



The Vision

To sing is everyone's birthright. Margaret's Choir regards singing as a powerful human expression through which singers experience joy and seek to share this message with others. Members of the choir strive to make a difference both for themselves and the world.

Choir Founder: Margaret Tobin (1946 – 2014)



Guidelines for the Management of Margaret's Choir

These Guidelines provide a description of the purpose, structure and membership of Margaret's Choir. Sections 1 and 3 are aspirational and the remaining sections describe how the organization is to operate.

The Dream Team is the standing group of individuals who have undertaken the roles and responsibilities required to ensure that Margaret's Choir is able to fulfill its mission in a manner consistent with the values described in this document.

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1. THE ORGANIZATION

Margaret's Choir is a non-auditioning community choir in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In this document it is also referred to as "the organization", and "the choir". Activities of the choir are conducted in accordance with the mission, vision and values defined below, within the structure outlined in this document. The Dream Team acts as the choir's governing body and functions as both an executive and a working board.

a) History and Purpose

Spirit's Call Choir in Winnipeg began in an "Exploration of the Self" workshop with Margaret Tobin and Dorothy Becker sponsored by U of M Counselling Centre in 2000. Nine people who thought they couldn't sing found their voices and formed a choir under the volunteer leadership of Margaret Tobin. Since then, the choir has become a musical home for women and men who have been told or believed they couldn't sing, for novice to accomplished singers and musicians and for those who love to "Sing for the Joy". The choir has unfolded based on the supportive remembering of the premise that everyone has a right to sing.

The choir has evolved an ability to support local charities that are consistent with the fundamental mission, vision and values of Margaret's Choir. This is accomplished through the presentation of fund-raising concerts.

Spirit's Call Choir was renamed Margaret's Choir in October 2014. The fundamental operational tenets of the organization are: improvement, cooperation and consensus.

b) Choir Mission

Margaret's Choir sings for personal, choral and global harmony. Through voice and action, members are enriched, and collectively contribute to the lives of other choir members (the choral family), of our community and others throughout the world.

Margaret's Choir usually presents two concerts every year to share our accomplishments with the audience and to raise funds for a local charity.

c) Choir Vision

To sing is everyone's birthright. Margaret's Choir regards singing as a powerful human expression through which singers experience joy and seek to share this message with others. Members of the choir strive to make a difference both for themselves and the world.

d) Choir Values

Acceptance of diversity, compassion, continuous improvement, creativity, empathy, helping others, respect for human dignity, inclusiveness, joy, justice, leadership, positive attitude, and respect.

2. MEMBERSHIP

a) Eligibility

Membership in Margaret's Choir shall be open to all. There is only one form of membership, and that is Active Membership. Anyone who wishes to join the choir must complete an official membership registration form, pay the seasonal membership fee (or part thereof) and by such registration implicitly agree to the Code of Conduct outlined in Section 3.

b) Fees

The Dream Team shall set the seasonal membership fee. Individuals may decide to pay a higher or lower fee depending on their circumstances.

c) Membership Term

The term of membership begins with a new spring or fall session and ends after the third practice of the next season. The exception to this limit is the entitlement to attend the Annual Assembly and any special meeting. (See Section 5.)

d) Privileges of Membership

The primary privilege and purpose of membership is to sing with other members, in all organized choir endeavours.

All active members are entitled to attend meetings of the whole membership as defined in Section 5.

Members are entitled to be involved in all choir initiated social events and are free to choose whether or not to participate.

All active members are entitled to make recommendations to the Dream Team regarding any area of choir functioning.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

a) Choir Environment

Margaret's Choir is committed to providing a welcoming and supportive environment for all who want to sing, whatever their experience. The choir relies on all choir members to contribute to this atmosphere of positive acceptance, in both singing and social activities. Essential aspects of choir culture include creating a climate of safety for individual vocal expression and discovery, facilitating group cohesion and conveying musical knowledge in a way that is accepting, encouraging, empowering and joyful.

Through membership in Margaret's Choir, members each have the opportunity to give and receive a very special experience that is embedded in the mission and values and reflected in the everyday act of singing together, in harmony, with positive intention, shared vulnerability and respect. Each member has the right to that experience, and is encouraged to also undertake the responsibility of contributing to it.

b) Member Respect

Choir members are responsible to act in a manner that respects the personal rights of other choir members, audience members and those directing the choir. Members are encouraged to contact a member of the Dream Team should they have any difficulty feeling respected and supported in their singing.

c) Conduct Review

A member may be asked to leave if he or she blatantly displays behaviours inconsistent with the Code of Conduct. Membership rights are only removed following both a discussion and a consensus decision by the Dream Team.

d) Reasonable Accommodation

The choir acknowledges the following obligations:

- To ensure that there is reasonable accommodation of the disability needs of all members, where those needs are based on demonstrated medical conditions,
- To assist individuals as needed in the mediation of any situation where the accommodation of one member's needs comes into competition with the needs of others.

4. CHOIR CONCERTS

Margaret's Choir usually presents two concerts every season (December and May) to share our accomplishments with the audience and to raise funds for a local charity.

The charity is selected from organizations whose names are brought forward to the Dream Team. An application to become a beneficiary and the criteria for selection of the beneficiary are posted on the choir's website (Margaretschoir.ca).

Proceeds from the sale of tickets are used to offset concert expenses (including a small percentage used to offset indirect expenses incurred by Margaret's Choir) and the resulting net proceeds are donated to the selected beneficiary.

5. MEETINGS OF CHOIR MEMBERSHIP

There are two types of meetings of the choir membership where formal business can be conducted: **Annual Assembly** and **Special All Members Meetings**.

To perpetuate Margaret Tobin's philosophy of consensus building, voting will be done by show of hands (aye, nay, abstention). However, any motion may be voted upon by secret ballot if 30 % of members present declare that preference by show of hands. The Dream Team will manage such a vote.

Minutes of these meetings will be posted on the choir's website (Margaretschoir.ca) for membership review.

All active members are entitled to attend these meetings, discuss and where applicable vote, on matters put before the membership. Anyone who became a member in either a spring or fall season prior to the Annual Assembly is regarded as an active member.

a) Annual Assembly

An Annual Assembly will be held each year, within 90 days of completion of the fiscal year, which ends on August 31. Notification of the meeting date and the agenda must be provided to members as follows:

- 5 weeks' notice of the date via announcement at practice and by email. Choir members will be invited to propose changes to the Guidelines, or request discussion of 'other business' items provided they give the Dream Team 3 weeks' notice.
- 4 weeks' notice if the Dream Team determines that proposed changes to the Guidelines will form part of the agenda.
- 2 weeks' notice of the meeting agenda.

The following business will be conducted at the Annual Assembly:

- A Financial Report will be presented for consideration and approval.
- The Dream Team will report on any other significant matters related to the operation of the choir or of interest to the members.
- Membership in the Dream Team will be ratified. New DT members may be nominated by Dream Team or nominated from the floor. If there are more nominations than positions, a secret ballot will be held. The Dream Team will manage such a vote.
- Any proposed changes to the Guidelines will be presented for consideration and approval.
- A quorum will exist if 20% of members are in attendance, providing correct procedures for notification have been followed.

b) Special All Members Meetings

The Dream Team, by majority vote, may convene a special meeting when it is determined to be in the best interests of the organization. A special meeting may also be convened by the request of at least 25% of choir members. Such requests must be made at least ten (10) days before that meeting is scheduled, in writing to the Dream Team.

Special meetings must be held after 6 pm on a weekday or any time on a weekend, and will be chaired by a Dream Team member. Members will be advised as to the purpose of the meeting and the business to be transacted. No other business except that specified in the notice will be transacted without the unanimous consent of all members present at the meeting. A quorum exists if 25 % of eligible members are in attendance.

6. DREAM TEAM (DT)

The Dream Team acts as the choir's governing body and functions as both an executive and a working board. The Dream Team controls and manages the organization's affairs and business, has fiduciary responsibilities, and contracts and liaises with the Artistic Director and Accompanist.

a) Membership

The Dream Team is comprised of up to twelve (12) members consisting of at least one member from each of the four singing sections (SATB), and the Artistic Director as a non-voting ex-officio member.

Dream Team members must be current members who have been members for two full consecutive years (four seasons).

Dream Team members serve for a term of three years, beginning at season's end following the Annual Assembly.

A Dream Team member may be re-elected at the Annual Assembly to serve subsequent terms on the Dream Team.

Should a vacancy on the Dream Team occur, resulting in responsibility for one or more functions becoming unassigned, the remaining Dream Team Members, may choose by majority vote to:

- Leave that position vacant until the next annual membership meeting, or,
- Fill it temporarily with a choir member nominated by majority vote of the remaining DT members until the next Annual Assembly meeting, or,
- Call a special meeting to fill the vacancy (See Section 5.b).

b) Operating Principles and Procedures

Meetings will be held monthly or as required.

A majority (50% + 1) of the members must be present at a Dream Team meeting in order to constitute a quorum authorized to conduct the organization's business.

A Dream Team member may be removed from the Dream Team when there is sufficient cause for such removal by a majority vote of the other members.

If any member of the Dream Team has a substantial connection to the concert beneficiary organization, they should excuse themselves and not participate in discussion related to the concert beneficiary.

Dream Team members will turn over to the Dream Team all files, communications and relevant documents when leaving a specific role or leaving the Dream Team.

Minutes of Dream Team meetings shall be made available to Dream Team members as standard practice and available to choir members upon request.

Two Dream Team members may be appointed to stand by to act as Mediators as requested by the Dream Team.

c) Voting

To perpetuate Margaret Tobin's philosophy of consensus building, voting on decisions at the Dream Team meetings will be done by show of hands. It is expected that members will adopt that decision whole-heartedly and will support that decision even if they initially voted against it.

Any motion may be voted upon by secret ballot if any Dream Team member makes a formal request. Ballots will be counted by the Vice Chair or a designate.

d) Communication

Communication between Dream Team members shall be shared with all other Dream Team members in order to ensure that the Dream Team proceedings remain transparent. Dream Team members are expected to respond promptly to requests for decisions or opinions.

There are to be no online discussions regarding: the qualities of specific persons for recruitment to tasks, the evaluation of persons performance at choir tasks, or the compatibility of a persons' behaviour to the mission, values and code of conduct of the choir. Any such discussion will take place only in camera, and only when such topics are clearly relevant to the wellbeing of the choir and/or the member involved.

e) Delegation of Tasks to Other Committees

The Dream Team may also appoint task-specific working roles to other members of the choir. All committees of this organization shall be appointed by the Dream Team and serve for a period of one season. The term can be shortened or extended by the Dream Team as it sees fit.

Each of these committees/teams will have a designated member of the Dream Team as its primary liaison member.

f) Dream Team Member Roles

The Dream Team will organize the roles and responsibilities of the Dream Team and will designate Dream Team members to specific roles.

A Handbook for Dream Team members was approved on January 19 2019. A section of the Handbook describes the roles and responsibilities of the Dream Team and other support teams. The Handbook is a working document to be updated annually at the discretion of the Dream Team and does not require review or approval at an Annual Assembly. The standing roles are summarized below.

Chair: Responsible for providing leadership to the organization and the DT to ensure they function effectively, for representing the choir's interests in all interactions (signing authority for contracts, etc.), acting as the lead contact for potential new choir members and the community (i.e. public voice of MC), and liaising with:

- Practice Venue Team

Vice-Chair: Back-up for Chair, responsible for the smooth operation of the financial function (depositing funds, paying bills, etc.), liaising with the provider of the practice space and following Support Teams:

- Website Administrator
- Incident Response Team (IRT)
- Mediators (ad hoc basis)

Secretary: Responsible for keeping choir records and documents, taking and producing DT minutes, liaising with the Chair and Vice-Chair, and the following Support Team:

- Website Administrator

Treasurer: Responsible for the accounting function of MC's financial operations (not a signing authority). Liaises with the Chair, Vice-Chair, Registration Coordinator and Ticket Sales Team.

Registration Coordinator: Responsible for organizing registration and liaising with:

- Website Administrator
- Name Tag Lead

Member Support Coordinator: Responsible for communicating with existing members, orienting new members and leading recognition activities. Liaises with the following Support Team:

- Pot Luck Team

Communications Coordinator: Responsible for carrying out external communications activities approved by the DT and liaising with the following Support Teams:

- Website Administrator
- Photography/Videography Team

Beneficiary Selection Lead: Responsible for selection of concert beneficiaries

Music Acquisition Coordinator: Responsible for ordering music and liaising with the following Teams:

- Music Distribution Team
- Music Recording Lead

Concert Readiness Coordinator: Responsible for arrangements related to the concert venue, and liaising with the following Support Teams:

- Concert Venue Team
- Ticket Sales Team
- Scarf Team
- Stage Manager

7. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

a) Fiscal Year

The organization's fiscal year shall be September 1 to August 31. The Dream Team can designate an alternate term by a resolution.

b) Banking

All funds received by the choir will be deposited in a recognized financial institution in the name of Margaret's Choir. Margaret's Choir shall not borrow money for any purpose.

The Chair and the Vice-Chair are designated to hold signing authority and be the "the signatories" for this account. One of the two signatures is required for all transactions. The Treasurer will not be a signatory but will have access to the banking records.

Expenditures in excess of \$500 require a resolution passed by the majority of the Dream Team, unless they relate directly to a line in the approved budget for the season and would not cause a deficit. Up to \$300 may be withdrawn in cash for expenses preapproved by the Dream Team.

c) Financial Management

The Chair and the Vice-Chair shall provide the Treasurer with detailed information and documentation for all expenditures and deposits.

The Treasurer will prepare an annual budget, provide financial updates at Dream Team meetings and make recommendations about budget matters.

d) Membership Fees

The Dream Team will determine the membership fee for each season based on the current financial status and the budget proposed for the year.

e) Musical Scores:

The original scores purchased by the choir remain the property of the choir. They are to be archived, lent or disbursed at the direction of the Dream Team.

f) Conflict of Interest

No member of the organization shall have any right, title or interest in any property of the organization (e.g., music, instruments, photos, website or publicity content).

No person, whose membership is terminated, whether by death, resignation or any other means, shall have any right, title or interest in any asset or property of the organization.

8. CONTRACTS

The Dream Team, at its discretion, in the best interests of the organization and if financial circumstances allow, may approve the contracting of specific services on a temporary, part time or permanent basis in order to better meet the organization's mission. Such contracts may be for services such as musical leadership, guest performers, and any specific administrative tasks identified as necessary for the day to day running of the Choir.

All contracts must specify a time of renewal and review. Margaret's Choir will have no employees.

a) Artistic Director

The Artistic Director selects the repertoire, and leads each of the weekly practices, preparing the choir to sing in two concerts each season (December and Spring).

This includes:

- Selecting a repertoire in keeping with the Aspirations for Repertoire Selection adopted by the Dream Team on March 18, 2018. (Appendix 1)
- Arranging for accompanying musicians, soloists or other performers to augment the concert performances.
- Supporting the learning of the repertoire by creating practice recordings and holding sectional or additional practices as needed.

The Artistic Director is a non-voting ex officio member of the Dream Team and attends at least one meeting of the Dream Team each season.

b) Accompanist

The Accompanist provides piano accompaniment for choir rehearsals and concerts, and assists the Artistic Director in preparing the choir to sing in concert.

c) Performance Contracts

Contracts should be considered for specific services approved by the Dream Team such as guest performers for choir concerts, guest conductors or workshop sessions for the choir.

d) Space Rental

These contracts are required for the rehearsal space, performance space or any other requirement for choir activities.

e) Insurance

The Dream Team contracts for such insurance as needed to protect the interests of Margaret's Choir, to protect the public served by Margaret's Choir, and to save those acting on behalf of Margaret's Choir and the Dream Team from unreasonable indemnity and liabilities.

f) Financial Services

The Dream Team contracts for bookkeeping and financial reporting services as outlined in the role description of the Treasurer.

9. AMENDMENTS

The main consideration for any changes to these by-laws should be fairness, common sense, and the best interests of harmonious functioning of the organization. Any changes must be consistent with the Mission, Vision and Values and be approved by a vote at an Annual Assembly.

The organization may, if it wishes, change its name by a majority vote of its membership.

10. DISSOLUTION

In the event of the winding up of the affairs of Margaret's Choir all the assets of Margaret's Choir, including cash on hand and on deposit, after the payment of all outstanding accounts and other liabilities, shall be assigned, transferred and paid to a recognized charitable or non-profit organization determined by the Dream Team prior to final dissolution.

Guidelines for the Management of Margaret's Choir was ratified at the First Annual Assembly, November 15 2015, and amended at Annual Assemblies in 2017 and 2018. The document was redrafted and ratified at the Annual Assembly, November 3, 2019.

Aspirations for Repertoire Selection

On March 16 2018, the Dream Team formulated a set of five concepts, which in equal measure, are to form the architecture for the artistic direction of the choir over next several years. This document does not expire and is considered a Working Document for Margaret's Choir, the Dream Team and Musical Directors.

The musical content addressed in any season:

1. should be reasonably accessible to all members, when the support and leadership of the musical director is taken into account.
 - a. Rationale: This choir aspires to be both a non-audition opportunity for those who wish to sing but have little knowledge of how to do so, and a place for those who have experience to enjoy the singing environment.
2. should present some element of challenge to all members of the choir, across the full range of musical skill within the membership.
 - a. Rationale: This choir hopes to retain members of a variety of skill level. It is important Margaret's Choir provide those with developed skill, an ongoing opportunity to refine their musicality as they might wish to do so.
3. should have appeal to the audience anticipated to attend the end of season performance.
 - a. Rationale: This choir sings for the enjoyment of self and others, as well as in performance for the benefit of designated causes. The ability of the choir to do so is in part based on the excellence of performance and the connection the audience is able to make with the music presented.
4. should be sufficiently diverse that it appeal to potential choir members of a broad range of adult ages, cultural backgrounds and both genders.
 - a. Rationale: The long-term health of the choir requires that the membership have as full a representation of age gender and cultures as the community can provide.
5. should be consistent with the mission and values of Margaret's Choir.
 - a. Rationale: The choir needs to advocate with others through song, learn to sing, and interact with each other in the caring and fun-loving manner that has been the drawing card of membership, and which has been articulated in the Margaret's Choir Guidelines.