



Glorifying God Through The BoyChoir Tradition

**2019 – 2020 Season
ChoirBoy Handbook**

*St. Petersburg BoyChoir
&
Tampa BoyChoir*

Revised 11/1/2019

The Purpose of the *Florida BoyChoirs*

I will sing of You among the nations! (Psalm 108:3)

Glorifying God Through The BoyChoir Tradition

We endeavor to achieve this mission statement through every concert, rehearsal, project and program of the Florida BoyChoirs. As a Christian cultural youth organization, we welcome boys of all faiths. We develop their God-given gift of music, promote character and spiritual growth rooted in traditional Judeo-Christian values. We are dedicated to instilling in our ChoirBoys and our audiences a life-long appreciation of the music of the great masters, the classical BoyChoir Tradition, and its role in worship and the history of music.

About the Florida BoyChoirs

The Florida BoyChoir was founded by ChoirMaster Brian L. Collar as a non-profit, cultural youth organization in July of 1986. Since then, hundreds of ChoirBoys have made recordings, appeared on radio and television in the United States and Canada and toured throughout Florida, to several U.S. states and internationally to Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Iceland and Poland.



The Florida BoyChoir has to its credit performances of classical, folk and spiritual compositions. Works such as Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* and *Missa Brevis in D Major*, Johann Sebastian Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Franz Schubert's *Mass in G Major* and other works of the masters remain at the center of the repertoire. The BoyChoir has self-produced operas including a one-act adaptation of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*, Malcolm Williamson's *The Happy Prince*, and Gian-Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* on several occasions. Our boys are engaged by professional companies such as the Florida Orchestra, St. Petersburg Opera, Opera Tampa and others for productions such as of George Bizet's *Carmen*, and Puccini's *La Bohème* and *Tosca*. They have performed with the Florida Orchestra in the *Lord Of The Rings Symphony*, a Broadway touring production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*, and nationally televised on a Nostalgia Network Christmas Special and throughout Canada on *Breakfast Television*.

The long range objective of the organization is to develop new BoyChoirs in many cities throughout Florida and to one day open the Florida BoyChoir School: a Christian school for boys, grades three through twelve, dedicated to choral, athletic and academic excellence, and committed to the raising up of young men to be husbands, fathers and leaders anchored in the word of God.

The Florida BoyChoirs Experience

Great personal enrichment comes from membership in the Florida BoyChoirs. Collectively, we refer to all Choral Activities and their benefits to our ChoirBoys, as the "BoyChoir Experience".

Our ChoirBoys receive training in proper singing, music theory and music history. They perform the music of classical masters as well as folk music, spirituals and that of more recent genres.

Membership

Membership in the Florida BoyChoirs is earned through an encouraging audition process intended to evaluate a boy's desire to sing and his readiness to begin formal musical training. Once accepted into membership, new boys are seated in one of the choirs by the ChoirMaster.

*St. Petersburg BoyChoir**

The St. Petersburg BoyChoir is composed of boys, ages eight through seventeen, of unchanged, changing and changed voices. This choir performs locally.

Tampa BoyChoir

The Tampa BoyChoir is composed of boys, ages eight through seventeen, of unchanged, changing and changed voices. This choir performs locally.

Florida BoyChoir

The Florida BoyChoir is an advanced choir composed of select boys, ages eight through seventeen, of unchanged, changing and changed voices. It performs full concerts locally, out of state, internationally and, on occasion, in professional productions ranging from fully staged opera to larger orchestral works. Some boys hold permanent seats in the Florida BoyChoir and others are selected to participate in certain projects while also singing in their city BoyChoir.

New BoyChoirs. The organization plans to open additional BoyChoirs in Florida as soon as possible.



*Sing the glory of His name;
make His praise glorious!
(Psalm 66:2)*

* The original St. Petersburg Boychoir was founded in 1958 by Donald Mathis and continued through 1985 providing training and concert opportunities to thousands of boys. Our ChoirMaster, Brian Collar, began his musical training in the St. Petersburg BoyChoir at age nine and served as a rehearsal assistant and Student Conductor while in High School.

The Audition Process

All boys, ages eight through seventeen, who love singing are encouraged to audition. Prior training or experience is not necessary. Music Educators, Church Choir Directors and Voice Teachers often nominate boys. Every effort is made to make the audition process enjoyable and supportive.

Applicant Status (First Audition) - Applicants attend a group audition with two or more other boys, generally of the same age. This hearing considers the boy's ability to echo clap and echo sing (repeating what he hears). At first, boys sing together and, toward the end of the session, sing on their own. There is no music to prepare. Boys passing the Applicant audition are promoted to Candidate status.

Candidate Status (Second Audition) - Candidates participate in a few rehearsals along with seated ChoirBoys. This allows the ChoirMaster to evaluate the boy in a working rehearsal and the Candidate to experience singing with the BoyChoir. Should this second audition be successful, the Candidate is promoted to the status of Apprentice.

Apprentice Status (Third Audition) - Apprentice boys are assigned to a choir by the ChoirMaster and attend all rehearsals and events fully participating for a number of weeks. Once the ChoirMaster is confident that the Apprentice is ready, and his family is committed to membership, he is promoted to ChoirBoy status and officially "seated" in his choir.

Once accepted into the BoyChoir families are presented with an updated ChoirBoy Handbook, a Membership Agreement and Season Schedule. We ask that these materials are read together with the ChoirBoy, discussed and prayerfully considered before a commitment to membership is made.

Choral Activities

The term "Choral Activities" refers to all events such as rehearsals, concerts, performances, tours, recordings, and rehearsal camps.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals resume shortly after the start of the new school year and continue through May.

St. Petersburg BoyChoir Rehearsals

Monday from 6pm to 8pm

One Saturday each month from 10am to 3pm

Two rehearsal camp weekends each season

Rehearsal Location TBA

Tampa BoyChoir Rehearsals

Thursday from 6pm to 8pm

One Saturday each month from 10am to 3pm

Two rehearsal camp weekends each season

Rehearsals are hosted by

Hyde Park United Methodist Church

500 W Platt Street

Tampa, Florida 33606

Saturday Rehearsals

Saturday rehearsals, held monthly, serve as a one day workshop to prepare repertoire, receive specialized voice training and to combine with the other choirs of the Florida BoyChoirs.

Many Saturday rehearsals will be followed by a fun outing or activity to promote the important building of friendships. If staying past noon, please bring a bag lunch and a drink to the Saturday Rehearsals. Refrigeration and microwave is not available.

Extra Rehearsals

Before major concerts, recordings and events, additional rehearsals may be scheduled. These will appear in the season schedule with as much notice as possible.

Concerts and Performances

Each ChoirBoy performs in a number of Christmas and Spring concerts which are private engagements or part of our own concert series. The boys are available to perform as part of local opera productions, for major orchestral works, for worship services of all faiths and for community and private events.



Concert Tours

The *Florida BoyChoir* is the touring choir. Those seated in this choir are expected to tour. Select boys of the city BoyChoirs may be invited to participate in a tour. Touring is a tremendous musical opportunity and growth experience. The choir may give weekend mini-tours throughout the season and/or an extended tour of two to three weeks in June. While "on the road" the boys are managed by the ChoirMaster, Accompanist, Director Of Choral Activities, Proctor and a Tour Assistant. All travel and lodging is carefully planned and often includes hotels, home stays with other BoyChoirs, and dorms or youth hostels (in Europe). Any overnight concert obligation is considered a tour. For longer tours, we ask that parents understand it is best that family not attend tours as it minimizes the experience for their son. Parents may be asked to join the tour staff for Mini-Tour weekends. Pictures and videos will be posted online as often as possible.

Florida International BoyChoir Festival

The Florida BoyChoirs, Inc. has produced a music festival to which BoyChoirs from all over the world are invited to attend. Past Festivals have brought together 282 boys (in 1992) and 208 boys (in 1994) under the direction of world-renowned ChoirMaster and Composer Sir David Willcocks. Boys from as far away as Canada (1992), Germany (1994) and Iceland (1992 & 1994) have joined those from throughout the United States for our week-long celebration of the BoyChoir tradition. Boys will be selected from each of our choirs to represent the organization in the combined Festival Finale Concert and will attend many or all festival week events.

BoyChoir Rehearsal Camp Weekends

For many of the boys, weekend rehearsal camps are a favorite part of membership. Held two to three times each season, attendance is required as it equals six weeks of regular rehearsals. The BoyChoir uses Camp Frontier, a private summer camp located in Haines City, Florida (see CampFrontier.com) or a similar venue. Although the primary purpose of the camp weekend is to provide concentrated rehearsal time, plenty of time is committed to swimming, boating, fishing, sports, arts and crafts, horseback riding, paintball and campfires. Equally important, rehearsal camp weekends provide time for the boys to build friendships.

The weekend concludes with awards for musical, athletic, and arts and crafts activities. One boy from each choir is recognized with a special award for his work in rehearsal, his cooperative spirit and leadership.

Parents are encouraged to participate in camp weekends. The boys are under the supervision of their counselors of parents and select alumni.



BoyChoir Rehearsal Camp Packing List

- Play clothes for duration of the camp. Please consider the weather.
- Bathing suit
- Flash light, toothbrush, soap, shampoo, sun screen, bug spray
- Do NOT bring: Knives, money, matches, fireworks, food

Towels, pillows and bedding is provided

Please contact the BoyChoir office with any questions.

Florida BoyChoir Training Scheme

Tremendous emphasis is placed upon the proper training of our ChoirBoys. We desire to produce not just "rote singers" but complete musicians with a deep knowledge of music and an appreciation of the Art of BoyChoir. Our multi-level system has been freely adapted from the Royal School of Church Music practice and includes the tradition of "ribboning." Boys are formally presented with their new ribbon in concert and wear them during performances whenever appropriate.

The ChoirBoys receive professional instruction in: Music Theory, Music History, Sight Singing, Ear Training, Conducting and Vocal Studies.

Philosophical Approach

It is our philosophy that the best environment for the artistic child is created when, and only when, there is a balance of spiritual, intellectual, cultural, athletic, and social experiences. We believe that growth, enthusiasm, self-discipline and confidence will result.

Level Requirements

After meeting a series of specific requirements, and with the ChoirMaster's approval, boys are promoted through three levels, each with its own ribbon color.

White Ribbon - Complete the 1st Theory Book, pass the Peer Jury, level one in all Training Areas, write one new Composer Report and earn a minimum 400 points and hold a score of 80% or better.

Blue Ribbon - Complete the 2nd Theory Book, pass the Peer Jury, level two in all Training Areas, write two new Composer Reports and earn a minimum 800 points and hold a score of 85% or better.

Red Ribbon - Complete the 3rd Theory Book, pass the Peer Jury, level three in all Training Areas, write three new Composer Reports and earn a minimum 1200 points and hold a score of 90% or better.

Composer Reports

Boys select a composer from those whose music is currently in repertoire. Using any number of sources, the report is to tell the life story of the composer including dates of birth and death, family, type of music composed, and major positions held, et al. The length requirement is by word count equal to 100 words per grade level (ie a 6th grade boy's report would have a minimum of 600 words.)

Annual Awards

The concert season closes with an annual awards ceremony generally following the Spring Concert. Special awards are given in each choir; ChoirBoy of the Year Award, Music Theory Award and various others.

We Award Achievement!

In situations where the boys have the opportunity to choose partners, cabin bunk mates, tour partners, and the like, they are polled by seniority based upon rank and total points. This fosters a healthy atmosphere of tradition, friendly competition and accomplishment.

Advancement and Evaluation

ChoirBoy Rank and Position

Our internal peer structure is designed to motivate the boys to achieve. Each choir has a Head ChoirBoy, an Assistant Head ChoirBoy, and, often, a Section Leader in each vocal section. More experienced boys are assigned to newer ChoirBoys and serve as Mentor demonstrating our rehearsal traditions and procedures. Positions are appointed by the ChoirMaster.

ChoirBoy Point System

All ChoirBoys participate in a motivational point system. Every rehearsal, concert, tour, and camp is an opportunity to earn points throughout their membership. There are also projects and bonus point opportunities. When a boy earns a total of 1000 point, all celebrate with a “Thousand Point Cake”.

Point Values

Weekday Rehearsals – up to 5 points, based upon performance

Saturday Rehearsals – up to 10 points, based upon performance

BoyChoir Camp Weekends - up to 25 points

Concerts - up to 25 points

Music Theory Book – one point for every page completed

Sight Singing Exams – up to 10 points

Music History Exams – up to 10 points

Composer Reports – up to 25 points

Head ChoirBoy - 100 points per season

Assisitant Head ChoirBoy - 75 points per season

Each Choir’s Section Leaders - 50 points per season

Music Related Scripture Verse Memorization (optional) – 5 points each

Other points may be earned for various projects and assignments

Note: Boys may lose a point for being late or unprepared (ie. not having music, BoyChoir shirt, et al)

ChoirBoy “Score”

In order to additionally evaluate a ChoirBoy’s progress, a percentage score is presented. It is determined by the number of points earned out of the number of possible points. For example: a boy earning 190 out of 200 possible points, would have a score of 95%.

An excused absence will not lower the score but a “0” is factored for an unexcused absence.

Points and Score Requirements

To be invited to return for another season, a boy must have a score of at least 80% and have earned at least 300 points in the preceding season. This is prorated for those boys who begin later in the season. Most boys will earn over 500 points in a single full season.

In order to tour, a boy must have a season score of at least 85%.

Boys holding positions (Head, Assistant, Section Leaders) must maintain a minimum score of 90%.

Membership Policies

It is the organization's purpose to recruit gifted boys, guide them in the development of their musical abilities, and present quality concerts of tradition-appropriate choral literature, all in such a way which develops character and glorifies God. The following policies and requirements are the result of decades of experience and ensure the continued success of this objective for the BoyChoir and its ChoirBoys.

Attendance and Dedication

ChoirBoys are required to attend each and every rehearsal, concert, tour (if applicable), fund-raising event and rehearsal camp for which they are scheduled. The only excused absences are those resulting from illness or family emergency. Boys missing a dress rehearsal may not perform in that concert. The ChoirMaster has the sole authority to excuse an absence.

If a boy must be absent, it is important to notify the BoyChoir by email, phone or text so that it will not count against his score nor good standing in the choir.

Sports and other extracurricular activities, while a valuable part of a boy's development, are not usually acceptable reasons for absence, early dismissal or tardiness. Continuing transportation problems and homework (in most cases) are also not typically considered an excused absence.

In order to be mutually beneficial, membership in the Florida BoyChoir must be of the highest priority for the ChoirBoy and his family. Excellence in choral music is only possible when each boy is fully committed to the choir's purpose, to his role in the ensemble, and to his fellow choir brothers.



Bizet's *Carmen* with St. Petersburg Opera

Newsletters, Schedules and Communications

The Season Schedule contains a tentative listing of all concerts, rehearsals, projects and other activities. Newsletter and updates are regularly emailed containing detailed information and changes, if any. All information is also available on our website, FloridaBoyChoirs.com, in the members section. Please feel free to send in your choir photos for use in the newsletters and online.

Clothing Requirements

BoyChoir Rehearsal Clothes

ChoirBoys are required to have at least one embroidered BoyChoir golf shirt. (We recommend two shirts.) The boys wear them to each rehearsal and for certain functions. Shirts are to be tucked in during rehearsals. Boys should wear clean, comfortable shorts or pants and closed-toed shoes: no sandals or flip-flops are to be worn during rehearsals.

Concert Clothes

Depending upon the nature of the concert, our boys wear the embroidered BoyChoir dress shirt with black dress pants, full tuxedos or traditional red and white Choir Robes. The BoyChoir provides for use the tuxes and robes which are sent home and maintained by the parents. The tux is dry clean only. Please do not iron the satin trim. It is important that they be clean and pressed prior to each performance. The boys purchase their own black slip-on dress shoes and black socks. Some concerts afford the opportunity to arrive in the rehearsal uniform and change on site while other venues require arrival already dressed for the performance.

Supervision Of The ChoirBoys

The safety of our ChoirBoys is our highest priority. Parents are welcome to volunteer to assist with supervision at rehearsals, rehearsal camps and backstage at concerts. More than one adult is present at all events and the boys are never unsupervised.

Recordings and Photographs

In order to follow appropriate concert etiquette, the use of recording devices, photographs, audio and/or video recordings are not permitted during concert as it is a distraction to others in the audience and due to license and royalty legalities. A brief photo opportunity is often staged following specific concerts and recordings are often available through the choir. In many cases the Florida BoyChoirs will take official photos and recordings of performances, rehearsals, choir camps and events. These become the sole exclusive property of the organization and may be used in print or digital reproduction.

Parents As Drivers

It is our policy that parents may volunteer to drive groups of boys to concerts and events that are within a ninety-minute driving distance. For longer travel, a bus may be chartered. We require that while transporting ChoirBoys, all are secured in seat belts (one per ChoirBoy) at all times. If you plan to stop en route, please communicate your intention in advance for approval. The ChoirBoys may not be exposed to smoking, vaping or alcohol at any time while in the care of others. Drivers must be fully insured and in compliance with all legal requirements.

Attitude Of The ChoirBoy

It is important to realize that the attitude of a ChoirBoy has a direct effect upon his ability to be a contributing, productive and benefiting member of the BoyChoir. It is his mindset that will determine the amount of growth, pride and satisfaction he receives from the BoyChoir experience. Our ChoirBoys tend to come from very supportive homes where parents take an active role in their son's life. As a boy progresses through the season, parental support becomes increasingly important. For example, it is interesting to note that a few boys think of leaving the BoyChoir just after a major event such as large concert, festival or tour. This downtime or "slump" is a result of the return to a rehearsal "working" mode following all the fun and excitement of a big event. Quite frankly, we expect artistic children to be occasionally "moody". Please know that with his parent's encouragement and support it will pass.

If you believe that your son's interest level may be decreasing or that there may be a problem, there are several things that can be done both in and out of rehearsal to help him through this transitional phase.

A commitment such as membership in the Florida BoyChoir teaches the boy to fulfill obligations – a life skill which is very much needed. Please communicate your observations and concerns.



Standard of Conduct, Removal or Withdrawal

Simply put, we expect our ChoirBoys to be on their very best behavior at all times. Boys who choose ongoing, non-improving conduct problems, poor attendance, or display dishonest, vulgar or violent behavior will not continue in the BoyChoir. Dismissal from membership is at the sole discretion of the ChoirMaster.

Should a boy be sent home from an event (rehearsal, concert, camp or tour), incurred additional costs are the responsibility of the parents. In this unfortunate event or in the case of permanent expulsion, any advanced fees, including tours fees, tuition or contributions, are nonrefundable. This policy requires an explanation: At the very core of this organization is a sincere commitment to the BoyChoir tradition, to our ChoirBoys, and our purpose. We ask that the membership commitment be undertaken after a complete exchange of information. It is for this reason that this handbook contains all facets of information on the organization. Additionally, the operating budget is dependent upon the committed Tuition amount. It is unfair to the remaining ChoirBoys, the employees and the organization to permit families to obligate their support and then renege.

Financial Obligations

*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;
and all these things shall be given unto you. (Matthew 6:30-33)*

Above all, we trust in God to provide for the financial needs of the Florida BoyChoirs. Revenues come from membership tuition, ticket sales, private bookings, activity fees, fund raising and contributions.

Funding is never requested nor accepted from any tax-derived sources such as city, county, state or federal arts grants. Funds from private, corporate and foundation sponsors are welcome.

ChoirBoy Tuition

St. Petersburg BoyChoir: \$65 per month during the concert season

Tampa BoyChoir: \$65 per month during the concert season

Payment options: If at all possible, we ask that the tuition be paid by September 1st. If needed, two payments may be made (September 1st and January 1st) or monthly, September through May.

Other Membership Expenses

Music Theory Book - \$10

BoyChoir Golf Shirt - approximately \$20 each

BoyChoir Dress Shirt - Prices will vary with size

Concert Tickets - Families are asked to purchase and sell tickets

BoyChoir Rehearsal Camp – \$100 to cover all expenses for a ChoirBoy or an assisting adult

Concert Tours (Florida BoyChoir) - The cost of tours will be announced as early in the season as possible. Parent-lead fund-raising will be coordinating to benefit each boy's account.

It is our policy that **"No boy shall be denied full membership in the Florida BoyChoirs due to financial concerns."** Since the founding of the Florida BoyChoirs in 1986, no ChoirBoy has ever been denied membership nor full participation due to his families' finances. Need-based scholarships are available. Many parents contribute beyond the tuition to benefit the Scholarship Fund, as do Sponsors and Alumni.

Cost Comparison

Intentionally, the cost of membership is comparably less than league sports, dance classes, children's theater and private instrumental or vocal lessons. We believe the life experiences gained are priceless.

Membership Agreement

The Membership Agreement form includes the ChoirBoy's family contact information, emergency information, consent for medical treatment, and liability release. This form needs to be notarized and returned prior to the first rehearsal. It can be mailed or scanned and uploaded to the website.

888-469-FLBC (3522)
for voice and text

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