for all of us. Unfortunately, these devices can often be a source of distraction to their owners and nearby choir members, disrupting the atmosphere of intense focus necessary to create an excellent performance. Singing City members are asked to keep their devices off and stowed away during rehearsal. The rehearsal break is a great time to check and respond to important messages. If there is an emergency, please remove yourself from the rehearsal space to attend to texts, voicemail, etc.

Music

Music will be assigned by number to each member of the choir. It is the singer's responsibility to bring all music to each rehearsal unless otherwise instructed. It is difficult to share music and unfair to the person who must share it. In addition, you need to be able to make your own notations on your music – so remember to bring a pencil (no pens or highlighters). **It is not permitted to punch holes in music.** New music can be found prior to each rehearsal in file boxes, with each member's numbered file inside. Please check your file each week and pick up new music before the start of rehearsal. Music is to be returned to the file box when requested. **Please erase all markings before returning your music.** Choir members are responsible for paying for any missing or damaged music at replacement cost. Each singer must provide his or her own black folder for performances. All questions regarding music should be directed to Cortlandt Matthews, Choir Administrator.

Participation in Concerts

Choir members are expected to participate in all season concerts and to be available for contract and community concerts at care facilities, schools and retirement communities, unless otherwise notified because of space restrictions. Some of our concerts require the entire choir while others use a smaller group (partial choir) depending upon the nature of the concert or the size of the stage or expected audience. The Director will assign personnel for all partial choir concerts. All members of the choir will have an opportunity to participate in some of the partial choir concerts. Choir members may request to be included in a particular concert for personal reasons, i.e., family or friends residing near the concert location, special interest in the sponsoring organization, etc. The important consideration for staff, however, is that a well-balanced choir be selected which best represents Singing City. If you cannot participate, you should notify the Choir Administrator in writing as soon as possible so that a replacement can be named.

Choir Council

The Choir Council provides leadership for the choir and a voice for its concerns in the larger Singing City community. The Choir Council consists of the president and Section Captains. The members of Choir Council help to support the choir members by keeping them informed of Board activities and artistic program plans. They also encourage singers to participate fully in the activities of the choir. Choir Council meets each month with the Music Director, Executive Director, and Choir Administrator to discuss internal choir concerns,

fundraising activities, and other items related to choir performance. Contact information for Choir Council members can be found on SC's Chorus Connection site and on page 8 of this handbook.

Financial Commitments

Singing City's annual budget ranges from \$235,000 to \$255,000. Since Singing City is a non-profit institution, it depends on government grants, corporate and foundation funding, and on the financial commitment of its members and friends. The choir's participation – through annual dues, ticket sales, and the annual Friends Drive – comprises a significant part of our budget and speaks loudly to our funders. Your participation is expected in the following ways.

Choir Dues

Choir members are expected to pay dues by the first rehearsal in the fall or, if you are admitted after that time, within the first two weeks of membership. Dues for singing members are \$250. Payment plans are available to those in need of such assistance. Contact Cortlandt Matthews, Choir Administrator, at cmatthews@singingcity.org for more information.

Ticket Sales

We have found that one of Singing City's most successful marketing tools is word of mouth. You are encouraged to tell your family, friends and co-workers about our concerts. Singing to a full audience is your reward! Tickets are available to purchase at rehearsals and through our online box office.

Fund Raising Projects

The Singing City Board and the Choir Council will sponsor a variety of fund raising projects throughout the concert season. All of these projects will need your support and assistance if they are to be successful. If you have ideas for successful fund raising activities, discuss them with a member of the Choir Council. Your input and participation are invaluable.

Annual Friends Drive

Singing City's Annual Friends Drive begins in the fall of each new season. Becoming a Friend of Singing City is something all choir members should seriously consider when they join the choir. Annual dues are not enough to meet the organization's funding needs. We rely heavily on a broad base of financial support to keep Singing City running. Many foundations look specifically at the

number of choir and board members who are financial supporters of Singing City. Our goal each year is 100% participation by the choir in the Annual Friends Drive.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Choir Bulletin and Singing City Website

Chorus Lines, the weekly choir bulletin, is e-mailed to choir members each week prior to the Tuesday rehearsal, usually on Monday afternoons, with an update on Thursday. Choir members are expected to read *Chorus Lines* each week for important announcements regarding schedule changes, concert assignments, driving directions, and other vital information.

Emergency Cancellation Procedures

If a rehearsal must be cancelled due to inclement weather, an e-mail will go out to everyone on the e-mail list. If you do not have an e-mail address, please make arrangements with a friend to call you. The staff at Friends Center will be notified as well, so you may also call the front desk if in doubt: 215-241-7000.

You will find all choir information at **Chorus Connection**, including a calendar of rehearsals and concerts, choir directory, bulletin board, rehearsal resources, online payment for dues, and more. Every singer has a profile. You can edit contact information, upload a photo, and share a little bit about yourself. All new singers will be added to Chorus Connection and will receive a welcome e-mail with instructions for gaining access. We are excited about using this online tool!

Attire

Each singer is expected to purchase and maintain the appropriate choir garb. Concert garb for women is available through Stage Accents and consists of a black top and black pants or skirt. Contact Choir Administrator Cortlandt Matthews for ordering information, cmatthews@singingcity.org.

Men wear a black long sleeve shirt, regular collar with black buttons and no pattern to the fabric, **black tie (new)**, black dress pants and black shoes. The shirt should look sharp (not faded or worn). **If wearing an undershirt, purchase a black V neck t-shirt.**

It is especially important that you have the appropriate garb and the music required for each performance. These details will always be listed in *Chorus Lines* prior to every concert.

Perfumes and Scents

In consideration of other choir members, especially those with allergies, please do not use any perfume or perfumed cosmetics, cologne, scented hair spray, shaving lotions, or other scented products when you are rehearsing or singing with the choir.

Rehearsal Parking

Discounted parking is available at the Parkway lot on the east side of 15th Street, between Race & Cherry Street. Take your parking ticket with you, and ask the Friends Center receptionist to stamp it for the validated parking rate of \$15.00 for the day.

Evening parking at the rate of \$5.00 is available at Gateway Parking, 1540 Vine Street with entrances on Spring and 16th Streets.

Important Numbers/Addresses

Singing City

1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Phone: 267-519-5321

E-mail: info@singingcity.org Website: www.singingcity.org

Chorus Lines

Send information to Cortlandt Matthews (*deadline noon Friday*),
cmatthews@singingcity.org.

Staff

Jeffrey Brillhart, Artistic & Music Director, jbsingcity@aol.com
Lauren Anderson, Executive Director, lauren@singingcity.org
Cortlandt Matthews, Office Manager and Choir Administrator,
cmatthews@singingcity.org
Kreg Godfrey, Asst. Conductor and Director of Outreach
Rosemary Schneider, Director, T-VOCE
Parker Kitterman, Accompanist

Choir Council

President - Deb Clarke (S2), dclarke11@aol.com
Rebecca Horowitz (S1), rebhorowitz@gmail.com
Beth Johnson (S2), beth@singalot.net
Roz Ominsky (A1), rominsky@firstalto.com
Martha Fried-Cassorla (A2), marthafriedcassorla@gmail.com
William Lim (T1), williamlimtenor@gmail.com
Matt Thornton (B1), mr.thornton76@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Brian Auerbach, President	Gil Feinberg
Diane Mallery, Vice-President	Jay Fluellen
Jane Gardner, Treasurer	Sue Goldstein
Jane Murphy, Secretary	Linda Litwin
Perry Brisborn	Laura Randolph
Geneva Butz	Ken Schoenholz
Emily Cathcart	Nadeen Van Tuyle
Deb Clarke, ex-officio	

SINGING CITY

2019-2020 Concert Season

Jeffrey Brillhart, Artistic & Music Director

Fall Concert—*The Road Less Traveled*

Saturday, October 5, 2019, 4 p.m.

Haddonfield United Methodist Church, Haddonfield, NJ

Sunday, October 6, 2019, 3 p.m.

Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral, 23 S. 38th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

Singing City and **Lyric Fest** together again. Songs of journey and diaspora, welcome and belonging, leaving home and finding home. A timely program exploring world-wide migration and America's roots as an immigrant nation.

Holiday Concert - *Philadelphia: An Immigrant City*

Sunday, December 15, 3 p.m.

Old First Reformed Church of Christ, 151 N. 4th Street, Philadelphia, PA

With **Philadelphia Brass and T-VOCE (Teen Voices of the City Ensemble)**

Repertoire from Ireland, Poland, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Latin America, along with music for Chanukah and African American traditions.

Winter Concert—*Festival of Voices*

Saturday, February 22, 2020, 7 p.m.

Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral, 23 S. 38th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

With Singing City Choir, T-VOCE, Agnes Irwin Middle School Choir, Keith Valley Middle School Choir, Northeast High School Choir and Pine Forge Academy Choir
Choirs from across the region join together in song.

Spring Concert—Stephen Paulus' *To Be Certain of the Dawn*

Sunday, May 3, 3 p.m.

Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA

With the **Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia** and **Philadelphia Boys Choir**

Kara Mulder, soprano; Misoon Ghim, mezzo- soprano; Michael Hogue, tenor; and Daniel Teadt, baritone. A Holocaust oratorio that is at once beautiful, powerful, and filled with hope.

Tickets and more information:

www.singingcity.org or 267-519-5322



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Philadelphia, PA 19102
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info@singsingcity.org
