



ROBERT SHAFER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

THE CITY CHOIR OF WASHINGTON

Robert Shafer, *Artistic Director*

AUDITION INFORMATION PACKET

General Information, Rehearsal and Performance Schedules
2017-2018 Season

Information as of June 1, 2017

Contact:

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The City Choir of Washington

“In just a few seasons, artistic director Robert Shafer has shaped the City Choir of Washington into another of the area's first-class choruses.” – *The Washington Post*

Critics and audiences alike have praised **The City Choir of Washington** and its Artistic Director **Robert Shafer** for consistently beautiful choral tone, clear diction, and exquisite attention to musical detail. The City Choir has performed with The National Symphony and The Washington National Opera Orchestra at The Kennedy Center, Wolf Trap Park for the Performing Arts and Lincoln Center for the Arts under the batons of Stephen Lord, Randall Craig Fleischer, Ludwig Wicki, Marvin Hamlisch, and Murry Sidlin. In addition, the group has performed to capacity audiences in their own yearly subscription series conducted by Maestro Shafer.

In the 2012-2013 season, The City Choir of Washington presented the world premiere of *Three Hymns of George Herbert* and *Tolstoy's Creed* by Sir John Tavener, with the composer in attendance. The work was commissioned especially for The City Choir of Washington by the Legatum Institute, under the leadership of its Executive Director, Dr. Jeffrey Gedmin. In 2013 The City Choir of Washington gave the U.S. premiere of Benjamin Britten's *Two Psalms*, and in 2016 The City Choir of Washington gave the U.S. premiere of Sir John Tavener's *Requiem Fragments*.

The City Choir is presently in its eleventh anniversary season. The City Choir of Washington's 2017-2018 season will include performances of works by Bruckner, Charpentier, Handel, a world premiere by Brian Bartoldus, and our annual *Holly and the Ivy: Music for Christmas* concert. The 2017-2018 season will mark Maestro Robert Shafer's 50th anniversary as a choral conductor in the Washington area.

The City Choir is comprised of approximately 135 professional-level volunteer singers from throughout the Washington metropolitan area. The City Choir of Washington dedicates itself to inspiring singers, audience members and the community to discover the rich musical and cultural heritage of choral music. Through performances and educational and community outreach programs such as The City Singers, Partners in Song, and The Young American Artists, The City Choir is committed to nurturing the next generation of performers and audience members.

Our Artistic Director

Robert Shafer is Washington's GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor, composer, educator, and church musician. He has been active in the Washington metropolitan area more than 40 years. He conducted The Washington Chorus for 36 years before he was invited to become the Artistic Director of The City Choir of Washington in 2007. While Maestro Shafer was the Artistic Director of TWC, he won a GRAMMY® for Best Choral Performance for their recording of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*. Mr. Shafer also prepared The Washington Chorus for the GRAMMY® award-winning recording of John Corigliano's *Of Rage and Remembrance* with Leonard Slatkin and The National Symphony. Mr. Shafer is Professor Emeritus of Music of Shenandoah University and Conservatory in Winchester, VA.

In June 2011, the Choralis Foundation Board of Directors and Artistic Director Gretchen Kuhrmann named Robert Shafer as the winner of the 2nd Annual Greater Washington DC Area Choral Excellence Award. This award is given to a person or organization that has made significant contributions to the art of choral singing in the greater DC metropolitan area.

Our Website

www.citychoir.org

Audition Dates

Auditions are generally held in the summer and early fall for new singers. Additional audition dates will be arranged as necessary to accommodate interested singers and fill available openings. Returning singers generally re-audition each season in order to retain their place in the chorus. Auditions for new singers for the 2017-2018 season will be held during the month of July.

Audition Location

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, 4201 Albemarle Street, Washington, DC 20016. The church is located one block from the Tenleytown Metro station on the Red Line. For driving directions to this venue, please go to this page on the SCEC website: http://columba.org/index.php/2011/about/getting_to_st_cs

Audition requirements

You need to be able to read music, sing in tune, and hold your part within an SATB choir. You do not have to bring music for your audition, but you might be asked to sing a portion of a well-known choral piece. You will be asked to sing vocal exercises to show your range, and you will be asked to sight read a short passage.

You will be notified of the results of your audition within several days. Please make sure that we have your correct contact information so that we can let you know about your audition results.

Rehearsals

Piano rehearsals are held on Monday evenings from 7:15 – 9:45 PM. We rehearse in the Great Hall of St. Columba's Episcopal Church.

SPECIAL NOTE: St. Columba's is closed on Federal or DC holidays. On those, days, we will rehearse at another prearranged location. Please see the season schedule for specific notes about each rehearsal locations.

There are two orchestra rehearsals for each concert. They occur during the week of the concert and are required for all singers who will sing that performance. Please see the attached schedule for dates, times and locations.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is a requirement for our singers. We realize that you may have an emergency situation, such as illness or a family situation, that may preclude your attendance on occasion. Any singer who misses more than three rehearsals within a given concert preparation sequence may be asked to sit out that concert.

If you must miss a piano rehearsal, you are required to notify your Section Leader no later than noon on the day after that rehearsal. If you anticipate an absence from an orchestra rehearsal or concert, you must also notify the Membership Chair <lynnemezzo@aol.com> and the Assistant Conductor so our Artistic Director can be informed about your proposed absence in advance.

Punctuality and Cooperation

Please arrive for each rehearsal at least five minutes in advance so that you can be seated and ready to begin at the stated time. If you must be more than a few minutes late for a rehearsal, please notify your Section Leader as soon as you know you will be late. Talking during rehearsals is not looked upon kindly.

There will be a fifteen-minute break during the rehearsal. Delicious snacks are available for you during the break. Singers are requested to contribute \$1.00 per week to help subsidize the cost of these snacks. Please make sure to return promptly at the end of the break.

Music and Folders

Each singer will purchase most of the music for our concerts from our Music Librarian. The cost is estimated to be \$75-\$100 per season. If you already have the same edition of a composition we are performing, you may use your own score. If you cannot afford to purchase your scores, please speak with your section leader so we can try to help.

Some of the music will be available on loan. This music must be returned to the designated box immediately after the final performance of that work. If you do not return the music, you will be billed for the replacement cost of that score.

You will need a large format black folder for use in all our concerts. This is the standard choral folder that many groups presently use. If you do not already own this folder, you may purchase it at several local music stores or from the Music Librarian. All singers will purchase a red 3-ring binder to use in our Christmas concerts, and they will be available for purchase at the dress rehearsals. Please purchase our standard folders so we maintain a professional, uniform look in performance.

Dues

TCCW does not require annual dues. However, beginning with the 2017-2018 season, there will be a \$100 facilities/user fee to defray the cost of the hall rentals for Monday rehearsals and the cost of our world-class accompanist. Consult with your tax professional about the deductability of the fee.

Supporting TCCW

Each member of The City Choir of Washington is asked to support the organization in some way, through monetary donations and selling four tickets to each concert. If a monetary donation is not feasible, please talk with your Section Leader to get an idea of how you can volunteer your time to further the interests of TCCW.

Required performance uniform

MEN:

Standard black tux, tux shirt with a regular collar (No wing collars, please.), bow tie, black dress shoes, black socks.

WOMEN:

Each woman must purchase the long sleeved black dress that we use. The dress is washable and very comfortable. The purchase will be made through our "Dress Lady," Susan Schreurs <schreurs_ss@yahoo.com>. Please make arrangements with Susan to come early to a rehearsal so that you can be measured for your dress. The cost is approximately \$75 including shipping. Alternations and hemming are the responsibility of each individual singer.

Black closed-toe dress shoes, black hose or knee socks, small earrings (no more than ½" in diameter - optional).

ALL SINGERS:

Please wear your TCCW membership pin on the upper left side of your performance uniform ("above your heart".) Each new member will receive a pin at his/her first performance. If necessary, you may purchase a replacement TCCW pin for \$2.00.

Please do not wear hair decorations, necklaces or bracelets of any kind. Wedding rings and a watch are permitted as part of your concert uniform. If your watch has any audible signal features, please disable them before you come to the concert. Please do not take your phone onstage with you for performances.

Special Appearances – performance uniform

The performance uniform for certain concerts may be different, depending on the requests or requirements of a particular venue or performance. These performance requirements are often the standard “black and white” or all black. We will let you know well ahead of each performance if there is a different outfit, and the components will be readily available in local clothing stores.

Communications

The City Choir of Washington has a communications plan in place to inform its members of important information in a timely manner.

- *Singer News and Notes* is an electronic publication that highlights events and articles for and by our members. SN&N will also contain links to documents that have previously been sent out to our members. SN&N will generally be sent by email on Fridays to the current members.
- On occasion, emails will be sent to TCCW singers that contain time sensitive information. These emails may require a direct response. Each singer should have a valid, reliable email address in order to receive and reply to these communications. If you do not have the ability to receive and answer emails, please ask your Section Leader to call you when these notices are received so you know what’s happening. Please check your designated email address regularly so you stay up to date with our activities. **Please check your email every day during each concert week. If you change your email address, please let TCCW know right away (info@citychoir.org).**
- We have a Singer’s Page on our website. This secure page that includes the roster of current members will only be accessible to current members by password. The password will be changed at appropriate intervals and the new password will be sent to current members of the choir. Documents such as scores, ticket forms, and schedules will be available for download from this page or through link in each week’s *Singer News and Notes*.

Cancellations

On rare occasions, we must cancel a rehearsal or performance due to circumstances beyond our control, such as a weather emergency. When DC Public Schools are closed because of the weather, our rehearsal will be canceled. If this situation occurs, you will be notified by email. *Please be sure to let TCCW know about any changes in your contact information so we can continue to communicate with you about important matters.*

Section Leaders

Each section has an appointed Section Leader and Assistant Section Leader. They are your first point of contact if you need anything. They monitor attendance, answer questions, bring your concerns to the attention of the appropriate person (Artistic Director, Assistant Conductor, Membership Coordinator, etc.) They are often your best source of information and assistance in our group. Please contact them if you need help, or if you must miss a rehearsal.

TCCW Staff

We have a small but dedicated paid staff (Chorus Manager and Director of Operations) who will do everything they can to make your time with us as rewarding as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact them if you have a concern or need assistance that you have not been able to obtain elsewhere. In addition to our paid staff, TCCW has a Chorus Management Committee, comprised of the Section Leaders and heads of various committees within the organization. Get to know these people, and volunteer to help them!

Chorus Officers

Each year, the Chorus elects a President and Vice President. The Chorus President attends the monthly TCCW Board meetings as your representative. The Chorus President also serves as the Chair of the Chorus Management Committee. The Chorus Vice President represents the Chorus President in his/her absence and also organizes our social activities.

Being a full member of the chorus

We value each and every member of The City Choir of Washington, not only for his or her voice, but also for the sense of community that they bring to the group. Part of the responsibility of being a member of TCCW is to do your part to assure that we have full audiences to listen to our performances. We ask that you do the following things to help our organization grow and prosper:

- Sell subscriptions and tickets to our concerts! Each member is encouraged to sell as many subscriptions and tickets as possible.
- Volunteer to assist us in your areas of expertise and interest.
- Help us find sponsors for our events, secure in-kind donations or program ads.
- Add friends and family members to our email and snail mail lists.
- Help distribute flyers and concert postcards to businesses and organizations.
- Set up and take down equipment for rehearsals.
- Set up and clean up the snacks for rehearsals as requested.
- Volunteer to work at special events.

Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success. – Henry Ford

You will receive our most recent 2017-2018 Rehearsal and Performance Schedule as a separate attachment. This schedule is subject to change, but it has the most up-to-date information available. ***Please read through the schedule before you audition to make sure you can fulfill all of the commitments.*** If you have any questions or concerns about your ability to commit to this schedule or need additional information, please contact our Membership Chair, Lynne Price <lynnemezzo@aol.com> before you audition.

Concert dates: November 5, 2017, December 17, 2017, and April 22, 2018

N.B. There are sometimes extra rehearsals, usually on a Saturday. These may occur if we have to miss a Monday rehearsal because of inclement weather, or if there are not enough Mondays in a rehearsal cycle.