

# CRYSTAL COAST CHORAL SOCIETY

## *Practice Is What We Do Before Rehearsal*

### GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING APRIL 2020 HANDEL'S *MESSIAH* Effective January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Thank you for being part of this very exciting and challenging presentation of the complete Handel's *Messiah* by the Crystal Coast Choral Society. Our orchestra is the best professional players in Eastern North Carolina and the vocal soloists are world class singers. Our guest conductor, Dr. Jonathan Griffith, Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Distinguished Concerts International New York (DCINY), is an award winning conductor and recognized authority on *Messiah*. This document gives general information concerning your participation, and is important in your personal preparation. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact the Choral Society Music Director, Finley Woolston, at 910-358-2997 or email [finley@ec.rr.com](mailto:finley@ec.rr.com).

#### REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

We are being innovative in our rehearsal schedule in order to accommodate both the regular Choral Society members and also other experienced individuals and singers from other ensembles who might not be able to attend our regular Tuesday night rehearsals. In addition to those Tuesday rehearsals we'll have three Saturday rehearsals.

The regular Choral Society members will be expected to attend all Tuesday rehearsals as well as all three Saturday rehearsals. They will also be required to prepare the music in personal practice in addition to the weekly and Saturday rehearsals.

Experienced individuals and singers from other ensembles who can't attend the Tuesday rehearsals will be expected to attend all three Saturday rehearsals. These singers will also be expected to prepare the music on their own in advance of the Saturday rehearsals.

With some exceptions, all singers will be required to attend the Thursday evening, April 23<sup>rd</sup> piano rehearsal with the guest conductor. Although we hope they would make every effort to be there, experienced individuals and singers from other ensembles attending only the Saturday rehearsals, especially those long distances from Jacksonville, may skip the Thursday evening rehearsal.

Of course, all singers will be required to attend the dress rehearsal on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>.

All Tuesday and Saturday rehearsals will be in the Fellowship Hall of Swansboro United Methodist Church, Highway 24, Swansboro, NC. Tuesday rehearsals are 7:00-9:00 p.m. Saturday rehearsals are 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m./lunch 12:00-1:00 p.m./1:00-3:30 p.m.

Dress rehearsal and performance are at the Earl Taylor Performing Arts Center, White Oak High School, 1001 Piney Green Road, Jacksonville, NC.

## REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE DATES

### TUESDAY REHEARSALS:

January 7, 4, 21. January 28 off

February 4, 11, 18. February 25 off

March 3, 10, 17. March 24 and 31 off

April 7, 14. April 21 off

### SATURDAY REHEARSALS:

March 21 and 28      April 18

### PIANO REHEARSAL WITH GUEST CONDUCTOR

Thursday, April 23, 7:00 - 9:30 p.m. CALL TIME IS 6:45 p.m.

### DRESS REHEARSAL

Saturday, April 25, 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. CALL TIME IS 11:45 a.m.

### CONCERT

Sunday, April 26, 2:00 p.m. CALL TIME IS 1:00 p.m.

The concert will last approximately two and a half to three hours including a 30 minute intermission.

## VOCAL SCORE EDITION TO BE USED

The grey cover G. Schirmer edition of the *Messiah* SATB vocal score has been around for generations and many choral ensembles continue to use it. However, there are literally dozens of mistakes in the Schirmer score. Time consuming corrections need to be made in order to use the score. Other editions using modern scholarship and research are available that are much better than the Schirmer. Because of that we will NOT be using the Schirmer edition.

We request that all singers purchase personal copies of the Watkins Shaw edition published by Novello. Not only is it a much better edition, it's also the one the Choral Society Music Director and our guest conductor will refer to in rehearsals. You can order the Novello edition from any music supply company. The cost is about \$10. We recommend ordering from J.W. Pepper. Their website is [www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com). Phone is 800-345-6296. The product number is 1378520. You can also search under "Messiah Novello."

We will have a very limited number of Novello scores to lend at rehearsals to be returned when the singer's personal copy arrives. Although not necessary at rehearsals, all scores will be in a black cover or binder for performance.

We will be performing the entire *Messiah* **EXCEPT** the following movements: #34-36; 49-52.

Even with the excellence of the Novello score, there are still changes that that need to be made in order to make it ready for rehearsals and performance. Those changes also include directions from our guest conductor. ***These changes will be provided in a separate document.*** We request that all singers have the changes in your SATB score before attending rehearsals. Time at each rehearsal is extremely valuable. Having the changes in the scores before arrival will save tremendous amounts of time at rehearsals by not having to make them verbally.

## **PARTICIPATION COST**

The financial requirements of presenting *Messiah* at this level are considerable. We receive support from various sources, but not enough to cover expenses. Like all non-profit arts organizations, we also can't depend on ticket sales to meet the budget. All members of the Crystal Coast Choral Society pay dues to sing in the chorus. We ask that singers joining us specifically to sing this concert also share in these dues. The following rates apply:

- a. Current singers who have paid the entire 2019-2020 dues will not be requested to pay additional.
- b. Current singers who paid only for the fall 2019 season will be requested to pay an additional \$35
- c. Additional singers joining specifically for the *Messiah* concert will be requested to pay \$35

Payment may be made by check, cash or credit card. For those attending the weekly Tuesday rehearsals we request that payment be made as soon as possible in the rehearsal season. The experienced singers attending only the three Saturday rehearsals may make payment then.

## **INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE MATERIALS**

All singers will be provided with an individual, voice-specific practice CD recorded on piano. All the voice parts sound at the same time with the appropriate voice louder. This CD will be prepared by the Choral Society and will be free of charge.

All singers are highly encouraged to purchase a commercially prepared voice-specific practice CD. They are also available as an .MP3 immediate download. These CD's have professional singers on each part and a professional orchestra. All voices sound at once with the appropriate voice louder. Many of the movements are taken at a slow tempo to aid in learning. These materials are absolutely invaluable to aid in learning during individual practice between rehearsals.

These CD's and .MP3 files are copyrighted materials and may not be legally reproduced privately. They will not be provided by the Choral Society.

You may order the commercial practice CD's and .MP3 downloads from Rehearsal Arts, LLC. Their website is [www.rearts.com](http://www.rearts.com). Phone number is 888-302-8524. Current cost is \$28.70, and worth every dime!

## **CONCERT DRESS**

Men- (a) standard black tuxedo, tuxedo shirt with regular or wing collar, cummerbund, black bow tie, black shoes, OR (b) black trousers, white long-sleeved dress shirt, black suit jacket, black bow tie, black shoes.

Women- black top and bottom,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length sleeve top, floor length bottom (pants are OK), black shoes, single strand of pearls. More complete information in this area will be provided closer to the concert date.

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS TO SING WITH THE CHORAL SOCIETY**

We are a non-auditioned community chorus that welcomes singers of all ages and musical experience. However, we require members to: (a) have a pleasant singing voice; (b) be willing to do individual personal practice outside the weekly rehearsals; and (c) be able to match pitch to sing within the appropriate voice section.

The following are excerpts from the standard Choral Society pre-concert season letter:

INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE: I really do know how difficult it can be to find time to practice outside of the weekly rehearsals. I do, however, fully expect you to do it. The sooner we all know the basic notes the sooner we can make actual music together. An ideal is at least 30 minutes each day. If you can't sing each day, at least study your part, practice the words, work on bothersome rhythms, etc.

CUT-OFF DATE FOR NEW SINGERS: This is at my discretion, but as a general rule no new singers will be accepted after the 4<sup>th</sup> rehearsal (February 4th). Up to and including 4<sup>th</sup> rehearsal all qualified singers are invited. After 4<sup>th</sup> rehearsal, please check with me before inviting someone new. I really do want to give everyone who wants to a chance to sing with us, so if there are any questions, please ask.

REHEARSAL ETIQUETTE: The camaraderie and fellowship with other singers before, during and after rehearsal is one of the reasons I love choral music. During rehearsal, however, I insist that you concentrate on the music and not engage in unnecessary talking. When a section other than yours is rehearsing use the time to silently sing your part, study the score, etc. If you personally have difficulties with the music don't hesitate to ask for help, but please, allow me to decide if an entire voice section needs extra attention. Also, if a question is asked from the chorus let me be the only one to answer! We have a finite rehearsal time and I need to be the one who decides how that time is used.

MARKING OF MUSIC AND USE OF PENCIL: Please be sure you always have a pencil at rehearsals. Mark your scores with special instructions from the podium, notes to yourself (*WATCH THE CONDUCTOR!!!!* is still my favorite), and anything else you need to make things clearer. Again, if a special instruction is given from the podium don't trust your memory- write it down.

INDIVIDUAL ENJOYMENT: You have heard me say this a few times, but it always bears repeating. Even though we strive towards a very high standard, and rehearsals can sometime be intense, I consider it a prime personal responsibility that we all have a great time at rehearsals. The fun, fellowship, musicianship and obvious love in this chorus are very, very special. I am forever grateful for the hard work you do, the long distances you drive, your good humor and your friendship. If there is anything I can do to make things even more enjoyable, let me know.

Yours in Harmony,

*Finley*