



# CHORISTER HANDBOOK

## STAFF

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## ABOUT CANTABILE

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The **Cantabile Choirs of Kingston** is a registered charitable organization that was founded in the fall of 1996. The purpose of the choirs is to provide a musical education for choristers of all ages through a high standard of performance of quality choral literature. The music includes both sacred and secular literature ranging from traditional classical repertoire to 20th century folk songs and original compositions.

Commissioning of new works, and recording are also important components of the programme.

There are currently eight choirs in the Cantabile organization:

<b>Training Choir</b>	Ages 8 - 9
<b>Children's Choir</b>	Ages 10 - 14
<b>Girls' Choir</b>	High school age
<b>Young Men's Chorus</b>	Changed voices
<b>Youth Singers</b>	Girls and Young Men combined
<b>Women's Chorus</b>	Adult Voices
<b>Men's Chorus</b>	Adult Voices
<b>Madrigal Singers</b>	Small ensemble of 12-18 voices

The choirs have received enthusiastic support from critics and audiences alike. The Cantabile Girls' Choir, Young Men's Chorus, Madrigal Singers and Youth Singers have won local, provincial and national honours in the Ontario Provincial Music Festivals, and the National Music Festivals Finals including the Lincoln Trophy, Mathieson Trophy and Cooke Trophy. At the Cork International Choral Festival in Ireland the Youth Singers won the *International Jury Award* for imaginative programming and artistry. In March of 2004 the Youth Singers won a Gold Award at the Young Prague Festival. In the spring of 2008 the Women's Chorus were semi-finalists in the CBC Choral Competition.

The choirs tour regionally, nationally and internationally. The Youth Singers have traveled to England 1998, Alberta 2000, Ireland 2002, the Czech Republic 2004, Italy 2006, and most recently to France in April 2008. Children and Women's Choruses have been heard regionally in Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Stratford, and many other locations in eastern Ontario. The Women's Chorus has performed for the Westben Festival and the Festival on the St. Lawrence, and Festival 500 in Newfoundland.

The choirs have released six CD recordings. Cantabile's newest release *Midwinter* (December 2007) received critical acclaim and selections from the disc were played on CBC Radio and NPR in the U.S. Later that month, Cantabile was featured on the arts report on the CBC Radio's national news programme, *The World At Six*.

## ARTISTIC TEAM

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The founding Artistic Director of the Cantabile Choirs is Dr. Mark Sirett, a graduate of Queen's University. He holds both masters and doctoral degrees in choral conducting and pedagogy from the University of Iowa. Dr. Sirett is a noted composer whose works are frequently performed by major ensembles in this country and abroad. He is frequently in demand as a guest conductor, clinician and adjudicator.

Dr. Sirett is supported by several other professional musicians and teachers, as well as conducting apprentices from Queen's University, most of whom are music majors or students at McArthur College of Education.

In the fall of 2007 Marie Anderson joined the Cantabile Artistic Team as the conductor of the Training Choir and Children's Choir. Marie Anderson is currently in the graduate program at the Education Department, Queen's University. Before moving to Kingston, she was co-founder and director of La Jeunesse Youth Choirs- a youth choral program in Northumberland County. From an initial membership of twenty girls, it has grown to include four choirs, ranging in age from four to nineteen years. Under her direction, the choir toured Europe five times, receiving four gold medals in International competition.

## COMMUNICATION

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### NEWSLETTER

The Cantabile newsletter published at the beginning of every month, is **the major form of communication** with choristers and their families. Newsletters are emailed to choristers each month, with additional copies on our website and the chorister portal. Please ensure that dates of all activities are marked on your calendar. We will try to inform you in advance of any changes or additions to the schedule.

### WEB PAGE <http://cantabile.kingston.net>

If you need a copy of the most recent newsletter, or updates to the Cantabile schedule of events, consult this on a regular basis throughout the year. The site also contains information on tours, auditions, season subscriptions, the artistic director's comments on recent rehearsals and important messages and updates.

### TELEPHONE TREE AND CONTACT LISTS

At the first rehearsal a list of choir members, addresses and phone numbers was circulated. If there are any errors in the lists please contact the office immediately. Each choir arranges a phone tree to relay important messages to choristers and their families.

### EMAIL

Email is an efficient way to communicate quickly with everyone. Please provide us with at least ONE email address per family, that is checked regularly by a parent. Sudden changes or important information will be communicated in this way. If you change your email address or contact information, please update your

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

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Due to demand, Cantabile offers a special season ticket package of five concerts for the price of four. See the season subscription brochures available in the upstairs rehearsal hall, on our website, or from various locations throughout the city. Subscriptions are not available from the Grand Theatre Box Office.

## TICKETS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONCERTS

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Single tickets are available from the Grand Theatre Box Office, (10:30 - 5:30 Monday through Saturday - 530-2050). **Concerts usually sell-out and tickets for the December concerts sell-out weeks in advance.** Please purchase your tickets early to avoid disappointment.

## FUNDRAISING

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In order to keep the tuition fees for Cantabile as reasonable as possible we rely on a large number of volunteers to assist with many of the functions of the organization, especially fundraising. Cantabile only has one major fundraising project, a spring annual sale in April/May. We appreciate your support of this important endeavours. It is hoped that most fundraising ventures will be designated toward the various tours of the choirs.

## DONATIONS

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The Cantabile Choirs of Kingston is a charitable organization that relies on financial assistance from individuals, corporations, foundations and government agencies. Individual donations are greatly appreciated and assist with a variety of endeavours including bursaries, music purchases, endowment programme, and touring.

## ENDOWMENT FUND

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In the spring of 1999 the Cantabile Choirs established the Cantabile Memorial Bursary Fund to honour the memory of individuals who have been significant supporters of Cantabile and of the arts. Our sincere appreciation to those families who have contributed to this fund in such a thoughtful and lasting way. The money donated to the memorial fund has been invested in the Cantabile Choirs of Kingston Arts Endowment Fund established through the Ontario Arts Council. An additional endowment fund has been established through the generosity of Chander and Anju Datta and Cancoil Thermal Corporation with the Community Foundation of Greater Kingston. For further information regarding the endowment programme contact Dr. Sirett.

## REHEARSALS

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All rehearsals are held in the upstairs hall of Sydenham Street United Church or in the sanctuary of the church. Enter using the William Street entrance to the church. Please enter quietly as the staff of the church may be working and there may be piano lessons in progress in the music studio. In the winter, assume that rehearsals will go ahead as scheduled. Choristers will be notified as quickly as possible by email (or in extreme cases the phone tree) if rehearsal is cancelled.

## SCHEDULE

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**Please note: please consult your newsletter for updates and possible changes and additions to rehearsal times.**

### AT REHEARSALS

Throughout the season there are additional concert dates and special workshop dates that will outlined at registration time, and in the monthly newsletter. Attendance at all rehearsals and workshops is **mandatory**.

CHOIR	AGES	REHEARSALS (WEEKLY)
TRAINING CHOIR	8–9	FRIDAYS, 4:15-5:15PM SEPTEMBER TO APRIL
CHILDREN'S CHOIR	10–13	TUESDAY AND THURSDAY, 4:15-5:15, SEPT-APRIL
GIRLS' CHOIR	TEEN VOICES	MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY: 3:30-4:45 SEPT-MAY
YOUNG MEN'S CHORUS	CHANGED VOICES	MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY: 4:45-6:00 SEPT-MAY
YOUTH SINGERS	SELECTED TEENS	MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY: 4:30-5:00
MADRIGAL SINGERS	12-16 VOICES	TBA
WOMEN'S CHORUS		WEDNESDAYS, 7:30-9:30 SEPT-MAY
MEN'S CHORUS		WEDNESDAYS, 5:45-7:30 SEPT-MAY

Members of the Children's and Training Choirs should plan to arrive early to participate in the music games that are offered prior to rehearsal and to assist in organizing the room for rehearsal, (chairs, bulletin board, CD player and piano in place). **Please bring: a black 3-ring binder for your music, your music, a supply of sharp pencils with eraser to mark your score and a water bottle or plastic cup with lid for a drink of water prior to rehearsal.**

**Children are not permitted to play the piano prior to rehearsal.** Please be courteous and respectful of others, and enter and exit quietly.

Rehearsals may be recorded by parents or children (recording at dress rehearsal or in performance is strictly forbidden due to musicians union and copyright laws).

**PARENTS**—Please arrange to pick up your children on time following rehearsals. Parking can be difficult around the William Street entrance especially during winter months. For the safety of our choristers, **please do not double park on William Street, and DO NOT BLOCK DRIVEWAYS.**

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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In order to achieve a high level of performance, **attendance at all rehearsals, concerts, and special events is imperative.** If your child is ill please call 542-9616 x.24 and leave a message. **If you have a cold, sit at the back of the rehearsal hall, follow your music, mark your score, listen and observe.** In the event that you are unable to attend rehearsal, please arrange for someone to tape the rehearsal for you so that it may be reviewed later.

A chorister who misses rehearsals will find it difficult to keep up with the choir, and **slows the progress of the whole choir.** The chief difference between ‘singing’ and ‘singing in a choir’ is the building of ensemble—singing in tune, being rhythmic, enunciating clearly, uniformly singing the correct vowel, being expressive and sounding like one instrument. These qualities only develop as choristers work together as a team. The music learned for one concert becomes part of the repertoire for the whole season. A chorister who hasn’t adequately learned materials for a concert will not know them well for performances later in the season.

**Attendance by all choristers at all rehearsals is essential. There are no acceptable absences. There will be no exceptions made to the Attendance policy. Poor attendance at rehearsals and concerts may result in a chorister being asked to withdraw from the choir for the remainder of the season.**

- a) Children, Young Men, and Girls who miss three rehearsals, (including sickness), will not be permitted to sing at the next concert.
- b) Training Choir choristers and Women who miss two rehearsals (including sickness), will not be permitted to sing at the next concert.
- c) Attendance at dress rehearsal is **mandatory.** All choristers are expected to be at dress rehearsal or they will not be permitted to sing the concert.
- d) Attendance will be reviewed at the re-audition in the spring.

## PROBATIONARY PERIOD

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For new members of the Training, Children’s, Girls’ and Young Men’s Choirs, and some returning members, there is a probationary period during which behaviour, cooperation, commitment, and contribution to the choirs are monitored by the Artistic and support staff. This is an opportunity for new choristers to demonstrate that they are willing and capable of meeting the challenges of the choir. If choristers do not appear to be able to keep pace with the musical demands of the programme they will be asked to leave the choir.

## PARENT HELPERS

For rehearsals, concerts, social events, and any other special activities for the Training, Children, Girls and Young Men's Chorus, there are duty parents who assist with the supervision of our young people. It is important for choristers and parents to understand that it is the **duty parents' responsibility to supervise the young people when they are not singing**. It is important to listen carefully to instructions, and be respectful and courteous of them. They are there to ensure the safety and comfort of our singers and to reinforce the best possible behaviour from our young people. **It is expected that all parents who have children involved in Cantabile will be available on at least one occasion each year to serve as a duty parent.**

## TUITION

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Tuition is outlined at the time of registration. Tuition payments are by post-dated cheques in July, November and February.

TRAINING CHOIR - tuition for the training choir is \$200 + GST (payable in two separate installments). Tuition for all the other choirs is payable in 3 equal installments by post-dated cheque.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR - \$350 + GST

YOUTH SINGERS - \$400 + GST

MEN'S CHORUS - \$300 + GST

WOMEN'S CHORUS - \$350 + GST

A number of **bursaries are available** for members in any of the choirs who require financial assistance. If you are interested in assistance with your tuition, please submit a request in writing to the Artistic Director with your registration.

\*Cantabile is now required to charge GST on tuition

## MUSIC

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Music is the property of the Cantabile Choirs of Kingston. Music is very costly and difficult to replace. **Please look after it carefully.** Make pencil markings neat and legible. Music will be collected at various times of the year. **Choristers will be billed for unreturned, lost or damaged music.** Returned music should be directed to the Cantabile Office or mailed to P.O. Box 2273, Kingston ON, K7L 5J9.

## CONCERT DRESS AND CONDUCT

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Cantabile **Dress Rehearsals** are usually held the day before the concert from late afternoon through the evening. The schedule varies for each concert depending on the choirs and instrumentalists involved, and the need for combined rehearsal time. Generally speaking, the schedule is set out so that the Training and Children's Choirs rehearse immediately after school. **The newsletter will always specify the exact schedule.**

Common courtesy and good manners to each other are expected at all times. Choristers are encouraged to eat a light nutritious meal before a concert. Please avoid milk or milk products, or chocolate prior to a concert as they make it difficult to sing.

- no extreme make-up or hair-styles; Long hair should be tied/pinned away from your face.
- no nail polish
- no jewelry, except for ear studs
- no watches (ask others to please turn off alarms)
- Girls may wear small barrettes, hair bands or scrunchies if they are black
- no perfume or cologne or strong scented deodorant/hair sprays— (many choristers have allergies/intolerances)
- **recording devices such as tape recorders and video recorders are not permitted**—these are infringements of Musicians Union bylaws and copyright and performing rights regulations. By special permission of these organizations a single recording for the Cantabile archives is made of these concerts.
- **flash photography is not permitted at concerts**

Most of the time the choristers will be located 'backstage' during the concert. There will be adequate parental supervision and activities provided during this time. Choristers are expected to behave off stage, the way they do on stage. Choristers who do not conduct themselves in this manner may be asked to leave the choir.

Choristers are expected to stay in their uniform until they have left the building after the concert. Girls must stay in their dresses and boys should keep their shirts tucked in and their ties on, you are still representing the choir even when you are not performing.

## UNIFORM

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The Cantabile Choirs have a distinctive uniform for members of the Training Choir, Children's Choir, Girls' Choir, and Young Men that are worn for all public appearances unless announced otherwise. It is the responsibility of each chorister to purchase and maintain their uniform. They are to be kept **clean, tidy and freshly pressed for each performance.**

With the exception of shoes, all items of the uniform will be purchased from Cantabile. This avoids complications in colour variations, quality and style. Choristers who do not conform to the dress code will not be permitted to sing. The uniforms are listed on the following pages.

**\*\*New choristers will receive information regarding uniforms after we have received your tuition and registration.**

### NOTE ABOUT DRESS LENGTH (GIRLS' CHOIR)

Please hem the dress to one inch above the top of the shoe—no higher. We want a tidy “uniform” look for our young people that is attractive but not distracting. It is also important that you mark them hem with the shoes you will be wearing at the concerts. Maintain as much of a hem as possible so that the dress may be lengthened if necessary.

### NOTE ABOUT SHOES

All shoes should be comfortable, black dress shoes with a **LOW HEEL**. (Please, **no platform shoes, sandals or running shoes permitted.**) This is critical for correct posture for singing.

### TRAINING CHOIR

Cantabile T-shirt with your own black skirt/pants and black shoes. No velvet or shiny satin please.

### CHILDREN — GIRLS

Black Palazzo Pant and Royal Blue Shirt. *Own black shoes—flats or low heel. Please see note above regarding platform shoes and sandals.*

### CHILDREN — BOYS

Black Pants, White Oxford Shirt, Royal Blue Tie, Black Satin Vest. *Own black shoes and black socks.*

### GIRLS' CHOIR

Green Dress, flesh coloured nylons, black shoes, necklace. *Please see note above regarding platform shoes and sandals.*

### YOUNG MEN

White button-down Oxford shirt, silver tie, black vest, black pants and your own *black socks and black shoes.*

## **WOMEN**

Black outfit purchased from Expressions Boutique.

## **MEN**

Black button-down shirt, black pants, black tie (purchased from Cantabile).

**Substitutes for uniform items are unacceptable; this is to ensure the consistency of colour and quality.**

We also required choristers to purchase a casual t-shirt or polo-shirt to wear at workshops and casual guest performances and while on tour.

## **CONCERT DRESS**

- no extreme make-up or hair-styles; Long hair should be tied/pinned away from your face.
- no nail polish
- no jewelry, except for ear studs
- no watches (ask others to please turn off alarms)
- Girls may wear small barrettes, hair bands or scrunchies if they are black
- no perfume or cologne or strong scented deodorant/hair sprays— (many choristers have allergies/intolerances)

## AUDITIONS/RE-AUDITIONS

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Membership in Cantabile is open to all members of the community by audition. Each year current members of the choirs are re-auditioned for membership the following year. This is an opportunity to assess individual chorister's commitment to the choir, attendance, attitude, conduct at rehearsals, performances, on tour, and overall contribution to the choir in addition to musical progress.

## RECORDINGS

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In the fall of 1998 the Cantabile Choirs released their first CD entitled *in the distant sky*. In November 2000 the choirs released a Christmas album entitled *Blessing of the Snow*, and in May 2001 a special limited edition *Youth Singers Live* consisting of highlights from the last few seasons. In the fall of 2002, they released a Celtic CD entitled *All Around the Blooming Heather*. In 2006, the choirs released *Reflections* a commemorative, limited edition CD with previously unreleased material from the first decade of Cantabile. In December 2007, the choirs released our newest cd, *Midwinter*.

All six CD recordings have been generously sponsored by Chander and Anju Datta of Cancoil Thermal Corporation and they have been heard on CBC and National Public Radio in the US. This is one of the principal fundraisers for the organization. *Please consider buying CDs for your own collection and as gifts to family and friends.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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As a charitable organization, the Cantabile choirs is run by an elected Board of Directors. The Annual General Meeting of the organization takes place each October in the upstairs hall at Sydenham Street United Church. Choristers, parents, and interested individuals are invited to attend. If you have any experience and interest in serving on our Board of directors, please contact the Chair. At the meeting new members will be elected to serve on the board to fill the vacant positions. Please feel free to contact any members of the Board regarding the operations of the organization.

## VOLUNTEERS

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In order for the organization to run smoothly it is important that there is a high level of involvement by choristers, parents and friends. Attached is a list of some of our important volunteer positions. We are grateful to all those who have volunteered to help coordinate these activities. If you are willing to serve as a coordinator please contact the Cantabile office.