

**Con Brio Choral Society, Inc.  
Members' Handbook, 2017**



From the By-Laws:

This society's purpose is to cultivate choral music of high quality. For this purpose, it has organized an auditioned chorus to act under the name of Con Brio, trained to perform a variety of choral works and to present or collaborate in choral concerts for the general public. The society is non-commercial in its aim, and all funds arising from its activities are devoted to achievement of its purpose.

**Con Brio Choral Society, Inc.  
PO Box 312  
Centerbrook, CT 06409  
[www.conbrio.org](http://www.conbrio.org)**

## About Con Brio

Formed in 1997, Con Brio is a self-supporting, not for profit 501(c)3 corporation, registered in the State of Connecticut. Funding comes from Membership dues, concert ticket sales, program advertisements, donations and grants.

A brief history of Con Brio was included in the Christmas 2016 Concert Program and may updated and included in future programs from time to time. It is available on the Con Brio website.

See the website [www.conbrio.org](http://www.conbrio.org) for further information, lists of past performances, and for access to the Members' Roster and By-Laws. The Roster is confidential for Members' private use only and may not be loaned, sold, or given to non-Members of Con Brio. Access to the Members' Only page is password-controlled. The password is **duomo**.

Members should check that their name, address, phone number and email address are all correctly recorded in the Roster. Members should contact the Database Manager, [rolf.p@comcast.net](mailto:rolf.p@comcast.net) if any fields need to be updated.

## Membership

Con Brio invites applications to join Con Brio, without regard to age, race, color, religious belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnic origin.

Admission to Con Brio is contingent on audition, availability of places in the appropriate choral part, and the choral balance. Admission to Con Brio, and continuing Membership in Con Brio, is at the discretion of the Music Director and the Music Committee.

Members are expected to:

- Purchase and learn their music\*
- Acquire and wear the appropriate concert dress
- Attend all rehearsals and concerts
- Advise the Music Director and Section Leader of any absences
- Pay annual dues\*
- Participate in the annual fund-raising campaign
- Sell concert program advertisement space
- Sell concert tickets
- Volunteer and participate to meet the needs of Con Brio

\*Con Brio does not wish to exclude any Member due to financial hardship. Any Member who has difficulties paying, should speak with the President of Con Brio, in strictest confidence, to discuss the possibility of a special arrangement.

## Attendance

Members are expected to sing in all concerts and attend all dress rehearsals, except in emergencies or sickness. Members should advise the Music Director and their Section Leader in advance of any planned absences, particularly in the case of being absent for an entire concert Semester. Failure to do so may be treated as a resignation.

Members who miss more than three rehearsals in any concert semester, may be requested by the Music Director or the Music Committee Chairman, to demonstrate their ability to perform the music.

Weekly rehearsals are held Tuesday evenings from 7.00 pm to 9.30 pm at St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, 56 Great Hammock Road, Old Saybrook, CT, or as otherwise advised. There is an intermission with refreshments.

The rehearsal schedule changes during the week preceding the concert(s). Dress rehearsals are typically from 6.30 pm to 9.30 pm on the Tuesday and Thursday immediately before the concert(s), at Christ the King Church, 30 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, CT, or as otherwise advised.

Members should be aware of the concert and rehearsal calendar listed in '*Fast Notes*' — the weekly email newsletter that is emailed to all singing Members. **In the event of closings due to winter weather, or other emergencies, Members will be advised by email.**

Members are expected to be in their assigned seats, (in accordance with the seating chart issued by the Music Director), ready to start singing at the posted time of the rehearsal. Rehearsals move at a brisk pace, so Members should organize their music for singing in the published rehearsal order in *Fast Notes*. This order changes week by week. The Music Director may instruct Members to mark their scores for additions and changes, so Members should keep a pencil to hand. Members are responsible for obtaining such markings from their peers or Section Leader, in case of any missed rehearsals.

## Learning the Music

Con Brio endeavors to perform fine music at a high level of excellence. Music is selected that will be interesting to all, including the audience, but may be challenging to many. A committed Con Brio member should be able to master all the selections and give an excellent performance if she/he attends all the rehearsals and accepts personal responsibility for learning their music.

From time to time Con Brio will perform shorter pieces without music. All Members are required to study and memorize such pieces. This creates a very professional appearance and creates a fuller, richer sound and perfect precision of tempi. Con Brio can assist Members to monitor their progress and learn their music:

- **Individual Monitoring:** Members should listen to others in their section. Members should ask themselves, “Am I keeping up?”
- **Group Evaluation:** Some form of testing, usually in double quartets (“DQ”), is used to expose problems rapidly.

Members who have the sense that they are behind, or perform weakly in a Group Evaluation, and cannot work alone, should seek help. Members should speak to their Section Leader. Occasionally a Section Leader may call an extra rehearsal if that section is specifically challenged by a piece. Con Brio also makes free MIDI files available to all Members, to assist in private learning and practice. These should be requested from the Database Manager.

## Finance and Fundraising

Con Brio is self-supporting. It takes approximately \$1,000 per Member to cover annual operating expenses. Members meet this responsibility through:

- **Dues:** Annual dues are \$125, payable at the first rehearsal in September. Members are required to pay dues for the entire year, even if intending to miss a concert semester. Members who join in January who may, exceptionally, pay for half a year on joining for their first concert semester.
- **Music:** Members purchase their music unless they already own the required edition(s) *and advise the Librarian in advance*, before the music is ordered. The Librarian is responsible for bulk ordering the music. To reduce costs, photo-copies may be provided of shorter works, in the public domain. Members should bring their check book to the first rehearsal of each concert semester to pay for their music.
- **Ticket Sales:** Members should sell at least 4 tickets for each concert.
- **Advertisements:** During the annual Jan-Feb Advertising campaign, Members sell advertisement space in the concert program for a full calendar year. This a key part of Con Brio’s funding. All Members are expected to participate.
- **Fundraising:** *All Con Brio Members* are expected to contribute during the Fall fund-raising drive. Any amount is acceptable. Please contact the President regarding Legacy Donations. Please also encourage friends and relatives to contribute. All donations are fully tax-deductible. All contributors are recognized for their support in the concert programs during the following year.

## Participation

Con Brio relies on Members to volunteer in a variety of ways to further its mission and contain costs. A very high proportion of Members are active in one way or another.

- **Serve on the Board and Committees:** Help direct the workings of the organization
- **Hospitality:** Bring food/snacks for the weekly rehearsal breaks. A sign-up sheet will be circulated at the first rehearsal each semester
- **Concert Setup:** Set up and take down risers, lighting, audio, and chairs for rehearsals and performances

## Concert Tours

The Con Brio Tour Committee organizes concert tours, which usually take place in May and early June of even years.

The next Tour to Slovenia and Croatia will take place in 2018. Members who are interested in travelling should contact the Tour Manager. Recent tours have included:

- 2005: Italy: Florence, Venice, Lake Como, Milan, Aosta
- 2007: Germany: Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Prague
- 2009: Italy: Rome, Naples, Amalfi Coast, Sicily
- 2012: Spain: Granada, Sevilla, Ronda, Malaga
- 2014: Spain: Barcelona and France: Toulouse, Tours, Paris
- 2016: Portugal: Lisbon, Oporto and Spain: Salamanca and Madrid

Although Con Brio sponsors these tours, there is no funding from Con Brio, and assets are not co-mingled. Touring Members' are responsible for their own expenses. Non-singing participants are welcome, subject to available space.

## SummerSings

The annual program of SummerSings, co-sponsored by Con Brio and *Cappella Cantorum*, provides an opportunity to enjoy reading through the great choral works. SummerSings also offer the experience to work with some nationally and internationally acclaimed conductors.

SummerSings are held at St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, 56 Great Hammock Road, Old Saybrook, CT. Registration takes place between 7:00 pm and 7:30 pm, with singing from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, with a brief intermission. A modest fee covers all costs. Scores are usually available (on loan for the evening) for those who do not own them.

SummerSings are welcoming and open to all.

## Fellowship

Con Brio is a friendly, welcoming and inclusive group. There is a thriving and vibrant spirit of participation and volunteerism, which makes the organization run smoothly and efficiently, with low expenses.

Each year Con Brio starts the season with a social evening and read-through. After regular rehearsals, many choristers enjoy fellowship at the *Hideaway Pub* in Old Lyme. Con Brio celebrates its concerts with a post-concert party.

## Concert Attire

### Ladies:

- ✓ Black concert dress (available for order from Con Brio)
- ✓ Black hosiery and black shoes
- ✓ Sparkly necklace (supplied by Con Brio)
- ✓ Earrings (supplied by Con Brio)
- ✓ A lightweight colored jacket (red for Christmas, blue for Spring) (available for order from Con Brio)
- ✓ Plain black folder for music

### Gentlemen:

- ✓ Black Tuxedo
- ✓ Plain white shirt, standard collar, (no wing collars)
- ✓ Black Bow Tie
- ✓ Black (shined) shoes, black socks
- ✓ Plain black folder for music

Members should refrain from wearing anything fragrant (perfumes, hair spray, aftershave, etc.) to either concerts or rehearsals.

## **Governance and Leadership Team**

### **Annual Meeting of Con Brio**

The annual meeting takes place at 9.30 pm following the Thursday dress rehearsal, immediately preceding the Spring Concert.

Following the approval of the minutes of the previous year's meeting, and the annual financial report, Directors are elected by a ballot of all Members present. The Board selects the Officers.

### **Officers**

President:	Peter Amos (860) 304-1399
Vice President:	Barbara Quinn
Treasurer:	Tom Meisenzahl
Secretary:	Suzanne Kitchings

### **Board of Directors**

Bill Chatman, Helen Charov, Becky Coffey, Mary Lee Duff, John Van Epps, Wendy Mill, Elizabeth Ramirez-Medina, Patrick Turner

### **Musical Direction**

Music Director:	Stephen D. Bruce Ph. D
Associate Music Director:	Susan Saltus

### **Section Leaders**

Soprano Section Leader:	Abby Bruce
Alto Section Leader:	Phyllis Gregor
Tenor Section Leader:	Scott Weaver
Bass Section Leader:	Larry Hamre

### **Key Contacts**

Program Editor:	Barbara Quinn
Advertising Manager:	Wendy Mill
Database Manager:	Rolf Peterson
Tour Manager:	Abby Bruce
Publicity Manager:	Becky Coffey
Concert Set Up Manager:	Len Dongweck
Refreshment Coordinator:	Elaine Meisenzahl
Ladies' Dress Coordinator:	Abby Bruce
Music Committee Chair:	Larry Hamre
Librarian:	Deirdre Rutan

Contact information may be found online in the Members' Roster.

Rev 5 for website 9/1/17