

# THE BATTLE CREEK BOYCHOIR

and the

## MUSIC CENTER OF SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN

The Battle Creek Boychoir (BCB) was incorporated in 1980 as a non-sectarian and not-for-profit organization. BCB offers boys ages seven and older the opportunity for professional music training and performance. BCB is affiliated worldwide with the Royal School of Church Music, and locally with the United Arts Council of Calhoun County.

BCB's sister group, The Battle Creek Girls' Chorus (GC) dates from 1987. The two groups have always been a part of the same administration. Although they maintain separate rehearsal and performance schedules, BCB and BCGC come together for special larger-scale projects from time to time.

In 2000, BCB/BCGC joined with the Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra, the Battle Creek Community Chorus, and the Battle Creek Community Music School to form the Music Center of South Central Michigan. BCB/GC's Executive Director Elinor Marsh serves as Executive Director of the Music Center. As a total organization, the Music Center offers collaborative musical performances of rare distinction. A recent venture of the Music Center is the IMPACT program (Inner-city Music Proving Arts Can Teach), which is directed toward the at-risk community. Information on Music Center administration and funding may be found on page 20.

### THE MISSION OF THE BATTLE CREEK BOYCHOIR

BCB exists for the teaching and performance of music to the highest attainable standard. BCB performs music from a variety of traditions and styles, and serves as a springboard to lifelong achievement and success.

In addition to musical training, the Boychoir offers character development and discipline, the singular excitement of outstanding performance, personal responsibility and commitment to a group, positive self-image, and perhaps most important, the great inner joy and self-fulfillment of sharing a talent with audiences who appreciate music of exceptional artistic quality and value.

Since its beginnings, BCB has earned a fine reputation for the quality of its performance, and the breadth and thoroughness of its educational offerings. BCB is among the few groups of its kind in the country which attain so high a standard on just two rehearsals per week. At the level to which we aspire, three or more rehearsals weekly are more often the standard. BCB achieves its goals through a highly efficient standard in rehearsal, and with the dedicated commitment of our staff and families. BCB believes that its families are its greatest treasure. We respect deeply the loyalty of our families, and the occasional sacrifices which must be made in support of our objectives. We are grateful to our families, and honored to have each and every singer in our group.

In the next pages, you will find detailed information on the privileges and responsibilities of membership, and on our style of work. With each new edition of this handbook, BCB believes that its program comes another step closer to fulfillment of the high mission we have set for ourselves, and for our incomparable singers and their families.

## I. BCB ENTRY AND ADVANCEMENT

### Audition Process

BCB singers come to the program from many sources:

- \*Reference from area school music teachers
- \*Reference from church music directors and private music teachers
- \*Reference from current or past BCB singers and families
- \*Media releases in papers, radio, TV.

Twice yearly (January and May), BCB sponsors an Open House evening. We present full information on the program, and we invite singers and families to observe the choir in rehearsal. Auditions follow within the next week or so. Previous music experience may be helpful, but is not necessary. Many of our most successful singers have taken their first musical steps with BCB.

Parents sometimes say that their son either cannot sing or never does. In fact, many boys have limited opportunity to sing and have simply an undeveloped sense of singing or of music. In nearly every case, a young boy can "find his voice" through the gradual steps of BCB training, and finds great satisfaction in doing so, in the context of an eager team.

### Levels of Training and Performance

#### *The Prep Class*

The Prep Class lasts for one term (one semester), and is our singers' first experience with BCB work. The class meets twice weekly, for one hour per rehearsal. In the Prep Class we work on;

- \*Production of good singing sound
- \*Accuracy in hearing and singing musical pitch
- \*Reading musical notation
- \*Performing rhythms with accuracy and precision
- \*Building a team upon our watchwords:

**Pride,  
Desire,  
Respect.**

In addition to the class sessions, a worksheet comes home from most rehearsals. BCB worksheets are not long nor difficult. They serve to reinforce the lessons learned that week. The worksheet is to be turned in at the next rehearsal. It will be graded, and returned to the singer, either for corrections and re-submission, or for placement in a 3-ring binder of completed worksheets, each bearing a commendatory "OK."

At the end of the Prep term, each singer takes an examination, a review of material covered in the Prep term. The examination has a written portion and a "performance" section, during which the singer demonstrates his skill for the Music Director or another member of the staff. There is never anything new or intentionally "tricky" about the examination. Every singer in BCB history has "made the grade" in the Prep examination.

If a BCB-sponsored major local performance occurs during the Prep term, each singer receives a complimentary ticket to the performance. Later in the Prep term, Prep singers usually sing with the larger BCB forces, in music suited to their level. Upon success in the Prep term, the singer becomes a part of the Performing Choir, Junior Division.

The choir may work as one unit, with the younger and older singers performing together, or it may work with the younger singers taking their own rehearsals, or in some combination of the two, depending upon numbers, and the needs of the singers. In any case, as a performing member of the choir, a singer becomes responsible for preparation of his music and delivery in performance, to the best of his ability.

The Junior Division. There are two levels within the Junior Division of Performers:

### *I. The Reading Ensemble*

With entry to the Reading Ensemble, a BCB singer enters the first level of full performance. Reading Ensemble rehearses twice weekly; its rehearsal schedule will be determined at the start of each semester, and announced well in advance. The Reading Ensemble works on:

- \*Flexible, more expert use of the singing voice
- \*Reading music from printed scores
- \*Facility with key signatures
- \*Sight-singing skills
- \*More complex rhythm
- \*English-language diction for singing

A portion of the rehearsal is given to "class work" in rhythm, sight-singing, key signatures, and score reading. The balance of the time is taken in rehearsal of music for upcoming performance. Reading Ensemble singers take part in all major local series concerts, and in local engagements as well. As they gain experience, Junior division singers join in out-of-town singing.

At the Reading Ensemble level. Worksheets come home only once weekly. But these are as important as those in Prep Class, and must be done with care, and turned in on time. End-of-term examinations at the Reading Ensemble term are similar to those for the Prep level, but covering the material of the new level of attainment.

Following success in the Reading Ensemble term of work, a singer advances to:

### *II. The Probationer Class*

Like the Reading Ensemble, the Probationer Class is part of the Junior division of BCB performers. The name "Probationer" comes to us from that part of our tradition which has roots in the English cathedral tradition. It simply means that the singers in this group are working toward the First Rank level of attainment (see Rank and Advancement, page 4). The Probationer Class does its own special work with Mrs. Grantier. Probationers work on:

- \*Using major keys and key signatures
- \*Writing and singing whole and half steps
- \*Handling more complex rhythms
- \*Knowing musical terms, as they come up in the music we are singing
- \*Fluency in foreign language diction, including Latin and other languages to be encountered this season.
- \*Singing chromatic scales

Probationers are the "senior" members of the Junior division of the choir. They take part in all local performances, all out-of-town performances, and in the summer tour. (see tours, pages 13 - 14).

The Probationer term ends with the Probationer examination. This is a most important step in BCB progress. Success in the Probationer exam is signified by the presentation of the light blue ribbon and medal from the Royal School of Church Music (see below) and BCB.

### *The Senior Division*

BCB Senior trebles are the chief touring ensemble of the choir, performing away from home as a professional-level treble choir in regional and out-of-state concerts. The group serves as a contracted ensemble for Midwest orchestras and as featured performers locally in our major concert series.

Many performance sponsors pay a fee to have BCB perform for them, and these sponsors expect to see a contracted number of singers. Performance at Senior level carries high expectations. There is likewise an expected extra level of attention to regular rehearsal. The fine rewards of outstanding performance at professional level depend greatly upon regular rehearsal from the Senior group. Our singers are, typically, high achievers in many areas, and demands on their time will be many. BCB respects these demands, but requests that BCB rehearsal

and performance be given pride of place in scheduling. BCB accommodates occasional absence for participation in other activities, but must expect a high level of loyalty overall. (See also [A note of Contracted Service](#), page 14).

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#### BCB as a member of the Royal School of Church Music

The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) was founded in 1927 by Sidney (later Sir Sydney) Nicholson, organist of London's Westminster Abbey (where BCB has sung). The goals of RSCM include performance at a high level, serious education in the making of fine music, and exemplary conduct on the part of its singers and other musicians. To these ends, RSCM sponsors a program of musical education at various levels. Each member choir (and there are hundreds of member choirs around the world) adapts the training scheme to its own needs. BCB's system of training and examination meets and exceeds all standards established by RSCM. Our ribbons and medals are therefore awarded jointly by BCB and by RSCM, and represent an internationally recognized standard of musical excellence. In addition to its ongoing training offered by member choirs, RSCM offers yearly special courses at its headquarters at Cleveland Lodge, south of London, and at several locations in the US as well.

#### BCB Summer Workshop

BCB Summer workshop is for:

- \*New Prep Class singers who auditioned in May;
- \*Singers who have finished their Prep Class in the spring term and are entering Reading ensemble;
- \*Singers who finished their Reading Ensemble term in the spring, and are entering Probationer level;
- \*Singers who finished their Probationer term in the spring, and are now new holders of the First Rank.

The Summer Workshop is a short period of eight sessions, Monday - Thursday for two weeks in mid-summer. The Summer Workshop does not take the place of the Prep or Reading Ensemble or Probationer term of work, but is, rather, a most important adjunct to it.

#### A note on BCB Success

BCB believes in success, and only success, for its singers. The great lesson of BCB is that you can stand with the best, and that the highest rewards of life can belong to you. They are not given away, but earned. Every BCB singer who has moved into the Senior division has earned the First Rank (and many have gone beyond that). BCB staff are prepared to work with each singer so that he can attain this level. If a singer needs attention in some area, he will have it. In BCB, every singer has the opportunity to earn this level of proficiency. For some singers the First Rank comes easily, for others with more effort. But it is available to all singers, given good effort and dedicated attitude. And, once earned, the singer's proficiency is his for life. Maintaining the ribbon and medal depends upon continued good work, but the personal level of attainment is a lifelong achievement.

#### BCB Rank and Advancement Program

Achievement at BCB / Royal School of Church Music standards is recognized in the presentation of ribbons and medals at several levels:

First Rank - upon completion of the Probationer Examination - Light blue ribbon and medal.

Levels above that are voluntary, taken at the singer's and his family's discretion, but strongly encouraged as a means of increasing musical skills. The whole choir gains from the increased expertise of any member who undertakes this more advanced study. Classes leading toward these levels are typically eight sessions in length, done during the summer workshop, or once-weekly during the regular season. For the 2nd / 3rd / 4th ranks, the active examination consists only of a performance section. Paperwork component is done through a take-home essay question

Second Rank - Dark blue ribbon and medal. Essay for the II Rank: What the Royal School of Church motto means to me:

"I will sing with the Spirit, and also with the understanding." (1st Corinthians 14:15)

Third Rank - Red ribbon and medal. Essay for the III Rank: biography and comment on the life and works of a composer whose music we are singing that season.

Fourth Rank - Green ribbon and medal. Essay for the IV Rank: the candidate puts himself in the position of the Music Director and writes his own standards for BCB admission and achievement.

NOTE: Those who attain the status of 2nd, 3rd, or 4th Rank will be expected to continue in the group for at least one more singing season. Exceptions are at the discretion of the Music Director

### Leadership

All BCB singers are expected to be leaders. By virtue of their effort and achievement, they have earned the right of respect from their fellow singers and their professional musical colleagues. BCB's leadership is chosen from among the choir for the fulfillment of specific duties. Leaders are both servants of the group and leaders of it. BCB's system of choir leadership is based upon the model of the Royal School of Church music. Choir leadership may be appointed by BCB staff, for set periods of time, or may be elected by the membership. Offices include:

*Head Chorister* – appointed or elected for a defined term of service.

Duties: Preside in the absence of the Music Director

Preside over the line-up and entrance of the choir

Advise the Music Director in matters of choir policy, conduct, or discipline

*Team Leaders* - (one each for Oxford and Cambridge teams) – appointed or elected for a defined term of service.

Duties: Take role at rehearsal and performance

Preside over the team in rehearsal

Monitor the conduct of the team in line-up and rehearsal or performance

Oversee the getting-in-order of music before rehearsals or performances

Record choirmanship for singers after each rehearsal (see Choirmanship on page\_\_\_\_)

*Assistant Team Leaders* - (one each for Oxford and Cambridge teams)

Duties: Pass-out and pass-in scores

Monitor the condition of scores

Maintain a supply of sharp pencils, and collect at the end of rehearsal

Monitor room clean-up after rehearsal

Prepare music for rehearsals and performances away from home

*Principal Singer* - Appointed at the option of the Music Director, upon demonstration of especially distinguished musical attainments

Duties: Be prepared to take any solo work, including filling in for absent solo voices.

Demonstrate correct technique and accurate reading at all times

Demonstrate consistent musical leadership in rehearsal and performance.

### BCB Seniority Awards

These are not related to rank attained or to elected position in the choir, but are presented solely on the basis of seniority within the group. Performance seniority is reckoned from the time a singer begins participation in the two-hour-rehearsals, normally in his Reading Ensemble term. Seniority awards are presented twice each year, in accordance with the singers entry in either Fall or Spring term.

The first award is a circular pin, for the lapel of the BCB blazer. Each year following, a singer will receive small recognition bar, to be attached to the circle pin.

## Retirement and Resignation from the choir

Retirement from BCB happens at age 14, or at voice change, or at the end of Grade 8, whichever happens first, and at the judgment of the Music Director and BCB staff. Occasionally, a singer may continue into 9th Grade in the choir, and such extensions are welcome, provided that the singer can still acceptably handle the treble voice.. BCB retirement is honored with the presentation of a special lapel pin from the Royal School of Church Music.

Resignation from the choir occurs when a singer gives up the privilege of membership before retirement age. Resignation usually deprive the choir of the benefit of a trained and trusted team member, and are therefore not encouraged, unless for reasons of health or of leaving the community. . No singer should consider early resignation without parent consultation with the Music Director. If resignation is to occur, the best interests of the singer and his team are filled by remaining with the choir until the end of the current term (through December or June).

In the very rare case of involuntary termination, dismissal is at the discretion of the Music Director, in consultation with BCB staff and with the singer's parents.

## II BCB FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

Beyond participation in the activities of the parent Auxiliary (see page 15 - 17), each family supports the basic operations of the organization in several areas.

### Registration and Tuition Fees

A one-time non-refundable registration fee is paid when joining the choir, and used for music purchases/rentals, office-related costs of registration, and educational materials. The tuition fee is reviewed annually, and kept to the minimum possible level. Tuition is lower than in most organizations of our kind, thanks to efficient management, and excellent support from our families. The BCB Scholarship Fund offers assistance, by application, to families for whom it may be necessary. Scholarship applications are reviewed by a committee of the Board of Directors, and awards are as generous as possible.

Tuition payment is due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. But note that *all* financial obligations (including tuition and tour payments) need to be paid up before departure on a June Tour, even if the tour leaves before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. This enables us to bring our annual bookkeeping to a close by the end of our fiscal year on June 30.

### BCB Medical Release Forms

BCB issues two copies of our standard medical release form in September (or February for classes which begin then). Please fill out, sign, and return promptly. One copy will be kept at the rehearsal site, and the other at the BCB office, for use at performance, tour, or alternative rehearsal sites. The Program Coordinator retains this second set of forms.

The Medical Form allows BCB staff (or persons delegated by them) to authorize emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent cannot be reached by phone. The form also provides pertinent information concerning allergies and medications that may be part of each singer's medical profile.

Even though the Medical Form covers the singer's entire tenure in the choir, a new form will be issued annually. Please take time to renew the form, especially in case of a change of medical condition, prescriptions, health care provider, or primary-care physician.

Material in the medical release form is held in strict confidence.

### BCB General Information Form

At the start of each season, BCB sends home a general information form, for the listing of names/addresses/phones/e-mails/and school information. We use this information to prepare a master roster of all singers so that communication can be easily managed. If a family provides BCB with a non-listed phone number, and notes that it is unlisted, BCB will not release that number. The same is true of other information which a family may consider privileged.

With the great number of phone numbers and e-mail addresses available, it is good to know the best means of being in touch with families, and their preferences for doing so.

#### Carpools

As soon as the membership is settled each term, each singer receives a new roster with names, parents' names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. Please keep this roster at hand, as it is invaluable for arranging carpools to rehearsals and performances, and for general communication among our families.

#### BCB Local Concert Series

BCB relies upon volunteer assistance in the production of our local major concert series performances. Such assistance may take the form of ticket sales, set-up or take-down of equipment, help in supervising the choir in grouping areas, providing break-time snacks for performers, or providing transportation for equipment. When you take on such assistance, you will receive a complimentary ticket for the performance.

Parents who have a singer in the performing group may request complimentary sibling tickets for additional children in the immediate family if those siblings are 12 years of age or under. BCB can issue such complimentary tickets only for its own major concert series, but not for performances sponsored by other Music Center groups, such as the Symphony, nor for performances sponsored by outside organizations.

#### Additional Volunteer Opportunities

Parent assistance is needed at the Fall Camp-Retreat, and at the Winter Rehearsal-Retreat (see pages 14 - 15). On Summer Tours and on Working Tours during the school year, parent chaperones are needed (see page 12). Parents may also serve on a tour planning committee. BCB staff makes all critical tour decisions, but parent recommendations are most helpful in determining itinerary. The tour committee should consist of experienced tour chaperones.

### III. BCB SINGER EXPECTATIONS

#### Attendance (general guide)

Achievement of BCB musical and educational goals is based upon full attendance at rehearsals and performances. When a singer is absent, no one can fill his place, and no one can learn his music for him. Rehearsal plans assume a full roster and maximum efficiency in use of time. Remember that BCB accomplishes its goals on only two rehearsals per week. A carefully timed agenda is posted at the start of each rehearsal. Absence or tardiness compromises the efficiency and musical production of the entire team. BCB rehearsals will begin on time, and will always end on time. Even in the case of an unexpected late start of rehearsal, we will end on-time in recognition of our families' complex schedules.

BCB also recognizes that its singers are often among the elite of other organizations, in sports, in music, in academics. We wish to respect our singers' accomplishments in these areas, but wish also to have them with us for every possible BCB rehearsal. Our attendance policy is based upon a standard of regular attendance, tempered with a modicum of flexibility, to allow for the many other commitments which may arise. PLEASE NOTE that it is best to call ahead with concerns of schedule or absence, rather than to take time away from rehearsal by engaging the Music Director in conference just before the start of rehearsal. Emergencies happen, and we will most certainly accommodate them, but as a general rule, please do use the phone ahead of time whenever possible.

#### Rehearsal Attendance

Each BCB singer is assigned to two rehearsals per week. These rehearsals are set on given times and days. If a singer must be absent, please contact BCB office as much in advance as possible, so that arrangements for assignments can be made, and the expectations of the rehearsal can be modified to reflect the absence of a valuable singer. A repeated pattern of absence must be taken up in conference between the Music Director and

the parents. There is almost always an equitable solution, if the parents and the Music Director can work together on it.

#### Exceptions to the norm of regular attendance

Excused absences: (please call ahead, as much in advance as possible)

Please keep in mind that, even in excused absence situations (honorable as these certainly are), there is no one who can take the place of the absent singer. Still, there are times when absence is unavoidable, including:

\*Illness, with a note, or phone call from home

\*Occasional performance with another organization, such as a school or civic arts-related group, particularly one to which a grade is attached. In these cases, such performances will normally be granted preference over BCB rehearsal. In the rare case of direct performance-to-performance conflict, BCB will work with you to decide which performance is most important. BCB singers are often "principals" in these other performances, and the Music Director will work with families to make a determination as to the direction of the singer's work. Those who have worked with the Music director will know that he is flexible in these instances.

\*Family participation in religious observances. These will always be honored.

\*Family emergencies (real emergencies, please)

Two "personal day" absences per term (such as homework pile-up, or transportation impossibility) will be honored so that we do not encounter undue absence from any one rehearsal.

\*No more than four excused absences (including "personal days") per semester are expected

\*Unusual circumstances should be discussed with the Music Director well in advance

\*A pattern of absence or tardiness deserves to be taken up among the parents and the Music Director, so that a solution can be worked out.

\*Participation in a sporting program which runs for a limited time can be managed. Please be in touch with the Music Director to work out the fairest possible schedule.

#### Late Arrivals and Early Departures from Rehearsal

Success in rehearsal depends upon each place being filled for the duration of the rehearsal. When unavoidable, early departures and late arrivals should be arranged as much in advance as possible. Parents are requested to accompany the singer to and/or from rehearsal in these situations. Singers who accumulate one hour or more of such absence per semester are expected to consult the Music Director about make-up time.

#### Excused Absence from Performance and Special Rehearsals

Performance is the goal of every rehearsal, and a very special priority needs to be attached to it. Only serious illness or serious family emergency should prevent a singer from being present at performance or at a special rehearsal.

#### Rehearsal Discipline and Procedure

##### *Arrival*

In the words of legendary Battle Creek Music Director Giff Richards, "To be early is to be 'on-time.' To be 'on-time' is to be late. To be late is a sin, because you are stealing from the other singers' rehearsal time." For BCB, "on time" is planned as ten minutes before the appointed hour, so as to be fully ready at the scheduled time. When you arrive early, you have the opportunity to use the restroom, to wash up (if needed), to get a drink of water, and to get your music and your pencil in place. As soon as you have "checked-in" with the conductor of the rehearsal, and taken care of personal duties, you may go to the play area until called in. (see "Conduct" below) Please schedule carpools to assure prompt arrival. Likewise, please schedule your pick-up time for the stated end-of-rehearsal time, so that others will not be delayed.

Transportation time to and from rehearsal is considered "BCB time." Respect for the driver and fellow passengers is to be at the same standard as it would be to the conductor and fellow singers during rehearsal.

Skateboards, roller blades, hockey sticks and scooters are not permitted on Music Center premises. If brought, they will be taken up by the adult in charge, and returned to the parents at the end of the event.

Beepers/pagers, I-pods, CD players, laser devices, cell phones, miniature televisions, electronic notebooks and other items of such nature are best left at home, and not brought to BCB rehearsals or performances. Game-boys and the like are reserved for pre-rehearsal and break time, and placed on the piano during rehearsal.

*Conduct* (at the regular rehearsal site, or special rehearsal sites, and at performance sites)

BCB conduct is based upon our three watchwords, Pride, Desire, and Respect. Our code of conduct calls up especially our sense of Respect. Being respectful means:

- \*Following the directions of all conductors and supervisors
- \*Not disrupting or distracting the rehearsal or performance environment
- \*Speaking and acting appropriately towards others, at all times
- \*Being prepared for all rehearsals and performances
- \*Observing a "hands-off" policy. Hands-off of other people, and other property. If you didn't bring it, you don't touch it.
- \*Settling disagreements without fighting (physically or verbally)

Respect requires honesty in all situations

- \*Being truthful
- \*Doing your own work
- \*Accepting responsibility for your own actions and choices
- \*Owning up to one's mistakes
- \*Never cheating on paperwork or examinations or IHP work.
- \*Accepting responsibility for your own actions and choices.

We observe good neighborliness in restrooms and hallways - flushing toilets, washing up, taking care of waste paper, wiping mud and snow from shoes, not tracking in debris, and always walking in a quiet manner when indoors.

*In the Play Area* (whether outdoors or inside the building, whether before rehearsal, at break, or after rehearsal)

The play area is defined by BCB staff. Singers will confine themselves to the established boundaries and rules of conduct. Physical contact sports are never allowed, nor is tree-climbing. The Music Director recognizes that such activities are part of every boy's experience. He also knows, of latter years, that such activities are more properly carried out on "home time," not on "BCB time."

Careless throwing of any object - balls, snow, or anything else - or hitting another person with any object - cannot be allowed. Balls are thrown TO an expecting receiver, never AT someone unexpectedly. Ball games are played according to recognized rules and standards of fair play, preferably under adult supervision. Snowballs, or any snow and ice throwing are not allowed on BCB time. Singers are not to climb onto or slide down any snow mounds that may develop.

Use of foul, abusive, vulgar language or gestures is crude and has no place in the BCB environment. Verbal abuse and teasing are not acceptable at any time. A BCB singer's voice is his treasure. It should not be abused in strenuous or extended yelling, or in language which hurts other people.

Play must be contained designated areas and care must be taken when crossing drive-ways to and from the play area to avoid cars.

Use of tobacco or any other controlled substance is strictly prohibited for singers involved in BCB activities.

Theft or hiding of another's property will not be tolerated.

BCB singers show respect for the premises used for BCB activities. Avoid excessive noise when inside building. Houses of worship require an extra measure of respect.

#### *During Rehearsal*

Each singer is an important part of BCB, chosen for the gifts each brings. No one is more important than anyone else; likewise, no singer is more important than you.

Full attention is expected toward the Music Director (or others who may lead rehearsal).

Each singer must listen to the other singers to be sure of his own tuning and blend. If a singer believes that another singer is not holding his own, he should bring this to the attention of the Music Director privately, not in the course of rehearsal. The Music Director will take all such advisements seriously.

Concentration must be on the conductor, keeping an eye on the music as necessary. Eyes and hands must be kept off of fellow singers.

Singers should make marks in the music only at the direction of the conductor, and only in pencil. No other marks are needed. Take the direction of the conductor, making corrections instantly and clearly.

Requests for restroom use or drinking fountain are made by raising a hand and being recognized. The conductor will honor these, so long as they are kept to a minimum. Such personal needs are best attended to before rehearsal and at break.

Serious and repeated distraction of the group will be taken up first with the singer, then, if needed, with the choir leadership, and then, as needed, with the parents.

#### *At Break Time*

Conduct is to follow guidelines outlines above. In addition:

Beverages and food are to be consumed in the rehearsal room only, not in hallways or outdoors

Singers observe established limits inside and outside the building. We do not roam about in unauthorized areas, whether inside or outside.

Break is for Ten Minutes, or until the group is summoned. Rehearsal resumes immediately upon the call-back. Full attentiveness is in order during the second half of the rehearsal.

#### *At the End of Rehearsal*

- \*Put away music as directed, right-side-up and in an orderly manner
- \*Return pencils to their place
- \*Take part in clean-up duties
- \*Be certain to pick up memos for the day (see page 19)
- \*Follow polices for inside-outside conduct. REMINDER: Singers are on "BCB time" until they arrive at home.
- \*BCB standard of conduct apply!

#### *Care of Music Scores*

All music and folders remain the property of BCB. These are for music-learning purposes, and for use in performance when necessary. A certain level of wear and tear is assumed, but deliberate destruction or defacement of music and folders cannot be tolerated.

Three-ring binders are expected to last for the entire September-to-June season. Premature replacement will be at the singer's expense, to BCB standards, as determined by the Music Director. Music scores are to be kept in good repair, marked only as directed, and with the covers and bindings intact.

BCB keeps on hand a supply of repair materials. Use these before rehearsal, during break, or after rehearsal, as needed. Scores in need of repair should be shown to the Music Director before repairs are made. All scores are to be returned to BCB as directed. Scores are expensive. Lost or seriously damaged scores may be charged to the singers for replacement.

#### *BCB Policies on Controlled Substances and Weapons*

BCB adopts the standards established by the Michigan Department of Education, as followed uniformly by school districts throughout the state. These policies are on file at the BCB office, and available for consultation during normal business hours.

#### Disciplinary Action

Failure to meet singer expectations may result in loss of privileges, or of current status in the choir to another eligible singer. Such action will never be taken without notification and consultation with the parents, and then only after repeated good-faith attempts at improvement have been exhausted.

#### Dismissal from the choir

Consistent, repeated negative conduct, which harms the singer and the choir, or which dishonors an audience, a performance sponsor, or the BCB program, is grounds for dismissal, at the discretion of the Music Director, in consultation with the parents and with BCB staff. Such action is extremely rare, and will be taken only after repeated good-faith attempts at improvement have been exhausted.

### IV. BCB PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Performance is the goal of BCB rehearsal. We seek to communicate in the best way possible our belief in the quality and power of the music we present, and to communicate also the excitement and attainments of our singers. We strive always to live according to the motto of the Royal School of Church Music:

*"I will sing with the Spirit, and also with the Understanding."*

BCB places great importance upon performance. Upcoming performances will be announced at the earliest opportunity, and reminders will be frequent. We want our families to appreciate with us the central importance of our performances, and to place a special priority upon them in working out the family calendar. It is in performance that we express best who we are and what we do, by having the full team present in performance.

#### Performance Preparation

BCB performs at its best when each singer is well-rested, properly fed, and in apposite and productive frame of mind. BCB relies upon the understanding and goodwill of its families in carrying out performance preparation. Like professional athletes, we are in training, and our success depends in large measure on our carrying out the training program. To make the most of performance:

*Rest* - Tired singers do not perform well and can negatively affect the group. As a guide, on the night before a dress rehearsal or a performance, singers should get as much (if not more) sleep than on regular school nights. Please avoid activities such as sleepovers or staying up very late, as these can remove the singer from his normal school-night pattern.

*Horizontal Time* - Before evening performances or dress rehearsals, plan on a time of horizontal rest (feet off the floor, eyes closed). A period of mental and physical recharge is the goal. TV, video games, radio and the like are discouraged, as they distract the mind rather than focus it.

*Nutrition* - Before performance, avoid things which are sticky or which coat the throat, such as dairy products, thick shakes, sauces or dressings. There is no single ideal diet, but in general, fast food meals contain much hard-to-digest material which can cause uneasy stomachs in the context of performance. Pasta and other carbohydrates, along with fruits and vegetables are often good choices. The goal is to eat energy-supplying, rather than energy-dissipating foods. Plan to arrive well-fed, but not stuffed.

BCB says, "Eat for strength, not for stuffing."

### Major Local Concert Series

BCB sponsors or takes part in several major offerings each season, presenting the masterworks of the choral repertoire with the full choir of men and boys, often with orchestra. These performances are regularly reviewed by the local and regional press. Tickets are offered by subscription and by individual admission.

Dress Rehearsals – All major local series concerts involve a "dress rehearsal," usually the day before the performance, or, in rare cases, earlier in the day of the performance. These are extremely important rehearsals, and will be announced well in advance. Please give dress rehearsal your highest priority.

In most cases, a "dress" rehearsal does not mean that you wear your performance wardrobe to rehearsal. It means only that the rehearsal will take place in the performance space, with all performance personnel on hand. For theater or opera, "dress" rehearsal does indeed mean that you come with performance wardrobe or costume ready for inspection.

Take Note that due to the paramount importance of dress rehearsal, as a rule, if you miss the dress rehearsal you should not plan to sing the performance. Exceptional circumstances can be taken up with the Music Director.

### Single Contracted Performances

The Music Center negotiates these appearances by contract with a sponsoring group or organization. Such performances are an important part of BCB's program of education and performance. Income from them forms a significant part of our revenue. A limited number of such performances are offered at little or no charge, as a community service, including at least two school performances per year. Contracts are negotiated through the office of the Executive Director of the Music Center.

For performances which are more than 45 minutes' drive time from the center of Battle Creek, mileage reimbursement is made to those who drive performers to the site. Reimbursement is calculated on the basis of:

Round-trip distance from the Music Center to the performance site.

Average current price of fuel.

Number of performers in the car.

Carpooling is strongly encouraged. A simple form will be given to each driver to submit for re-imbursement. Reimbursement checks will be mailed at the next pay period following notification. No checks will be issued for an amount under \$5.00.

### Guest Choir Performances

These are negotiated by contract with another organization, such as a symphony orchestra, opera, or theater company. In these events, BCB appears as a part of a larger program, and we will conform to their schedules and policies.

### Working Tours

During the regular season, BCB may contract with one or more sponsors for a short tour extending over several days. Typically, these short tours are over a weekend, and may extend from a Friday, or into a Monday. Working tours are paid for by fees from sponsoring organizations. Travel is normally by chartered bus. Overnights are most often in home-stays arranged by the sponsor. These tours require the highest professional standards and the rewards for both audience and performers are significant.

### A Note on Contracted Performances

For a Working Tour, or for any other Contracted Service, BCB enters into a legally binding contract to provide a certain number of performers, to sing a specified length of program, at a specified place and time. It is therefore critically important that BCB be able to deliver the contracted number of performers, well-prepared for the task. Cases of illness or serious family emergency, would not normally affect the contract, but please, if there is some other pressing reason for excuse from a Working Tour, a family is duty-bound to alert the Music Director well in advance, so that another singer (usually a younger and less experienced singer) can be called upon to step

in. Each singer who is assigned to a Working Tour is counted upon for his experience and expertise and replacements are not easily made. Please place high priority upon these performances.

### Annual Summer Tours

Summer tours differ from other tours in that principal funding does not come from performance fees, but is generated from within the BCB organization through Parent-Auxiliary fundraisers, and family assessments. Typically, Parent-Auxiliary fundraisers account for 33 - 50% of costs for each singer; the balance is paid by the family or by additional fundraising incentives. Chaperones and other non-performers pay the full fee; their expenses are not offset by fundraisers. It is BCB policy that at least one chaperone be provided for every three singers on these tours.

Because of the element of personal expense, the Annual Tour is optional for each signer, though strongly encouraged. The tour allows singers to experience new performing sites, to visit major cities and historic sites, and to attend important cultural events. In addition, singers learn to live and work as a team.

Decisions concerning tour itinerary are made by the Music Director, in consultation with Music Center staff and parents. Criteria include:

- \*Performance opportunities of greatest interest

- \*Performances which will advance the musical reputation of the choir

- \*Availability of additional cultural and educational opportunities

In order to keep the tour experience can be kept fresh and new, BC does not usually return to an area where current singers have traveled in recent tours.

Much advance planning is necessary for the Summer Tour. Buses must be reserved about ten months ahead. Performances (especially for summer music festivals) must be scheduled as much as a year in advance. Many cultural or recreational events require 21-30 days notice for group ticket sales. Such deadlines limit flexibility, but they allow us to control costs.

A coupon system of payment is available to the singer's family, with a non-refundable down-payment generally due in November, and the remaining balance being paid out in monthly installments.

Chaperones and the parents of any chorister who will be touring for the first time are required to attend a tour orientation, generally scheduled two - four weeks prior to departure.

BCB has traveled overseas on several occasions. Overseas travel requires an extra measure of preparation, a serious increase in fund-raising revenues, and a group of singers who are experienced enough to undertake this extra level of responsibility. Overseas travel also requires a most careful assessment of world conditions, and the full support of families, including a written declaration of intent to participate in necessary fundraising and other expenses.

### Policies Specific to the Summer Tour

Each singer going on the tour must stay with the tour through its entirety (with the exception of sickness or emergency). Special circumstances will be considered if the request is submitted in writing by the parents prior to the tour. BCB is legally responsible for its singers during a tour, and cannot release them from the established tour itinerary without written permission from the singer's parents.

### General Policies Affecting Tours

*Religious Observances* - In recognition of many families' participation in their own religious observances, BCB does not normally schedule local Sunday morning guest appearances. Exceptions are during Working Tours and the Summer Tour, when we very often sing as part of a weekend religious service out-of-town. When we are touring, allowance for individual religious observances will be made where possible, but as such times the schedule of the group must assume priority.

*School Absences* - BCB performance will not require more than a total of four-and-one-half days' absence

from school in a single school year. Area school superintendents have been in agreement with this policy, in view of the strong educational nature of BCB travel, and of BCB's consistent handling of its absence policy. Elements of that policy include:

- \* Superintendents and building Principals receive notification at least one week in advance of upcoming periods of absence.
- \* Singers' families notify Teachers and Attendance Secretaries of absence, and pick up any schoolwork which must be done.
- \* Periods of study are conducted during BCB travel; BCB staff and support personnel typically include persons versed and ready to offer coaching in English, Social Studies, Science and Math.
- \* Students are expected to present finished work on their arrival back in school.

## V. BCB CHOIRMANSHIP PROGRAM

BCB's success as a program may be seen in its sterling accomplishments in performance and in the further achievements of its alumni. In our day-to-day and season-to-season reckoning, we use a system of choirmanship points and our program of Rank and Advancement (see page 4).

### Points and Contests

BCB singers engage in friendly competitions, organized into two teams of singers, called Oxford and Cambridge, after those two universities famed for their incomparable choirs of boys and men. When the Music Director (or at times, a singer) calls for a contest, each team demonstrates the material at issue, and the Music Director awards a point to the winner. Appropriate rewards will be given, periodically.

At the performing-group level, the teams usually remain constant in membership for the current term. BCB also employs several other means of self- and group-evaluation, as time and circumstances permit.

### Individual Home Practice (IHP)

When we approach a performance date, singers will receive a carefully prepared rehearsal tape or CD, usually of about 20 - 25 minutes in length. The tape normally contains a short vocal warm-up, and important passages from current repertoire. Sometimes the tape contains a recorded performance by a renowned group, with an audible piano-support line bringing out the singer's own line. Other times, the music may be played on the piano or organ, with piano support.

BCB *never* uses these media as a means of *learning* the music. Learning is done in rehearsal. When the group has a firm grasp of the notes and phrasing, then the tape or CD is issued as a means of "setting-in" or "firming-up" the good skills learned in rehearsal. It is important that singers give their time with the tape or CD their very best attention, adjusting the volume so that they can hear themselves and the recorded music. IHP is done well away from distractions, in good standing posture. The goal is not simply to sing along with the tape or CD, but to take ownership of the music, to commit the music to memory, to become "a leader, not a leaner." A typical round of IHP is about 10 days, but never more than 14 days. During a round of IHP work, a singer is to use the tape or CD on each non-rehearsal or non-performance day. IHP beyond that minimum is certainly encouraged, but use for more than 60 minutes at a time is not encouraged. Better to do two shorter sessions than one too-long session.

Oftentimes, a small score booklet comes home with the tape or CD, so that music from rehearsal does not have to be transported back and forth. And always, the tape comes with a reporting form on which the singer records his time spent with the tape or CD. The tape or CD and the reporting are due back at an assigned date, signed both by the singer and by a parent.

Successful IHP work, and prompt reporting of IHP time are signs of pride in oneself and in the choir. At the end of each round, a small prize will be awarded the singers with the highest total IHP times. An annual award will also be made to singers who lead the total time for the season.

## Special Events and Activities

### *Fall Camp-Retreat*

The BCB Fall Camp-Retreat occurs in late August, at an outdoor camp near Battle Creek. The event begins on Friday afternoon; it continues overnight through the day on Saturday, and ends about 6:00 PM on Saturday. Rehearsal sessions alternate with recreation time, meals, and some "down" time of relaxation.

The Camp-Retreat is invaluable for the great amount of music covered, and for the forming of new teams and friendships. Parents are needed in several shifts to assist as chaperones, to supervise recreation and swimming, dining and kitchen duties. Expenses for the Camp-Retreat are covered by the parent Auxiliary fundraisers. Attendance at the Fall Camp-Retreat is expected, unless prior arrangements are made with the Music Director

### *Winter Rehearsal Retreat*

The Winter Rehearsal Retreat occurs in early or mid-January, at at the Music Center Building, not in an overnight camp-setting. The singers arrive for rehearsal on Friday evening, return home for overnight, and reassemble for rehearsal and recreation on Saturday morning. The Winter Rehearsal Retreat ends at about 6:00 PM on Saturday. Rehearsals alternate with recreation. As with the Fall Camp-Retreat, attendance is expected unless prior arrangements have been made with the Music Director. Expenses are covered by Parent Auxiliary fundraisers. The Parent Auxiliary usually meets during the Saturday Afternoon of the Winter Rehearsal Retreat.

### *Awards and Recognition Day*

This event comes usually in mid-September. We do a rehearsal and a brief performance for family and friends, of music which we have learned to date. During the rehearsal the Parent Auxiliary meets to set goals for the season, and to establish chairpersons for the fundraisers. Following the performance, singers and families assemble for a potluck dinner, followed by presentation of recognition for the season just past.

### *Fun Activities*

These are usually arranged by staff or by parents in consultation with BCB staff. Usually, all family members are invited. Attendance is optional, but encouraged. Participation may carry a small cost to each participant.

## VI. BCB PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

### BCB Parent Auxiliary

BCB serves not only its singers, but its families as well. Just as singers share in the responsibilities and privileges of membership, so their parents take on a critically important role in support of the choir and its mission. All parents whose sons are active in BCB are automatically members of the BCB Parent Auxiliary. The Parent Auxiliary provides volunteer supervision and snack materials at rehearsals, supervision at other events such as rehearsal retreats and fun activities, assists with wardrobe management, and undertakes financial support, through organized fundraising. All Parent Auxiliary funds are kept in an account dedicated to the support of the choir's summer tour, its rehearsal retreats, and its scholarship program, and other Parent Auxiliary-defined areas. No Parent Auxiliary fundraising monies go toward BCB or Music Center operating budgets. In short, all funds generated by the Parent Auxiliary go directly toward the work of the boys themselves.

### Organizational Structure

The Parent Auxiliary has its own bylaws, and it selects a slate of officers each year, including:

\*President: serves a one-year term

\*Vice President: serves a two-year term (one as Vice-President, followed by one as President)

\*Secretary: serves a one-year term

\*Treasurer: serves a two year term, if possible. The treasurer must have exacting skills in bookkeeping, as Parent Auxiliary books are audited annually with other Music Center accounts. The Treasurer makes regular reports to the President, the Executive Director, and the Music Director.

At the start of the performing season, usually September, BCB staff determines costs of the next summer tour, and other events funded by the Parent Auxiliary fundraisers. Fundraising goals and family quotas are established based upon these estimates. Those who exceed quotas will earn credit toward their out-of-pocket expense for the tour.

### Special Committees and chairs

All parents will be asked to participate in various areas, according to their preference and expertise, including:

- \* Fundraiser chair: responsible for overall coordination of a single fundraiser, with assistance of a co-chair, and in collaboration with parallel chairperson for BCGC.
- \* Wardrobe chairs: Best performed as a co-chair between two persons. The wardrobe chairs coordinate the care, inventory, and fitting of wardrobe: Boys' vestments, boys' blazer-tie outfits, and men's vestments. The boys have a wardrobe "tradedown" twice yearly, near the time of Fall Camp-Retreat, and again near the Winter Rehearsal Retreat, or scheduled individually by appointment as needed. Special wardrobe needs (such as t-shirts or shorts for summer tours) are handled by a representative of the tour committee. These items are not normally a part of the wardrobe chairs' duty.
- \* Carpool Coordinator: Acts as resource person for carpool drivers for contracted performances, especially those which are out-of-town.
- \* Recreation Coordinator: Works in consultation with the program co-ordinator to arrange for special fun activities from time to time
- \* Parent-Volunteer Coordinator: Parents sign up for days on which to perform Parent Volunteer duty. The Coordinator sends out reminders, and arranges for substitutes if a Parent Volunteer cannot be on hand. It is up to the Parent-Volunteer to call the coordinator if he/she cannot make the assigned date. (see Parent-Volunteer program, page 17)
- \* Phone Tree Coordinator: often attended to by the President, but may be delegated. Works out the Phone Tree, in consultation with BCB staff; initiates messages from staff; follows the message through to completion. (See The BCB Phone Tree, page 20)

### BCB Parent Volunteer Program

At the beginning of each term, at the general meeting of the BCB Parent Auxiliary, a sign-up sheet for Parent Volunteer duty will be posted. We ask that each family take an occasional date to serve as Parent Volunteer at specific rehearsal(s). With each monthly calendar, the name of the Parent Volunteer will be posted. It is BCB standard procedure that two staff be on hand at each rehearsal, together with a Parent Volunteer. The Parent Volunteer of the day should:

- \* Arrive 10 minutes before rehearsal, keep an eye on the outside door of the building, and admit late-comers.
- \* Bring and prepare the snack for BCB break, time arranged with the Music Director.
- \* Serve the snack at break-time (guidelines below), and, by agreement with the music staff, assist in monitoring singers either inside or outside during the break.
- \* Plan to stay at the end of rehearsal until all singers have been dismissed with their rides home. BCB staff may take on this task, but if circumstances require, they may call upon the Parent Volunteer to see to this important duty.

Many BCB parents welcome these days as Parent Volunteers, as an opportunity to stay in closer touch with the day-to-day work of BCB, and to be a part of guiding our singers as they grow in music and in maturity.

The Parent Volunteer is not a game-leader, not an "enforcer," not a disciplinarian, but a "reminder" of the standards of conduct in rehearsal and other times (arrival/break/departure). Simply, an adult presence, ready to provide assistance if needed. The singers will take care of their own recreation. The Parent Volunteer may take a role in the singers' break-time games, but is not expected to do so. In the event that two singers allow a conflict to go beyond what they can solve by themselves, then the problem should be brought to BCB staff. Parent Volunteers are not expected to solve conflict among singers on the playground, unless they have experience and training in this area. During rehearsal, the PV may take a role in directing the singers' attention, such as reminding an individual singer of his task, but the PV should not interrupt rehearsal to do this.

## BCB Snack Guidelines

BCB singers enjoy and look forward to their break-time snack. Often the snack is the pick-up needed to carry the choir through to the finish of a rehearsal or performance. For rehearsals of two-hours duration, snack is provided at rehearsal break by families on a rotating basis.

BCB snacks are consumed only in the rehearsal room, never in hallways or outside. “Seconds” are permitted, at the discretion of the Parent Volunteer. If there are leftovers, the Parent Volunteer may offer them to the choir at the end of rehearsal (at his/her discretion). But singers are not to take “stashes” during break, to eat during the second half of rehearsal or to take home at the end of rehearsal.

*What to serve.* Remember that we are serving the singers a snack, not a “treat.” The goal is a quick revival of energy midway through the rehearsal or performance. Guidelines:

\*KCC regulations require us to provide only pre-packaged materials.

\*Beverages might include lemonade, apple or other fruit juices (including fruit-flavored drinks). Carbonated beverages, even non-caffeinated, are not appropriate.

\*A little chocolate, as in chocolate chip cookies, is fine, but chocolate candy is to be avoided

\*Some items are best avoided, including

+sloppy, gloppy, items which will coat the throat and impair good singing after break

+caffeine (as found in many cola beverages, and others, such as Mountain Dew).

+red or grape or other beverages, which easily stain floors or clothing

+the sticky or chewy items which can get caught in dental braces

+popcorn and other snacks which are greasy or messy, or leave small debris

Take only as much of the snack as offered. Ask for seconds, don't grab. Take no “stashes” for later consumption.

## VII. BCB WARDROBE

BCB wardrobe is an important element of our public presentation. The first element in good wardrobe is good personal grooming. Hair is to be at or above the shirt collar, at or above the ears, and kept out of the eyes.

Especially in performance, it is important to observe common-sense standards of personal hygiene. The first impression an audience receives is our appearance. If we look good, listeners will expect that we will sound good too. If we look unkempt, it will take a great deal of very expert performance to overcome that first impression. Likewise, if we observe good standards of wardrobe and personal appearance, we are much more likely to take pride in the musical aspects of performance too.

Please note that BCB supplies nearly all items of the wardrobe. We do not want wardrobe expenses to be a burdensome part of membership in BCB. If a family prefers to purchase its own wardrobe items, it may do so, consistent with BCB standard, as outlined below.

It is important to keep your wardrobe items *cleaned* and in *good repair*. BCB keeps an inventory of buttons and the like. Please inspect wardrobe items *before* a performance or tour, and request any replacement items you need. There are three kinds of BCB wardrobe. In every case, be sure to place the singer's name in each item of clothing.

### Vestments

Vestments are the traditional “choir robe” of choirs such as ours, used particularly in the performance of sacred music, and especially in church performance. Vestments are in two parts:

The Cassock is the long black or red “robe,” which extends 7 inches from the floor. The Surplice is the white “overlay” which extends just below the knees. Ideally, a BCB surplice should come about 18 inches above the floor. Our appearance is best when we can all have the same floor-to-hem length in the surplices.

### Blazer and Tie Outfit

We wear the Blazer / tie outfit at other times where a good standard of dress is appropriate, including performance, attendance at important cultural events on a tour, eating together in better restaurants, or other times when a good group appearance is important.

As a rule, when we wear the Blazer / tie outfit, we wear the whole outfit. At the direction of the Music Director (or his delegate), sometimes the blazer or the tie may be omitted. This is the Music Director's choice, not an individual singer's option. The outfit consists of:

Navy Blue Blazer – supplied by BCB. The singer's family should replace brass buttons as needed, and keep the blazer cleaned as needed. BCB supplies the insignia patch for application to the breast-pocket.

Necktie – supplied by BCB. Singers should learn to tie their own knots, using the simple "four-in-hand" or other traditional necktie knot.

White Shirt – a standard "dress shirt." Short Sleeves are preferred, as being more comfortable, especially in summertime. If you do not have a white dress shirt, BCB has an inventory of "gently used" shirts. You are welcome to one of these, but if we do not have your size, then you should plan to buy your own.

Trousers – Grey dress pants, wash-and-wear fabric. BCB generally has a good supply of "gently used" pants, so that we should have your size. If we do not, then you should plan to buy your own. Heather grey, machine washable preferred.

Shoes-BCB preference is for a brown or cordovan colored loafer style. Other styles are colors (brown or cordovan) may be used, but must be harmonious with the norm of a conservative blazer / tie outfit. As in the case of pants and shirts, BCB keeps an inventory of "gently used" shoes. Usually, we will have something close to your size. Certainly the singer's family may provide its own shoes. Boots or sandals, for instance, are not normally worn with this outfit.

Belt – black. Normally supplied by the singer's family.

Socks – black. Normally supplied by the singer's family.

Singers may wear BCB blazer / tie outfit for other occasions where a level of excellent appearance is expected. But please do take care of the outfit, so that it is in fine condition for every BCB performance. We will have a bag of spare wardrobe items at each performance, for the occasional forgetful singer. Best, of course to remember on your own!

#### Informal Outfit

This is used in the summer, mainly for tours. BCB does not always use this outfit. We will let you know well in advance if we anticipate need for it. Note that some parts may have to be purchased by families. If so, then these items are staples of every singer's customary summer clothing, and will have wide use, in and beyond BCB.

Shorts – Khaki color. BCB has an inventory of "gently used" shorts, but if we do not have your size, then you should plan to buy your own. A most useful summertime investment in any case. (Khaki-colored pants are an acceptable substitute for shorts).

T-Shirt – with BCB logo, or as specified by BCB.. Purchased at minimal cost through BCB. As usual, we keep some inventory of "gently used" shirts.

Polo Shirt – with BCB logo. Purchased by singers from BCB. We usually have a certain number of these shirts returned to us by departing members. If we do not have your size, then please plan to order one or two from BCB. We will let you know if this item is required for the summer tour.

Shoes and socks – white socks, informal shoes (sandals, sneakers, or other) in good shape, with laces tied.

Sneakers – white or black, of reasonably conservative design. High-top sneakers worn open and floppy are definitely off-limits.

Garment bag – BCB issues a garment bag to each singer, at the start of the season. The bag is used for transportation of vestments, blazer/tie outfits, or summer wardrobe. To performance or on tour. The singer and his family should keep all parts of each wardrobe clean, and in or near the bag, so that the uniform of the day can be quickly and accurately assembled.

For each performance, memos will announce the uniform of the day. Be sure to double-check that all items are included in the red bag before leaving home! At each performance, each singer (himself, not his parents) are expected to place each wardrobe item in a place where he will locate it exactly, following the performance.

All navy blazers, and all grey trousers (for instance) look very much alike. Please be sure that your blazer (or other item) is not confused with another singer's. Likewise, that you take care of your own blazer, and do not pick up another singer's blazer in haste. The same applies to vestment sets, and all other wardrobe items..

Be sure to check for all blazer outfit and vestment parts before leaving home, and before leaving a performance site. Following a performance, singers should "pair off" to inspect each other's bags for complete inventory.

#### *A NOTE ON BCB-OWNED WARDROBE ITEMS:*

All wardrobe items from BCB inventory, even of the "gently used" sort will remain the property of BCB, and must be returned to BCB as they are outgrown, or when the singer leaves the group. Any items which are purchased by the singer's family are yours. In the event that the singer has no further need of an item, by virtue of growth or departure from BCB, and no other member of the family can use the item, BCB welcomes wardrobe items as donations to its wardrobe inventory. BCB will gratefully accept such items, and will issue you a receipt for your use as tax-deductible donation, subject to IRS guidelines.

*As a courtesy to future users, please wash (or dry-clean, as appropriate) any wardrobe which you will be returning to BCB inventory.*

### VIII. CALENDARS, COMMUNICATIONS, and CANCELLATIONS

#### BCB Memos

Memos are BCB's chief means of communication and are sent home from nearly every rehearsal. Memos contain important information on calendar, performance details, Parent Auxiliary announcements, and upcoming activities. *Please read the memos!!* BCB uses large, easily seen envelopes for memos. We appreciate receiving empty envelopes back, as we recycle them many times. If you receive mail in large envelopes (9 x 12 inches), BCB will be happy to have any extras which you may not need. We will use them for memo envelopes.

#### Monthly Calendars

At the performing levels, BCB issues monthly calendars of rehearsals and performances. Calendars also include the name of the Parent Volunteer for each day of rehearsal. Calendars will be issued one month in advance of the upcoming month. Important events (major performances and the like, will be announced *well* ahead in memos as well).

#### The BCB Phone Tree

As soon as the roster is settled for each term (Fall and Winter). BCB will issue a Phone Tree for use by families in relaying important messages. BCB phone tree messages are only initiated by BCB staff, and only through the Phone Tree Co-ordinator, or designated deputy. If you receive a message through the phone tree, it is vital that you contact the next person on your line. If that person is not available, either "live" or via answering machine, then go on to the next name, and then go back and stay after the person whom you could not reach. The last person in line will call the Phone Tree Co-ordinator, to confirm that the line has been completed.

#### Severe Weather Policy

In case of an overnight storm, schools may have to cancel classes, but often the roads are cleared by mid-day. In such cases, BCB (and GC) may well have regular rehearsals. School closure does not automatically mean cancellation of BCB rehearsals, though BCB (and GC) will pay close attention to area closings in making its decision.

In case of storms which occur during the day, the judgment to cancel will be made by the Music Director and Music Center Staff. We will alert the phone tree at least by 2:00 PM. In addition, BCB will post notice on WBCK Radio (930 AM) and WMUK (102.1 FM). BCB will not place any singer in danger because of weather. If a storm occurs during rehearsal, singers are excused at any time when their rides arrive. In questionable cases, the judgment of BCB families will be respected.

## Scheduled Days Off

BCB works in tandem with calendars of most area school districts. But please note;

- \* Starting dates in the fall are usually at the end of August (often at the beginning of the Fall Camp Retreat)
- \* Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter breaks are observed in accordance with most districts' policies.
- \* BCB does not rehearse on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday.
- \* BCB Spring Break is usually the first full week in April, in keeping with the practice of most area school districts.
- \* BCB maintains its regular schedule even though schools may dismiss class in one-day increments for in-service, parent-teacher conferences, or grading days.

## IX. THE MUSIC CENTER: ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL STRUCTURE

The Music Center encompasses seven core programs:

- \* The Battle Creek Boychoir
- \* The Battle Creek Girls' Chorus
- \* The Battle Creek Community Chorus
- \* The Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra
- \* The Battle Creek Community Music School
- \* The Battle Creek Pops Ensemble
- \* The Ars Voce vocal ensemble

All of these are part of the original merger of groups which took place in 2000. Since then, the Music Center has added:

- \* The IMPACT program
- \* A satellite campus of the Community Music School, in Hastings

Overseeing this is an elected Board of Directors. Board members conduct the Annual Fund Drive, create special fund-raising events, set policy for the Music Center, monitor compliance with state and federal laws, monitor finances, work with executive staff in strategic planning, and see to it that Music Center organizations are run on a professional basis, and in the best interests of the community at large.

Many resources comprise the revenues of the annual budget. About half of revenue comes from earned income (tuition, ticket sales, contracted performances, endowment and investment income, and "grass roots" fundraising). Funds for tours are spent on that purpose, and do not contribute to the operating budget. The other half of revenue comes from unearned income, including grants (state and local), annual fund drive, staff fund-raisers, corporate sponsorships, and other donations.

The Music Center currently serves as a Level 1 Anchor Organization for the State of Michigan, through the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

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# The

**Battle**

**Creek**

**Boychoir**

**Handbook**

**For**

**Singers and Families**

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