



The Bloomington Chamber Singers have been singing together for nearly 50 years, and are known throughout the region for excellence in performance, service to the community, and exemplary administrative management. We welcome experienced singers of all ages and backgrounds who share our common bond of singing great music. In this document you'll find practical information about what it's like to be part of BCS. If you have additional questions, please feel free to ask any singer in the group or contact Assistant Conductor Caio Lopes (calopes@iu.edu). Additional information may also be found on our website, www.chambersingers.info.

Auditions

All singers in BCS are admitted through an audition with the Music Director. Auditions for new members take place at the start of our season, which runs from late August through early May. Information about audition dates and times is posted on our website in mid-August. BCS performs a wide range of choral music, from Renaissance *cappella* motets through recent works by contemporary composers. Our singers typically have had a number of years singing in a mixed ensemble, are comfortable following a choral score, and have some familiarity with singing in different languages (Latin, German, etc.).

Rehearsals

Regular rehearsals take place every Tuesday evening throughout our season from 7:00-9:30pm at St. Mark's United Methodist Church. Rehearsals begin and end promptly, and we take a short break for refreshments mid-way through. Regular and focused attendance at rehearsals is essential, because we cover a lot of music and, more importantly, we learn to work together as an ensemble. All singers in BCS can read music to some degree, and the group generally moves relatively quickly through pieces. We do work out parts in rehearsals when necessary, and will occasionally break out into sectionals. Our singers take responsibility for "wood-shedding" (learning the more difficult passages outside of rehearsal), since rehearsals are for crafting musical, textual, and ensemble ideas, which can only be effectively done when the notes are in place.

Singers should mark their scores carefully during rehearsals, and are responsible for retrieving any work covered in rehearsals they missed. Absences from more than 2 rehearsals in a semester may trigger a probationary status for the upcoming concert and remaining season. Singers are responsible for letting the Music Director, the Assistant to the Music Director, and their Section Leader know in advance of any conflicts with the rehearsal schedule.

A full schedule of all rehearsals for the season is provided at the beginning of the season, and it is rare that any extra rehearsals are called. We respect your time, and in return, we require attendance at all rehearsals unless there is a conflict that cannot be avoided. In addition to our Tuesday night rehearsal, we typically have one additional Saturday morning rehearsal at some point before each concert. And, for any concert that includes orchestra, there are 2-3 additional rehearsals the week of the concert when the instrumentalists are added,

Performances

Our season runs from late August through early May. We usually have three major performances throughout the season. The repertoire for all concerts is selected by the Music Director with approval from the Board of Directors, and typically draws from a variety of musical periods and genres. Over the years, BCS has performed many of the great oratorios, Masses, and choral-symphonic works. One of the great benefits of living in Bloomington is being able to draw from the world-class musical talent of the Jacobs School of Music, who consistently partner with us in providing professional orchestra players and vocal soloists. In addition to our principal concerts, we annually present two Messiah Sing-alongs, one in December that covers Part 1, and one in the Spring that covers Part 2 and 3, during the Lent and Easter season. These Sing-alongs are local traditions that draw several hundred people each year. Around the December holidays we are usually invited to carol at any number of local events, and we usually break into smaller ensembles for those engagements.

Dues and Music Costs

Bloomington Chamber Singers is a not-for-profit 501c3 corporation, owned and operated by its member singers. When you become a member of BCS, you also become a voting member of the corporation. BCS has an annual budget that has grown steadily over the years and now stands at around \$100,000 annually. Our expenses include general operating costs (staff salaries, insurance, marketing) as well as costs specific to each

performance (space rental, orchestra fees, publicity, programs, and so forth). Our income is generated from a number of sources: ticket sales, individual and corporate contributions, grants, and member dues.

Membership dues are currently \$120 per year, payable in September in whole, or in September and January installments of \$60. If you are a member of the IU Credit Union (or want to become one), you can pay your dues through an automatic transfer at the first of each month from your account to ours. You will have to arrange this through Member Services at the IUCU (we cannot do it for you). Singers buy their own music which becomes their property. The cost of music depends on the year's repertoire, and normally runs between \$20-40 per semester.

If your financial situation is such that any of these costs are prohibitive, please discuss this with our Treasurer. We can defray expenses for those in need, usually in exchange for helping out with some aspect of concert logistics. We never have excluded qualified singers because their resources are limited.

Concert Dress

Concert dress is varied. For some concerts, we all simply wear all-black clothing, including shoes. For formal concerts, for men, "formal" means a tuxedo (black dinner jacket and trousers), white shirt, black bow tie, black socks, and black dress shoes. (A black cummerbund is also traditional but not required.) For the women, "formal" means floor-length black skirts or trousers, a solid black top with full-length sleeves, and black dress shoes. Ask about details; we have on-line sources for concert dress at costs significantly less than the going rates at local formal-dress shops, and sometimes other members can lend certain items.

Participation in Supporting Activities

As a member of the Chamber Singers, you are urged to participate in the running of the group to the extent you are able. It takes a lot of energy and work behind the scenes for BCS to reach its goal of producing rewarding music for our audience, our patrons, and, of course, for ourselves.

Our group is run by an elected Board of Directors, all members of the group, who volunteer their time to ensure our ongoing artistic and fiscal success. The Board relies on the generosity of our members who contribute their time in areas such as concert management, fund raising, marketing, publicity, program preparation, section coaching, data-entry, web-site management, research and writing, and such simple but necessary labor as moving chairs and platforms. We try to break large tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces so that even with limited time you can help with a small part of a much larger task. Please give serious thought to how you can best contribute to the group, and plan on making a commitment.

Communication

With a large number of singers, we have to make sure any communication is clear and timely. We have two principal methods of communicating with you: through email, and via the members only section of our website, www.chambersingers.info. On the website you'll find a calendar, roster with contact information, rehearsal documents, minutes of Board and Corporation meetings, and the like.

Your primary point of contact is your section leader, who will take attendance each week and who serves as your resource for any information distributed or covered in each rehearsal. In addition, both the Music Director and his/her assistant conductor are always available to address any questions or concerns you may have.

Coda

We have joined BCS for many reasons—education, service to the community, a night out—but the joy of making beautiful music together is paramount. Although we are not a stodgy group and have been known to sing P.D.Q. Bach's music as well as Johann Sebastian's, in general we have joined together to give each other the opportunity to work with a professional conductor in exploring the greatest choral works of the Western musical tradition, a rare treat that most people never have. We are committed to excellence and to the rewards that come from exploring and performing great music. We are glad you have come to sing with us.