

STAFFORD REGIONAL CHORAL SOCIETY



Member Handbook

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the *Stafford Regional Choral Society*. We work in order to serve you, our singing members. We hope that you will find SRCS a way to continue singing in a choral group that reminds you of your joy for singing. Should you need any help at all, please do not hesitate to ask!

**Chairman of SRCS Board of Directors
Wendy Colby**

**Artistic Director
Jason Michael**

Updated 9/20/2018

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Congratulations and Welcome!

Congratulations on having joined as a new member of the Stafford Regional Choral Society (SRCS).

Welcome! You are one of several very talented residents of the Stafford and Fredericksburg areas joining forces with this dedicated group of musicians. We are confident that this collaboration will be a rewarding experience for you.

We are excited that you have become part of this dedicated group of volunteer musicians, and we know that you will enjoy the musical camaraderie that we all share. We have created this handbook for our new members to help you learn about the SRCS and the many things that we do throughout the year.

There are many people who can answer questions that you might have as you begin your musical journey with us. A great source of information is the website, the Stafford Regional Choral Society Facebook page and your e-mail. Questions sent to staffordregionalchoralsociety@yahoo.com will be directed to the appropriate point of contact.

The SRCS is governed by a Board of Directors whose primary function is to handle the general operations of the SRCS. Any of our dedicated board members can help answer questions you may have. If you have a question that is more artistic in nature, we welcome you to talk with our Artistic Director. The Artistic Director's focus is on preparing us musically for our performances and therefore can answer questions about the section in which you have been assigned or any vocal issues you might be having.

2018 Board of Directors

Wendy Colby – Chair – wmrcolby@comcast.net

Barb LeRoy – Vice Chair – barb.leroy@gmail

Scott Bergstrom – Secretary – bergstromva@comcast.net

John Schumaker – Treasurer – jschumaker47@gmail.com

Darrel Cooper – darrellc505@aol.com

Mike Dudley – audiobooth@aol.com

Peggy Gresham – gmapeggy2016@yahoo.com

2018 Artistic Director

Jason Michael – aggedor3@aol.com

SRCS Information and History

Information

Please “bookmark” the Stafford Regional Choral Society Website because it has lots of important information (<http://www.staffordchoral.org>). SRCS also has a Facebook presence at Stafford Regional Choral Society.

Also, please allow emails from staffordregionalchoralsociety@yahoo.com as this is the primary way that we will be communicating with you. Questions sent to staffordregionalchoralsociety@yahoo.com will be directed to the appropriate point of contact.

Our History

The Stafford Regional Choral Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization beginning its second decade of existence, drawing membership from Stafford, Spotsylvania, Prince William, and King George counties and the city of Fredericksburg. It has a three-fold mission: 1) to provide FREE culturally-enriching performances to the community; 2) to provide an opportunity for advancing musicianship and performance to singers and instrumentalists of varying skill levels in our communities; and 3) to encourage and enable young musicians to continue the study of music beyond high school through financial scholarship and merit awards.

Since 2001, the SRCS has presented nearly 50 concerts in Stafford County and Fredericksburg and we have entertained well over 10,000 patrons with our free concerts. Each year, the SRCS presents classical and traditional choral holiday music presented with orchestral accompaniment and soloists.

The SRCS provides a unique outlet for singers and musicians from the region to develop and showcase their musical talent. A key feature of the group’s composition is the inclusion of talented high school and college musicians in the chorus and orchestra. The dynamic relationship of more seasoned adult performers and highly talented younger musicians is a truly unique aspect that provides energy, and builds the musical skills of our performers.

The SRCS also has a long history of giving back to the community. While a main feature of the SRCS mission is to provide free concerts for the region, the Board of Directors has often felt compelled to step up the giving in a meaningful way. In 2001, the fledgling SRCS abandoned plans for a Broadway review in response to the tragic events of 9-11. As rehearsals began, plans were reworked to present an inspiring patriotic program that raised over

\$3,000 for 9-11 charities. In the spring of 2009, the SRCS presented an Autism Awareness Program and inspirational concert, *Songs for the Silent*. That benefit raised over \$6,000 for Reaching Potentials, a local autism therapy center. In 2010, SRCS and a large audience of wonderful supporters embraced the cause of wounded veterans by donating all contributions from the *Patriotic Celebration* to the Semper Fi Fund. The SFF is a non-profit organization that provides support and assistance to veterans from all branches of the military who were injured in support of Marine operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

In 2018 the SRCS was asked and honored to sing with the Riverside Center for the Performing Arts in their production of the musical, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Members of the SRCS choir participated as the Notre Dame cathedral choir in the 40 performances of this acclaimed production.

Since its inception, the SRCS has worked to nurture the future of the musical arts by providing scholarships to local college-bound musicians. Starting from a single award of \$500 in 2003, we now award a vocalist, a pianist, and an instrumentalist award of \$700 each and second place awards of \$350 each. Past recipients are now pursuing various career paths including music education and performing careers at institutions such as Virginia Commonwealth University, George Mason University, the Massachusetts Conservatory and Berklee School of Music, as well as having toured with national productions such as *Riverdance*.

Concerts and Fees

Typically, there are three concerts in the SRCS performance season: our Christmas concert, a gala fundraiser, and a summer concert. Singers are notified by email when the next concert cycle begins. Singers pay fees at the start of each cycle to cover the cost of the music, the accompanist, and the director. Fees are due at the beginning of the cycle unless prior arrangements have been made. Fees for singers are established by the SRCS Board of Directors for each concert session and are posted on the SRCS website, www.staffordchoral.org. Student fees are usually 50% of adult singer fees and apply for any active student. If you would like to sing with SRCS but are unable pay the posted fee please contact an SRCS Board of Directors member to discuss your situation.

What does a concert cost?

Our concerts generally cost \$4,000-\$6,000. Some of our expenditures include:

- Directors and instrumentalists
- Decorations and venue preparation
- Venue rental, lighting and sound
- Publicity flyers, postcards, and concert programs
- Newspaper and radio advertising

Your concert fees provide funding toward our director and rehearsal accompanist fees. The remainder of concert costs need to be covered by donations, sponsorships, grants, and fundraising.

Rehearsals

At the beginning of each concert cycle, you will be given a detailed sheet of rehearsal and concert times and locations. Most rehearsals are approximately two hours. You will be notified in advance of a change of location/time for rehearsals. Please allow at least 10 to 15 minutes before rehearsal starts to take care of any chorus business, socialize a little, and be in your seat ready to sing at the scheduled time.

Rehearsals will begin promptly. You are expected to attend all rehearsals. Missing rehearsals affects the quality of SRCS performances and causes difficulties for the director. You are important and are needed to achieve the standards SRCS directors, concert attendees and sponsors expect. If you miss three rehearsals you may be asked to drop out of the choir for the concert.

Rehearsal and performance schedules are available on our website www.staffordchoral.org.

Rehearsal and Concert Supplies

Singers should bring a pencil to each rehearsal for marking their music, a water bottle, and a music folder or binder. The latter may be a simple black, 3-ring binder or an official SRSC music folder with the stretchy bands on the inside to hold your music.

Mark your Scores!

The Director will often make artistic changes in the music, so be ready with your pencil to mark your scores accordingly. Breath marks, dynamic markings, changes in text may be added or deleted, and you are expected to have this information marked even if you miss a rehearsal. If you need assistance in marking your score, arrive early and ask someone in your section for assistance in marking missed information.

Rehearsal Breaks

Generally, we take a short break at some point during rehearsal. The break will be called by the Director. After the break, Chorus members are to move quickly to their seats, cease conversation, and get back to the business of making beautiful music. SRCS business is conducted and critical information provided after our break.

Use of Facility

We must make sure our rehearsal space is prepared for those who will use it next. The director will inform us as to what needs to be accomplished at the close of rehearsal. Please clean up water bottles. Concerts begin with set up and end with clean up. We all participate in these efforts.

Inclement Weather

Please check the SRCS website and Facebook page for the current information regarding inclement weather in regards to rehearsals and concerts. We have had to postpone concerts due to inclement weather. It is expected that members will consider their personal safety first in all inclement weather situations.

Attendance

Missed rehearsals impact everyone. Please do not assume that you will not be missed! Any more than three absences during a concert series can cause a hardship for both musician and the choir. If you anticipate missing specific rehearsals or experience an unexpected absence, please email that information to staffordregionalchoralsociety@yahoo.com. Dress rehearsal absences must be pre-approved by the director. Being present for last minute changes and artistic interpretations with the conductor and orchestra is a vital requirement for a cohesive performance.

Tardiness

Please be on time to rehearsal. Our directors will start on time and it is critical that all be prepared for warm up. Local music teachers use the quote, "To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late." Of course, the unexpected does happen and we would rather you be late than not attend.

Contact Information

Please be sure to let us know if any of your information changes (e.g., address, phone numbers, email, etc.) so that we can be sure to keep in touch with you. You can email staffordregionalchoralsociety@yahoo.com with any changes in your information.

What Should I Wear?

Attire for Concerts

The director will provide instruction on what singers will wear during a concert performance. Most commonly, "concert black" is worn. Concert Black means tuxedos for men and black formal wear (skirt to the floor or pants) for the women. SRCS members obtain and own their own concert black attire.

Use of Fragrance and Personal Hygiene

Chorus members are not to wear fragrances in the form of perfumes, strong hair spray, shaving cologne, etc. at any performance. Many people have allergies to fragrant products. However, it is important that SRCS members practice appropriate hygiene by bathing regularly and using deodorants.

Membership in the Society

By joining SRCS and paying your fee for the current concert session you have membership in the Choral Society. Membership in the Society runs from October 1st to September 30th of the following year. Membership is open to any individual supporting the stated purpose of the Society and is current, relative to the dues and fees set by the Board of Directors. Dues and fees are established by the Board of Directors.

Code of Conduct

As a member of the Stafford Regional Choral Society you are expected to:

- Support the decisions of the SRCS Board of Directors
- Support the Director and follow the Director's directions
- Respect other members of the choir
- Respect the facilities where we practice and perform
- Help promote the goals and activities of the SRCS
- Conduct yourselves exemplifying the high character of SRCS

The SRCS Board of director will address any issues of compliance to the Code of Conduct.

Board Membership

The SRCS Board of Directors is in charge of the general operation of the SRCS and assists with fundraisers, social activities and special events, venue setup, and membership. The Board of Directors is selected each year by vote of the membership. Currently, this occurs during the fall concert cycle. Attendance at Board of Director meetings is open to any SRCS member. We currently meet the second Tuesday of the month. If you are interested in Board membership, please consider attending our monthly Board meeting. Members attending have voice, but no vote. Location may change month to month and can be obtained from a board member. This is a great opportunity to see the inner workings of the SRCS and all it takes to do what we do!

SoundCheck

SoundCheck is the Choral Society's community outreach choir. Debuting in 2013, the audition only group seeks to extend the SRCS brand by contributing additional performances in local celebrations and events. The roughly 25-member group commits to rehearsal periods and performances for a specific season. If you are interested in auditioning for this group, please speak to the SoundCheck director for the next audition opportunity.

More Than a Singer

At different times during your tenure, you will be invited to help assist in one or more of the following such as concert venue preparation, concert publicity, and silent auction solicitation. There are additional opportunities to have a greater involvement to invest in the success of the SRCS. Some of these opportunities include:

- SRCS Social Events
- Fundraising
- Scholarship Programming
- Membership Recruitment
- Pursuit of Grant Opportunities

Sponsorship

The purpose of the SRCS is to offer concerts to the community and to promote continued musical endeavors by providing scholarship opportunities in the greater Stafford - Fredericksburg area. We invite all who share our love for the arts, and our desire to see such community programming continue, to sponsor the SRCS as we begin our new season. We are currently receiving annual sponsorships that enable us to fulfill the purpose of the SRCS. It is through sponsorships from people like you that we are able to grow our programs! Your support is necessary. As always, we appreciate our individual and corporate sponsors, and we encourage their recognition in the community.

Individual Sponsorship:

Bronze	\$25+
Silver	\$50+
Gold	\$100+
Platinum	\$200+

Corporate Sponsorship:

An ad is placed in our newsletter and concert programs for the period of one year.

\$250+1/8 page (bus. card) ad

\$500+1/4 page ad

\$1000+1/2 page ad

\$1500+full page ad

\$2000+full page ad and 2 Gala Tickets

All Sponsors receive our newsletter, The Society Page.

SRCS Scholarship Program

Since our inception we have worked to build an appreciation for and support of musical arts by providing annual scholarships to local college-bound musicians. The SRCS holds an annual scholarship competition. The scholarship is offered to musically talented high school seniors who reside in counties or cities from which the SRCS draws its membership and who will pursue music during college level. It is **not** required that the recipient plan to declare a music major. While any field of musical endeavor is acceptable, performance **is** a requirement for the scholarship audition. Our current program consists of three categories, vocal, piano, and instrumental. Most recently, scholarships of \$700 have been made available in each category and \$350 second place award in each category.

Applications

Applications are available late fall and may be obtained through the following:

- High School Guidance Counseling Offices
- High School Music Directors
- SRCS Website: www.staffordchoral.org

Application Deadline:

Applications must be complete and postmarked by the deadline date specified in the application instructions. Completed application includes letter of reference and promotional photograph. Incomplete packets will not be considered for audition.

Scholarship Audition:

Those receiving an audition will be notified regarding the time and location of audition. Auditions are generally held on a Saturday (date announced in application materials.) They begin in the morning at a time to be determined based on number of applicants.

Fundraisers

SRCS participates in fund raising activities each year. The events listed below are past fund raising activities in which SRCS was involved. The primary fund raising event is the silent auction during the spring Gala.

Community Give – For the past several years SRCS has participated in a local web-based donation day such as the Community Give program. This on-line giving event allows anyone in the community to give \$25 or more to SRCS and/or any of the local non-profit organizations registered for this one day event. Choir members, family and friends are encouraged to participate to raise funds for SRCS. SRCS receives the donation less a small processing fee and donors receive a tax deduction receipt.

Restaurant Fundraising – From time to time we have the opportunity to cooperate with a local restaurant to receive a portion of the receipts for a given period. We have had great success with area businesses. Look and listen for these opportunities to enjoy time out while supporting SRCS.

Other Fund Raising Activities – Sale of SRCS items and occasional benefit activities such as Bingo are conducted by SRCS. Your participation and support are encouraged.

Gala Fundraiser and Silent Auction – A hallmark event and highlight of the SRCS season is the annual Gala Benefit, which is our primary fundraiser for the year. This one-of-a-kind concert experience combines high-end cuisine, stellar vocals, and a professional combo in an elegantly intimate setting, transforming audience members into guests and friends interacting with the performance. The evening is enhanced by a Silent Auction and has also included raffle drawings and door prizes. The Gala is usually held in a ballroom facility on a spring Sunday evening. SRCS members support the fundraising effort through ticket sales, solicitation of Silent Auction donations, and/or volunteer time in decorating, set-up, or other duties as needed. Some examples of past Galas include *Jazz*, *Around the World*, *Hooray for Hollywood*, and, *On Broadway*.

I have received and will read the SRCS Choir Members Handbook.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____