



Policies and Information

2017-2018

ABC Bel Canto Choirs
11520 Howe Road
Akron, NY 14001

(716)759-6428
amherstbelcanto@gmail.com
www.abcbelcanto.org

WELCOME!

...to the ABC Bel Canto Choirs! You and your child are in for a very exciting experience this year. Please read each section of this booklet carefully, so you will be aware of the expectations for participation in our program.

ABC Bel Canto's mission is to develop within the children of WNY a love of high-quality choral music through performance. Our choristers work to increase their skill and musicianship while developing a fine vocal tradition. ABC choristers experience a variety of music and enjoy musical growth in their many special concert performances in varied venues.

The Choir was founded in 1994 by Sue Fay Allen to sing for a single concert alongside a local adult community choir. Since then, ABC has grown from the original 25 singers to over 120 choristers from 30 different schools. **Presto** is for children grades 3-6, **Vivace** for treble voices grades 6-12, and **Bravo** for changed male voices and high school women.

Welcome to our 23rd Season of making excellent choral music!

STAFF

Mrs. Sue Fay Allen, *Executive Director*

Mrs. Laura Biddle, *Business Manager*

and *Conductor- Vivace*

Dr. David Bond, *Accompanist- Vivace/Bravo*

Dr. Sarah Meredith, *Accompanist- Presto*

Ms. Julie Furlong, *Conductor- Presto*

Mrs. Nancy Gutillo, *Conductor- Bravo*

Mr. Puneet Jacob, *Conductor- Bravo*

Ms. Simoya Ghajar, *Student Assistant*

BOARD

ABC is directed by a volunteer Board that determines policy, sets the budget and oversees all Choir activities. New Board members are voted into office by the adult members of ABC Bel Canto Choir, Inc.

Madeleine Kaufman, *President*

Michael Anton Sciortino, *Vice President*

Margaret Wietig, *Treasurer*

Elizabeth Oldfield, *Recording Secretary*

Susan Munford, *Corresponding Secretary*

Sue Fay Allen

Jon Brennan

Jennifer Kopp

Mindy Witte

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals are held on Thursdays from September to May:

Presto 4:30 – 5:30pm

Vivace 6:00 – 7:30pm

Bravo 7:30 – 8:45pm

All rehearsals are held in the Fellowship Hall of Christ United Methodist Church unless otherwise announced.

CUMC is located on the corner of Harlem and Saratoga in Amherst.

Expectations

- Be 5-10 minutes early to each rehearsal.
- Please do not touch the piano.
- Bring a pencil and your music folder every week.
- No gum, candy, food, or CELL PHONES allowed in the rehearsal room.

Attendance Policy

Any chorister who accumulates excessive unexcused absences may be asked to leave the Choir. No tuition refunds will be issued for a student who must resign from ABC for attendance reasons.

To receive an excused absence, families must contact their conductor *prior* to the missed event.

Presto, Ms. Furlong: furlong@abcbelcanto.org

Vivace, Mrs. Biddle: biddle@abcbelcanto.org

Bravo, Mrs. Gutillo: gutillo@abcbelcanto.org

You may also call the ABC Attendance Line: (716)480-2618.

If you are calling on the same day as a rehearsal, performance, or event, you MUST use the ABC Attendance Line.

In addition, any chorister who misses the rehearsal immediately prior to a performance will not sing in that concert.

Voice Placement

All members will perform a voice screening each year for appropriate section placement.

CONCERTS

Expectations

- Be 5-10 minutes early for concert call time. This is usually a half-hour before the concert starts.
- Wear the concert dress appropriate for your choir (see “UNIFORMS”, next page)
- Vivace and Bravo members must bring their hardback concert folder (with music!)
- No perfume, cologne, or body spray
- No gum, candy, food, or CELL PHONES allowed
- Appropriate concert etiquette is expected at all times

Etiquette

- No talking during any part of a performance
- Applaud when appropriate; refrain from stomping, shouting, or calling out
- Follow adult instructions immediately—both from teachers and parent volunteers

**please refrain from flash photography during performances.*

please do not **ever post any ABC video or photo to YouTube or any other public website. This violates copyright agreements that we have with the music publishers and we could be sued and/or heavily fined.*

TUITION, MUSIC, & UNIFORMS

Tuition

Tuition is different for each choir, and goes towards our many expenses: music, folders, uniforms, maintenance, recordings, venue fees, insurance, travel costs, salaries, guest musicians, and clinicians.

Each chorister receives (included in tuition fee) a T-shirt at Retreat and a CD at the end of the season.

2017-2018 Tuition Rates:

Presto \$275

Vivace \$325

Bravo \$275

Vivace & Bravo \$375

A half-tuition payment is due by June 1st each year, with the balance due by the last week of August. A one-time \$25 fee is assessed when a child initially joins the choir to cover the cost of music and potential uniform damage. Tuition Assistance Grants are available based on need, but there is a minimum tuition payment of \$25 regardless of grants. There is also a discount of \$25 for each additional member of your family (beyond the first) who sings with ABC.

Music

Each chorister is assigned a number, which goes with the number marked on all of his/her music. The music is surprisingly expensive—so take good care of it! **Use only pencil to mark your music.** Lost or damaged music will be billed to the chorister.

Uniforms

Presto: Please purchase a **white, long-sleeved, button-down oxford shirt with a collar** and **black dress slacks**. All choristers will wear their shirts tucked in with a red bow tie loaned from the choir. **Black socks** and **flat shoes or sneakers** are also required.

Vivace: Please purchase a **white tuxedo shirt with wing-tip collar**. The shirt will be tucked into the chorister's own **black dress pants** and worn with **black socks/stockings** and **FLAT, black, closed-toe shoes**. Vivace members will be issued a vest from the choir, which must be returned at the end of the season.

Bravo: Please purchase a **white tuxedo shirt with wing-tip collar**. The shirt will be tucked into the chorister's own **black dress pants** and worn with **black socks/stockings** and **FLAT, black, closed-toe shoes**. Ladies will be issued a shawl and gentlemen will receive a bow tie and cummerbund which must be returned at the end of the season.

Replacement Costs:

The following costs will be billed to a chorister for lost or damaged items:

Vest, Cummerbund, or Shawl	\$50.00 each
Concert Folder	\$20.00 each
Bow Tie	\$10.00 each
Music	\$5.00 per piece

Refunds

100% of tuition is refundable if a chorister withdraws from the Choir **before the first rehearsal**.

80% is refunded if a chorister withdraws **by September 30th**.

No refunds will be given after September 30th.

FUNDRAISING

We hold several fundraisers each year to help support our overall operations and keep the cost of tuition as reasonable as possible. We also need to raise funds to cover the increasing need for Tuition Assistance Grants among our membership. Fundraising ideas generated by the Staff, Board, and individual choir parents help achieve these goals. We also work with Giving Assistant, are members of Amazon Smile, and use iGive.com to raise additional revenue. We rely on volunteer assistance to run these fundraisers and make them successful, and hope that every family can do their part to help ensure the future of ABC.

COMMUNICATION

Email

We send a weekly email to all our families with information, reminders, changes, and any other important events that may occur. ***It is extremely important that you read this email each week.*** If you change your email address, please contact Laura Biddle at amherstbelcanto@gmail.com immediately to make sure you continue to receive this important communication. We encourage older choristers to provide their email addresses as well, so they can be more involved in the details of Choir work.

If you do not have access to email, you will not receive these weekly informational bulletins. Please let us know so that we can be sure to contact you by phone for important, emergency notifications.

ABC respects your privacy and will not use this email list for anything other than the exchange of Choir-related messages.

Text Alerts

We will use the Remind service to send you text alerts and reminders regarding your child's choir. As a member of the group, you are automatically "opted-in" to this service. Please let Mrs. Biddle know if you would like to opt-out of these notices – but it's probably best for at least one parent (AND the older singers) to be receiving these messages.

Facebook

Search "ABC Bel Canto Choir" on Facebook to "Like" our page. Choristers who are on Facebook should also "Like" us, as well as your family and friends who are interested in following your child's participation in the group. Reminders, concert information, photos, and video will be posted here over the course of the season.

You may post photos or video of Choir activities to the Facebook page. Please also copy these files and give to Laura Biddle so we can use them for archival and PR purposes!

Web

Our website has all of the information you could ever need about the Choir (including downloadable forms, etc), and can be found at www.abcbelcanto.org.

Phone Tree

Even with all the technology available to us, sometimes the best way to get an important, emergency message or reminder out to the entire group is still by phone. Volunteers will assist in making calls when the need arises. Each family will also receive a spreadsheet with the contact information of other families in their Choir to assist in carpooling and other communication needs.