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MEMBER HANDBOOK

For the 2018-2019 Season

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Northumberland Orchestra & Choir (“NOC”)!

Whether you are a new member or a long-standing member, you are an important part of our organization. This handbook provides you with the expectations, guidelines and information regarding your membership in the NOC so that each member can benefit from and enjoy their NOC experience.

Please take the time to review the contents of the handbook, and as this is a working document, and very much a work in progress, we look forward to your suggestions for improvements.

a. Our History

The NOC is one of the few joint orchestral/choral organizations in Canada.

The Northumberland orchestra was founded by the guiding vision of Dr. Philip Schaus in 1978, when enthusiastic local musicians united to form a symphony orchestra. A year later the local choral society joined with the orchestra as the newly-constituted Northumberland Orchestra & Choir. In 1990, Matthew Jaskiewicz succeeded Dr. Schaus as Music Director, and led the orchestra and choir until 2007. Michael Newnham followed Mr. Jaskiewicz and held the post for six seasons until 2013.

Our current Music Director/Orchestra Conductor, John Kraus, succeeded Mr. Newnham commencing with the 2013-14 season. Mitchell Cox joined the organization as Piano Accompanist for the 2015-16 season and was appointed to the position of Choral Director commencing with the 2016-17 season.

b. Mission Statement

The Northumberland Orchestra and Choir perform high-quality orchestral and choral music and encourage the development of community choristers and instrumentalists.

c. Vision Statement

Striving for excellence.

d. Values

We appreciate the opportunity to sing and to play together in rehearsal and in public.

We welcome musical challenges and want to learn.

We have a community focus.

We share a desire for fellowship.

We value classical music and seek to promote it.

e. Constitution

The Constitution of the Northumberland Orchestra Society (NOS) is available for review on our website at www.northumberlandmusic.ca. Changes to the content of this document are made through a voting process by board members, and are reviewed with members and ratified during the AGM.

f. **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

The AGM is held after both the end of the music season, and the fiscal year end (May 31) of the organization. Members are given notice to be present for a review of the previous season and plans for the coming season.

2. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is elected at the AGM. The Board of Directors oversees the management of the business and affairs of the NOC. All members are encouraged to consider contributing to the organization by joining the board and/or working on the various committees. The current Board membership is listed on our website.

3. COMMITTEES, VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

The NOC, in accordance with its by-laws, has established various committees and functions that are necessary to realizing both the artistic and operational goals of the NOC. All members are encouraged to participate on one or more of these committees. For details on what the various committees do, please refer to the By-laws section. A list of Committee Chairpersons and persons responsible for specific functions is listed in the appendices at the end of the hand book.

4. MEMBERSHIP

(a) Fees

Paid annually, the current membership fee is set at \$125.00. This fee helps offset a portion of the operating costs of the NOC. This fee also recognizes the musical advancement that performing members receive from the Music Directors. Board members contribute a further annual \$25.00 fee. Cheques should be made payable to "Northumberland Orchestra Society" and should be received by the organization at the first choir or orchestra rehearsal. Receipts may be requested. Regrettably, for legal reasons the receipts cannot be classified as charitable donations.

Exception: commencing with the 2013-14 season, at the prerogative of the Board and confirmed by the Music Directors, membership fees may be waived for self-declared professionals, students 18 years of age or younger who pay fees to participate in another music organization, or students who are in full time attendance at a college or university.

(b) Assessment of Ability / Auditions

For both Choir and Orchestra, these will be scheduled by request and/or at the discretion of the Music Directors. The requirements are the equivalent of a Grade 6 RCM music level for orchestra members, and for choir members, experience singing in a choir, along with some ability to read music.

(c) Communication

All members are encouraged to bring suggestions or concerns to their Reps, or the Chair of the Performing Members Committee, for conveyance to the Committee or to the NOC Board. All formal complaints must be submitted in writing. No musician shall be dismissed, demoted or otherwise disciplined without just cause.

The Music Directors, in consultation with the Performing Members Committee, will be responsible for informing members of any change in their status for just cause.

(d) Fundraising / Promotions / Volunteering

The NOC is a community organization and to encourage and offer as wide a community participation level as possible, does not charge fees sufficient to run the day to day operations. In this spirit, all members are required to assist with promotions and fundraisers.

The single biggest fundraiser for the NOC, is bingo, and members are required to volunteer for a bingo team. If any member is unable to support bingo fundraising due to religious convictions, there are many other opportunities to help the organization.

Volunteers are always needed to distribute posters and flyers for our concerts and public relations / media initiatives. Other fundraisers include the annual film and dinner events, Bach Yard Sale, solicitation of programme advertising, donations, sponsorships and grants. When all members contribute, we improve our opportunity to be successful.

The bingo commitment is a maximum of one Friday evening or one Sunday afternoon per month for approximately 4-5 hours. The tasks required are, for the most part, not complicated and do not take long to learn. The events take place at a Bingo Hall in Cobourg, and it is a non-smoking environment. This fundraising activity generates \$12,000 - \$15,000 dollars annually and allows the NOC to maintain its member ship fee levels. Volunteer participation benefits many charities and not-for-profits like the NOC. Losing a bingo date due to a lack of member participation, would be difficult to correct, as there are many organizations on the Hall's waiting list. If we get more members involved in this fundraiser, the required commitment may end up being less than once per month.

5. EXPECTATIONS OF PERFORMING MEMBERS

The experience of playing in an ensemble or singing in a choir is greatly affected by how one interacts with one's musical colleagues. How we relate to our Music Directors, Section Leaders and each other, and how the Music Directors and Section Leaders relate to the members, will determine how each of us enjoys being part of the NOC. The NOC believe this list of common courtesies will help to foster an environment of mutual respect and appreciation.

- Observe concert protocols and professional behaviour. See section 7, below, for further details.
- Maintain a consistent record of rehearsal attendance. See section 6, below, for further details.
- Always arrive early enough so that you are warmed up and ready to play at the rehearsal or concert start time.
- Come to rehearsals with your music prepared. If you don't know your part, you are not ready to rehearse, except where new music is introduced at rehearsal. Practice all parts that are evident at rehearsal as needing work.
- Bring a pencil to rehearsals – no musician can remember everything that is discussed, and time will be wasted at later rehearsals repeating things for those who did not mark their parts.
- Do not criticize colleagues in front of others or to others. Music making is a very intimate time of sharing, and players/singers must be able to trust one another, their Section Leaders and Music Directors to achieve the best results.
- Don't take musical criticism personally. The intent of the Music Directors or Section Leaders is to help members improve. By the same token, you have a right to expect that your Music Director and Section Leader will convey criticism or instructions in a positive and respectful manner.

- When the Music Director stops the ensemble during rehearsal, all singing or playing should immediately cease. Please do not talk when the Music Director is giving instructions. Wait for the Music Director to complete his instructions before asking a question.
- When suggesting a correction to a colleague, please be respectful. For example: “We seem not to be in tune at F. I may be high or you may be low. Can we check it?” is better than “You are flat. Can you bring that pitch up?”
- If someone in your section makes a mistake, do not glare at that person. In a performance, do not let your manner indicate that you or anyone else has made a mistake. It serves no useful purpose to call attention to an error that the audience may not have noticed.
- Respect the right of your colleagues to participate enthusiastically and joyfully in this musical experience.

6. EXPECTATIONS OF CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA REPRESENTATIVES

The Choir and Orchestra Representatives (“Reps”) are important liaisons between their performing member peers, the Music Directors and the Board. The following is a list of key responsibilities and expectations of your Reps.

- Welcome all members at the start of the year.
- Welcome and introduce new members when they attend a first rehearsal;
- Provide new members with a copy of the Members Handbook and season rehearsal/concert schedule.
- Communicate schedule changes and locations throughout the year to all members.
- Take attendance at all rehearsals; follow up on absences with a phone call.
- Receive suggestions/concerns from members – bring forward to the Performing Members Committee.
- Encourage members to support fundraising activities and to participate on committees.
- Attend, as invited, either Steering Committee or Board meetings.
- Present in a positive manner the benefits of membership in the NOC
- Generally, model the expectations of performing members in all respects.

7. REHEARSALS

All performing members are expected to attend rehearsals. At the discretion of the Music Directors, if more than two (2) rehearsals are missed prior to a concert, the member may not be allowed to participate in that concert. Attendance at the pre-concert Friday rehearsal and the Saturday dress rehearsal is mandatory.

Consideration will be given to member requests for absence. Such requests should be discussed with your Choir or Orchestra Rep.

Generally, each rehearsal does not exceed two-and-one-half hours in length. There is a scheduled rest period of fifteen minutes within each rehearsal/service. The rest period shall be no later than one-and-a-half hours after commencement of the rehearsal/service.

There shall be an interval of at least two hours between any two rehearsals/services unless agreed otherwise. The place of rehearsal/service shall be available to the members at least 30 minutes prior to the commencement of any rehearsal/service.

Performing Members should expect an Order of Concert at the dress rehearsal for each concert, even though this may be discussed in earlier rehearsals.

8. CONCERT PROTOCOL / ETIQUETTE

(a) Orchestra

- Playing or talking should stop when the Concertmaster walks on stage.
- When the “A” is given for winds, wind players only will tune. The second “A” is for the strings. Wind players should refrain from tuning at this time. When the Concertmaster sits, all tuning will end and players will wait for his signal to rise for the entrance of the conductor.
- At the beginning of the second half of the concert, tuning will proceed as per above. Musicians are not required to stand for the Music Director’s entrance. Turning pages during “Grand Pause” breaks or very quiet passages should be avoided whenever possible.

(b) Choir

- Members should be alert to the order given by the Choir Marshall to go on stage.
- Enter with your folders under your left arm.
- Move quickly and quietly to the stage area when given the signal to do so.
- Wait for the Music Director's signals to rise or sit, as required.
- Books should be held in the right hand and pages turned with the left hand. Do not turn pages when not performing, even to follow along with soloists.
- Please do not carry on conversations, even “sotto voce” while on stage during performance, or in between pieces.

Members should return all music to the Orchestra and Choir Librarians.

Orchestra and choir members should stay to mingle with the audience at the post-concert reception, if one is being held. It provides an opportunity for us to integrate with the audience community.

(c) Concert Dress Guidelines

Men	Women
Black tuxedo or black suit	Black blouses, long sleeves, high neck with or without a collar.
White collared shirt, black bow tie	Black skirts (mid-calf, or long) or dress pants (no jeans)
Dark socks and black dress shoes	Dark stockings (no bare legs) and black or dark dress shoes
No cologne or scent	No perfume or scent

(d) Stage Management

Reasonable efforts shall be made to provide the following physical working conditions:

- adequate dressing facilities
- music stands and chairs
- adequate lighting
- reasonable temperature

9. MUSIC

Much of the music used is the property of the NOC. For some concerts, certain music may be borrowed or rented. Music should be marked up using soft-lead pencils ONLY, as borrowed and rented music must be returned WITHOUT any markings. Members are responsible for removing markings they have made before turning the music back to the Choir or Orchestra Librarians. Members will also be responsible for charges associated with late returns of rental music.

Extra musicians as may be needed and approved by the Board to perform in specific concerts will be engaged as far in advance of a rehearsal/service as is practicable, and each musician shall be provided with a schedule of rehearsals/services and music in a timely manner.

10. BOWING ETIQUETTE

(a) Concertmaster Responsibility

The Concertmaster is solely responsible for setting bowings. Once the Concertmaster has set bowings and conferred with the Conductor, the Concertmaster will distribute his/her bowings to the Section Principals.

(b) Section Principal Responsibility

Upon receipt of the Concertmaster's bowings, each Section Principal will bow their respective parts. When this is complete, the music will be ready to distribute to the string section members. Please note that Section Principals are responsible for creating a separate bowed master, which shall be given to the Orchestra Librarians.

(c) String Player Responsibility

Each string player is responsible for copying the bowings from the Section Principal. The ideal order is for the 2nd desk to copy from the 1st desk, 3rd desk from the 2nd desk, etc. If there is any difficulty in copying, please do not hesitate to contact your Section Principal for assistance.

(d) Bowed Parts for Extra Musicians

Orchestra Librarians shall ensure that bowed masters are received from Section Principals for purposes of supplying extra musicians with properly bowed copies of music in advance of dress and pre-concert rehearsals.

11. PRIVACY

Your personal information - name, address, telephone number, email, etc., will not knowingly be divulged to any other organization or persons without your permission. All redundant files pertaining to personnel, past and present, will be returned or shredded.

12. NOC AFFILIATIONS

The NOC is a member of the following organizations:

- SOCAN (Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada)
- Orchestras Canada
- Arts Council of Northumberland
- Canada Helps (Fund-raising organization)
- Choirs Ontario

13. CONTACT INFORMATION

Address: Northumberland Orchestra Society
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Cobourg, ON K9A 4W4

Phone: 905-376-3021

Website <http://www.northumberlandmusic.ca>

Email info@northumberlandmusic.ca