

# **Cantatrice Ensemble**

## ***Member's Handbook***

### **A Brief History**

The *Cantatrice Ensemble Girls' Choir* was co-founded by its current director in 1997 to provide inspiring choral experiences for girls between the ages of 12 and 18. In the communities served by the Cantatrice Ensemble, elementary choirs thrive while young singers then have few opportunities to pursue further choral development. The Cantatrice Ensemble Girls' Choir operated as a community choir for its first ten years, and is now a program recognized and supported by the Halifax Regional School Board's Halifax All-City Music Department. By enabling members to experience a diverse selection of quality choral repertoire from classical to contemporary, the ensemble strives for choral excellence. The choir is under the direction of Karen Newhook-MacDonald and is accompanied by Pamela Burton. Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings at Cavalier Drive School from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. from September through May. The Cantatrice Ensemble is a not-for-profit organization run by a volunteer parent executive and is a member of the Nova Scotia Choral Federation.

### **\*\*Choir Highlights\*\***

- Gold Standings and Awards
  - Nova Scotia Kiwanis Music Festival (NS),
  - New Glasgow Music Festival (NS),
  - Rotary Music Festival (NL),
  - Maritime Musicfest (PEI),
  - Atlantic Band Festival (NS),
  - Musicfest Canada (ON)
- Special Guests on Stadacona Band's Annual "Beary Merry Christmas Concert"
- April 2009 ~ Canadian Rocky Mountain Music Festival; Banff, Alberta
- April 2008 ~ "Crescendo" Charity Gala with David Foster, Halifax, Nova Scotia
- May 2008 ~ *JUVENATA! – 2008: A Celebration of Youth and Song*; New Glasgow, Nova Scotia
- May 2007 ~ Mid-America Children's Choir Festival; Carnegie Hall, New York City, New York
- April 2005 ~ Toronto International Choral Festival. Toronto, Ontario
- April 2004 ~ Rotary Music Festival, St. John's, Newfoundland
- May 2003 ~ "Suas E!" International Choral Festival, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

## The Director

Karen Newhook-MacDonald, *director*, originally from St. John's, NL, is a music educator and choral director with the Halifax Regional School Board. She currently teaches at Cavalier Drive School as well as the Dartmouth and Halifax All-City Music Departments. In addition to directing the Cantatrice Ensemble, Ms. Newhook-MacDonald conducts the Dartmouth All-City Youth Choir and the Cavalier Drive School Choir. She has presented workshops for the Nova Scotia Music Educator's Association, Nova Scotia Choral Federation, Kodaly Society of Nova Scotia, PEI Music Educators' Association, Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, Nova Scotia Department of Education and Halifax Regional School Board. Karen holds a Bachelor of Music Education from Dalhousie University as well as a Master of Education from Saint Mary's University. She has been a choral singer for over twenty years, having sung with choirs in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, including eight seasons with the Halifax Camerata Singers, and has studied voice with Elvira Gonnella and Sylvia MacDonald. Her husband Michael MacDonald is also a music educator and choral director, and they are the proud parents of Lauryn and Taylor.

## The Accompanist

**Pamela Burton**, *accompanist*, received her undergraduate degrees in Music and Music Education from Memorial University of Newfoundland, her Masters in Music degree from the University of Western Ontario and a Diploma in Kodály Concept of Music Education from the University of Calgary. Since moving to Nova Scotia in 1994, she has been a music education specialist with the Halifax Regional School Board. Choral conducting and accompanying are her passions, and she actively pursues both roles in the Nova Scotia choral community. She serves as Director of the Halifax Boys' Honour Choir, the John W. MacLeod School Choir, and in recent years has directed the Seton Cantata and co-directed the Nova Scotia Youth Choir. In addition, Pamela thoroughly enjoys accompanying the Dartmouth Choral Society, the Cantatrice Ensemble, the Halifax Youth Honour Choir and the Nova Scotia Youth Choir. Pamela is a Past-President and active Board member for the Kodaly Society of Nova Scotia, promoting the Kodaly concept of music education.

## Membership Prerequisites

- ➔ entering grades 7-12
- ➔ strong interest and commitment
- ➔ parental support
- ➔ no previous training is required, however, choral or instrumental experience is an asset
- ➔ successful completion of an audition

## Members' Financial Obligations

The choir fee is \$150 per member. This fee includes the fall overnight trip and a new choir t-shirt, as well as operating costs such as music purchases, music festival entry fees, Nova Scotia Choral Federation membership, guest conductor workshop(s), postage, renting an alternate venue on holiday Mondays when the school is unavailable, concert expenses including concert venue rental and sound equipment, photocopying of notices and concert programs as well as other operating expenses incurred. The choir uniform and spring trip are not included in the membership fee and are the responsibility of individual members. Fees are non-refundable. Depending on the level of parent participation, fund-raising events may be held to assist with trips or other special projects. Where circumstances warrant, special financial arrangements may be made by contacting the treasurer.

## Parental Involvement

Parental interest in the choir can be a major factor in maintaining member interest. Volunteer opportunities are numerous - choir executive, attendance, uniform coordination, assisting with concerts, fund raising, telephone committee, etc. Parents should be aware that notices are sent home in choir members' folders. Please check your daughter's folder on a regular basis to keep informed of upcoming choir events.

## Attendance

In order for the choir to truly shine at all performances, regular attendance at rehearsals is **essential**. Members must attend all rehearsals, dress rehearsals and performances. Understanding the importance of commitments and learning to manage time is an important part of the choral experience. Members must make the Cantatrice Ensemble a high personal priority in order to have a successful experience. Irregular attendance inhibits the choir's ability to progress. Any member who absolutely cannot attend a particular rehearsal is asked to please contact Mrs. Newhook-MacDonald (865-7677) **prior** to the rehearsal. Members who have not given prior notice and are absent from a rehearsal will be telephoned to check on their absence. Frequent absences will result in dismissal from the choir.

## Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Monday evenings at Cavalier Drive School, 116 Cavalier Drive, Sackville. All members are expected to be their assigned seats prior to 6:30 and must have all music ready in their folder. All members should bring a sharpened pencil and bottled water or juice (no pop please). Occasional additional rehearsals may be called - there will always be considerable advance written notice of these rehearsals. **Rehearsals will be canceled and rescheduled if schools are closed due to inclement weather. In-service days do not normally affect the choir rehearsal schedule.**

## **Behavior**

Respect must be shown at all times for other members, music staff, parent volunteers and facilities. Unacceptable behavior is not permitted in the building or any performance venue. Gum chewing is not permitted. Conversation during rehearsals or performances is not appropriate.

## **Sheet Music**

Sheet music is issued to members at various times during the year. The music must be brought to rehearsals. During certain performances a choir folder may be used. Once issued the music and folder are the responsibility of choir members. If misplaced, members will be charged with replacement cost of these items. Replacement cost for each piece of music is \$5.00.

## **Concert Dress**

The appearance of the choir contributes to a polished, professional performance. Only those members properly attired will be allowed to perform. Please do not wear alarm watches, large jewelry or distracting items in your hair. Please do not wear perfume or hair spray as some members do have allergies to scented products.

It is the responsibility of choir members to purchase a choir uniform. The formal choir uniform for the Cantatrice Ensemble includes:

- black choir dress,
- black nylons, and
- black shoes with a low heel,

The choir t-shirt will be worn for more informal performances or workshops.

## **Performances**

Prior to all performances, members should note the following:

- eat a light nutritious meal
- arrive on time
- wear proper concert dress; failure to wear proper dress may result in exclusion from the concert
- conduct yourself in a professional manner
- always tell someone if you are feeling ill

## **Travel**

From time to time the choir will travel as a group. All travel plans are announced well in advance and information will be sent home at that time.

## **Transportation**

Transportation to and from rehearsals and performances is the parent's responsibility. A listing of all members can be provided early in the year so that car pools may be formed. Please check with the director if you need car pool information