

SOUTHERN NIGHTS CHORALE

POLICIES

“Gentlemen, we’re going to relentlessly chase perfection knowing full well that we will not catch it, because perfection is unattainable. But we are relentlessly going to chase it, because, in the process, we will catch excellence. I’m not remotely interested in (just) being good.”

The above statement, by Vince Lombardi in 1959 to his players on his first day as coach of the Green Bay Packers, articulates my philosophy concerning the Southern Nights Chorale. Perfection is unattainable, but if we don’t continually strive for it, we’ll never attain *excellence*.

J.D. Holmes, Director

Thank you for your interest in singing with the Southern Nights Chorale. It is important for everyone who joins the Southern Nights to know what standards are expected of him before he undertakes the commitment. In this manner, if the chorus’ expectations do not fit an individual’s present life situation, he can know this before making a commitment that he would be unable to keep.

INITIAL AUDITION

Everyone dreads auditions. It’s a natural fear. The purpose of an audition is to establish a minimum standard of quality. Its goal is to insure that all members of the chorus are qualified to participate with the others. Unlike most auditions, we do not expect to hear an aria. We merely ask you to sing “The Star Spangled Banner” a *cappella*. It does not have to be memorized. You can bring the words if you wish.

Also, we will test your reading skills and tonal memory. We will determine your vocal range, so that we can place you in the proper place in the chorus, from lowest voice to highest. Please come to the audition already warmed up.

That’s it.

ANNUAL RE-AUDITIONS

It is a sad fact of life that as we age, we tend to lose our tonal quality. We’ve all sung with people who were “past their prime” vocally. We feel sorry for them, and uncomfortable. (Usually, they do not even know they have “lost it.”)

It is a fact, however, that people who sing regularly tend to maintain their quality of sound much longer than those who do not. And vocal “retirement age” is different for each person.

I mention this awkward subject, not to embarrass, but rather to acknowledge that at some point we will all need to retire from precision singing. It is never a pleasant task for a director to tell someone that he needs to retire from the group, but in the interest of the common goals of the group, it is sometimes necessary.

For this reason, there will be an annual re-audition for existing members. It will take less than three minutes, and is not something to dread. The purpose is to maintain the quality of communal sound that you expect from the group.

If you are asked to retire, please do not take it personally; it is purely professional. Be glad that you were able to tell others that you sang with the Southern Nights Chorale.

MEMORIZATION

Excellence in *a cappella* singing is about precision ... precise intonation, precise entrances and cut-offs, precise articulation. For these reasons, all of our selections will be performed without benefit of sheet music. New members will have a lot of music to learn in order to ramp-up in our established standard pieces. Fortunately, we have learning CDs for most of our works, as well as carefully marked up scores. New members, especially, need to commit to extra homework in the early stages to negotiate the steep learning curve. Each singer should look at participation in Southern Nights as a long-term commitment.

REHEARSALS

The chorus will rehearse every Monday evening from 7:15 to 9:45 with a ten-minute break. We meet at Dogwood Forest at 1294 Hwy 54, across from Fayette Community Hospital, unless otherwise notified.

We will not rehearse during the following week:

- Christmas Eve to New Years Day

We will not meet during July, so that all can enjoy their vacation time, and rest their voices.

In order to sing your best it is most important that you keep your throat lubricated. I recommend that you bring a bottle of water with you to rehearsals. Also, bring a pencil and highlighter to take notes and mark your scores.

ATTENDANCE

Rehearsals: The goal of the Southern Nights is to strive for excellence. This will necessitate everyone being at rehearsals, and on time. With such a small group, your absence will be felt. It is not fair to those singers who are consistent in their attendance to be handicapped by those who miss practice or are late. Therefore, it is the

policy of the chorale to allow up to five (5) excused absences per year, and no unexcused absences. Rehearsals will start promptly at 7:20PM; please be here at 7:15.

If you need an excused absence, prior to the rehearsal you will need to email J.D. Holmes at southernchorale@aol.com, or call 770-265-4298.

Performances: We presently have four standing performances per year: Peachtree City's 911 Tribute, Fayetteville's 911 Tribute, Fayette Festival of Carols, and our year-end Friends & Family Concert. Most of our performances are at night and on weekends. Occasionally, we are invited to sing for morning worship services at churches.

If you are unable to commit the time required to be in this chorus, please do not audition.

PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

As a member of the chorale, you will receive a Navy Sport Coat and Grey Slacks which we use in most of our winter performances. In addition to the specified top, summertime performance attire will always include black pants, black belt, black socks and black shoes, unless specifically told otherwise.

FEES

All new members pay an initial \$35 to cover the cost of your three-ring binder, tabs, music, and learning CDs. Plus, you will need to pay \$120 for your sport coat, slacks and tie. The sport coat and slacks become your own personal property, but are to be used only for our performance-related events while you are a member of the chorale.

EXPENSES

Our scheduled operating costs are covered by sponsorship donations. We're very appreciative of our sponsors, and hope that our members will support them whenever practical. Please try to find an opportunity to thank them for their support.

QUARTETS

The primary purpose of the SNC is to make a *group* sound. Side quartets are not allowed as they detract from the major thrust of a chorus.

GUESTS

We will continually be in a recruitment mode for the chorale. We want to be able to have a waiting list in the event we lose a singer. Everyone needs to recruit good singers. Guests are invited to attend our rehearsals to see if they would like to join

us. However, after three visits, they must audition in order to be considered for membership, or to be placed on the waiting list.

GOALS

Remember, the two major goals of the Southern Nights Chorale are (1) to catch excellence, and (2) to have fun. Let's make sure we accomplish both.

J.D. Holmes, Director

April 2, 2007