

THE
NEW YORK
CATHOLIC
CHORALE



Artists in Residence at Siena College

NEW YORK CATHOLIC CHORALE Member Handbook 2006

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Welcome!

The New York Catholic Chorale (NYCC) is dedicated to performing music, chiefly of the Roman Catholic tradition, in both liturgical and concert settings. Although the choir welcomes all lovers of sacred music, it enjoys a special mission to Catholic musicians in acquainting them with the great, ongoing choral and instrumental tradition that is their heritage. Since 2001, the choir is honored to be artists in residence at Siena College, Loudonville, New York. NYCC's founder and director is Thomas F. Savoy.

Greetings from the Director

As founder and director of The New York Catholic Chorale, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to our company of singers! NYCC took its initial inspiration from the monumental work of Msgr. Richard Schuler and the Twin-Cities Catholic Chorale of St. Paul, Minnesota. Since my visit there in 1993, I endeavored to begin a series of similar "orchestral" Masses here in Albany, NY. I could never have foreseen the growth of NYCC nor the hunger among all people – Catholic and non-Catholics alike – for the beauty that our marvelous tradition of sacred music affords. It is to this world that I welcome you: one in which faith is united to the finest of art, all in praise of the God who has given us so much.

Peace and all good to you – and happy singing!

Tom Savoy

Who We Are

The New York Catholic Chorale is composed of men and women singers that participate in NYCC at different levels, depending on the needs of the music being performed, where we are performing it, and the personal schedules of the members. Membership is by audition.

It should be noted that within this structure, no one is required to sing at all events. The size of these groups varies depending on personal schedules and the required parts and number of singers needed to perform the music. Singers are simply asked to commit to what their schedule and interests dictate.

NYCC levels of participation and types of performances are as follows:

All NYCC members are invited to participate in about four masses with orchestra each performance season, one or two public concerts each year, and some events at Siena College such as events celebrating the feast of St. Francis in October and Siena's annual Baccalaureate Mass in May.

A smaller chamber group sings at a regularly scheduled Tridentine Mass at St. Peter's Church in Troy on the 1st Sunday of each month (September through June). This music is primarily, but not exclusively, unaccompanied polyphony of the renaissance Catholic tradition. This chamber group is separately auditioned.

A subset of the chamber group is the Schola, who sing the Gregorian Chant Propers at these masses and occasionally at other performances. At times, smaller groups are arranged for special events such as weddings, funerals or special events.

In addition, NYCC also has a weekly radio program on Siena College's commercial radio station, WVCR- 88.3 FM. Voices of Catholic Radio airs on Sundays at 8:30 A.M. and at 6:45 P.M. The program consists of choral singing and spoken commentary. Music for the program is from our live performances and studio recordings. Studio recordings involve a small group of singers with the appropriate sight-reading abilities, experience, and vocal quality for small-group blend. A recording session typically consists of a series of sight reading run-throughs and recorded takes.

NYCC's annual performance season is from September through mid-June.

Our Mission Statement

As singers and instrumentalists, we seek...

- To preserve, re-create and add to the thousand-year living tradition (*traditio vivens*) of sacred music that is the heritage of the Roman Catholic Church and one of its unique gifts to the world.
- To restore these works of great beauty to their original liturgical usage wherever possible.
- To contrast the timeless beauty of the Latin language in the Mass with the musical genius unique to each age – all in a sacred, organic unity.
- In doing all of the above to honor the mandates of the Second Vatican Council to preserve the heritage of particularly Latin Church Music and to add to the rich diversity that is Roman Catholic worship today.
- To use our trained musical skills to grow in our own faith and to act as ministers of evangelization by offering the finest sacred music of our Roman Catholic tradition to a world hungering for beauty and the Sacred.

What Members Can Expect from NYCC

Music Performance

Our efforts are to produce music that will be an inspiration for both musicians and listeners alike, both for the beauty of its composition as well as the beauty of its performance. We aim to render the best possible performances, consistent with our belief that music is a manifestation of the beauty of creation and that its composition and performance is a return of that beauty to our Creator.

Vocal Scores

NYCC supplies all musical scores and makes them available to our members for each performance. (If a member already owns the score, and if the edition is compatible with the one being used, there is no requirement to use the NYCC score however compatible markings are the user's responsibility. Scores supplied by NYCC remain the property of NYCC. Our librarians acquire, catalog, distribute and track all music scores.

Fellowship

We make a serious attempt to have a brief refreshment break during all rehearsals. Periodically we get together for a party and some of our events include a social reception afterwards that allows us opportunities to also socialize with our audience.

What NYCC Expects from Members

Attendance

Our rehearsals are every Wednesday evening from 7:30 to approximately 9:45 P.M. at Our Lady of Angels Chapel at Siena College, Loudonville, NY. Depending on upcoming performance needs, a rehearsal may sometimes need to be extended.

Members are free to participate in events as their respective schedules allow, however to facilitate planning and vocal balance, we ask members to commit (sign up) to events in advance.

Rehearsals are occasionally partitioned as to particular events, thereby allowing members to miss portions of rehearsals pertaining to events they are not scheduled to sing.

Attendance at rehearsals for events you are scheduled to sing, is required. As a courtesy, the director should be notified if you must miss a rehearsal. Attendance at dress rehearsals before an event is mandatory. (See **Extra Rehearsals** in the **Logistics** section below for more information about dress rehearsals.)

In the event that bad weather necessitates cancellation of a rehearsal or event, a notice will be broadcast on WGY, 810 AM radio station, and posted on our website, <http://www.NYCChorale.org>.

Dress

Performance dress is either "concert blacks" or "Sunday best." The dress for each performance is announced at the rehearsal before the event. Members are responsible for supplying their own clothing.

Concert Blacks for women: Long (mid-calf or longer) black skirt, dress, or dress pants, black blouse, and a necklace strand of white pearls.

Concert Blacks for men: Black slacks, black banded collar shirt, no necktie. A black-banded collar shirt is available at JC Penney.

Sunday Best: Dress clothes of any color.

PLEASE: No perfume, after-shave, or glittery jewelry.

Note that dress may occasionally change, with notice, for a given performance. An example is the annual caroling fund-raisers at the Fort Orange Club, at which festive Christmas dress is worn.

Audience

A full audience motivates us to render our best performance and also furthers our mission to our audiences. It is up to each of us to encourage friends, family and co-workers to come out and support our group by attending our events and purchasing tickets where necessary. Events are publicized by various means; e.g., direct mailings, emails, posting flyers, newspaper calendars of events, etc. as well as on our web site: www.NYCChorale.org.

Note however, that we have found that a personal approach is the most effective publicity tool. We hope that members will make an effort to notify their interested contacts of our events.

Finances

NYCC's operating expenses can be considerable to cover the costs of staging serious choral works, performing volumes of music, hiring professional orchestras and soloists, incurring radio production costs, meeting director's fee, publicizing events, preparing and printing programs, sometimes incurring location fees for concerts, and funding CD recording and manufacturing costs.

NYCC pays its music director, as well as instrumentalists and soloists where performances warrant. Occasionally it becomes necessary to engage a hired choral singer for balance in vocal parts when needed to meet a NYCC commitment. Regular membership is on a volunteer basis.

Sources of Income

Membership Dues

Annual member dues are payable at the start of the fall season, in very small part, to offset operating expenses, especially music costs. These dues are currently set at \$40 per year, with reductions for students and hardships.

Residency at Siena College

NYCC currently serves as Artists in Residence at Siena College. Associated with this residency, NYCC receives an annual stipend from the Siena College Office of the Chaplaincy.

Other Sources of Income

- Donations from individuals
- Corporate donations/grants
- Concert program ads
- CD sales
- Annual Christmas caroling at the Ft. Orange Club
- Sometimes a stipend from some performance venues
- Sometimes a free-will offering at public concerts.

Logistics (how we function)

NYCC activities are intended to not interfere with involvement in the member's own parish music ministries.

Auditions

As all members are aware, NYCC is an auditioned choir. The audition is held privately with the director, and it typically consists of basic sight-singing, range exploration, and sometimes rhythmic and melodic reading and memory. There is no need to prepare a piece of music for the audition.

In order to maintain an appropriate level of artistic excellence, we hold re-auditions for current members approximately every 2 years, or as needed for voice placement, balance, and repertoire.

Music Distribution

Each NYCC member is assigned a number by the music librarians. Distributed music is numbered so that the music librarians can track it.

In our office at Siena College we have a music rack with a numbered cubby for each NYCC member. The music librarians distribute music to the chorale by placing it in

the cubbies. Members should check their cubby for new music before the start of each rehearsal. Sometimes additional music is distributed at the rehearsal.

Each member supplies their own black three-ring binder to hold their music. A three-hole punch is available for member use in the NYCC office at Siena College.

Most music is collected by the music librarians after it is performed. Singers do not keep music all year long. Sometimes the music is collected at the performance location, immediately following the performance. Sometimes it is collected at the next rehearsal.

Singers should use pencil to write all their performance markings in their music. Leave markings in the music when it is turned in. There is no need to erase markings.

Extra Rehearsals

On occasion when performance situations warrant, an extra rehearsal may be scheduled.

For performances with orchestra, there is always a dress rehearsal. The dress rehearsal is our only rehearsal with the orchestra. It is essential that all singers and instrumentalists who will be participating in the performance attend the dress rehearsal.

Putting on a Performance

A lot of work goes into putting on a performance. The specific tasks depend on the type of performance - liturgical or concert – as well as the contractual arrangements made with the performance hall. Help from members may be requested.

How Members Can Help

Members are encouraged to help in the operations of the chorale in the following ways.

Events Committee

Whether a liturgy, concert or fundraising event, we need people to help move equipment such as risers, timpani, chairs, music stands and/or recording equipment. Sometimes a stage manager is assigned for an event.

Times and venues must be confirmed for liturgies, rehearsals and concerts. Sometimes printed programs, tickets, donations and receptions need to be organized. Volunteers may be needed to usher, record and to donate or to serve food.

The availability of singers for events must be communicated to the director through e-mail or weekly sign-up sheets at rehearsals. This aids the director in planning repertoire as well as contracting additional musicians.

Fundraising Committee

To further expand our ministry, the NYCC must broaden its financial support as Artists-in-Residence at Siena College. We receive funds for basic operations, a rehearsal space and music storage. Financing for some events is provided in whole or in part by the sponsoring organization. Dues from members only offset a fraction of the group's expenses. \$40 per year are due at the start of the season in September with reductions for students. When we sell program ads, we can fund a particular event. Beyond that, we must seek out larger individual and corporate sponsorship.

Members with expertise in fundraising are asked and encouraged to help in this effort.

Membership and Recruitment

NYCC is always in search of more singers. Our members are encouraged to refer any potential new candidates to the director for an audition.

Re-auditioning of current members may occur from time to time in order to maintain the proper balance and blend in the organization.

As an ongoing communication tool, members should refer to the NYCC website (<http://www.NYCChorale.org>) for updates and schedule changes.

E-mail has also been an effective tool for the director to communicate with the membership for special circumstances such as weddings, funerals, extra rehearsals and cancellations. Everyone is asked to check their e-mail a day or two before every rehearsal.

Publicity and Public Relations

Presentations by the NYCC must be publicized. Volunteers are needed to distribute posters, submit church bulletin announcements, and notify media (i.e., newspapers, radio, TV, community websites).

As an ongoing public relations and communication tool, www.NYCChorale.org lists a schedule of events, performance history as well as audio selections from actual performances.

The group is developing a publicity list for advertising events. Members are asked to submit names, postal and email addresses as often as possible.

Action Committee Chairs

Committee	Chairperson
Events	Deborah Savoy
Fundraising/Development/Sales	Anina Ritter
Membership and Recruitment	Thomas Herrmann
Publicity/Public Relations	Dennis Coker, Virginia Harrison

Key Personnel

Title	Name
Business Manager	Vincent Thomas
Contractor (for hired performers)	Thomas F. Savoy, Ann-Marie Barker-Schwartz
Artistic Director	Thomas F. Savoy
Legal Advisor	William Helmer
Librarians	Dolores Van Buren, Barbara Welch
Radio Production	Thomas F Savoy, executive producer Dennis Coker, producer and script writer Byron Nilsson, production engineer
Webmaster	Virginia Harrison
Concert Program Designer	Virginia Harrison

NYCC Board of Directors

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