WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

BOY CHORISTER

PROGRAM

2018–2019
WORDS FROM
THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

It is hard not to be struck by the elegance and grace of our National Cathedral. The building is an exquisite expression of faith. Within lies a hundred years of inspiration, vocation, dedication, and love.

Few things have the ability to inspire and move more than music. It is my hope that this music program will flourish and further inspire those who are touched by it. What we have here is unique; it is something we cherish and is at the center of the mission and ministry of this place.

Canon Michael McCarthy
Director of Music

“It’s part of my life that I’m really proud of and I wouldn’t trade it for anything.” —former chorister
AN INTRODUCTION

The mission of the choirs is to offer, at the highest standard possible, praises to God through leadership in music and liturgy.

Washington National Cathedral’s Girls Choir and Boys Choir are among the few cathedral choirs in the United States affiliated with schools. The Boys Choir was founded in 1909. The boys are students aged 8–14 who attend St. Albans School. Through the National Cathedral School, the Girls Choir was founded in 1997 as the first of its kind in the United States and is open to students from seventh to twelfth grades. The men of the choirs are professional musicians from the greater Washington area who sing countertenor, tenor, and bass to complete the traditional choral sound. Together the choirs set a high standard for liturgical worship in this country.

The rigorous and intensive choral training offered by the music program is unique. The high academic standards of the two participating schools combine to provide exceptional musical and educational experiences. Choristers rehearse as part of their daily academic schedule, and their participation is fully integrated and supported by the staff of both schools. The choirs are responsible for leading worship for weekday evening and Sunday services.

While the duty of the choirs is to provide music for the regular sung liturgy, they are also required to participate in services of national importance such as presidential funerals and commemorative services. The choirs also tour nationally and internationally and have recorded a number of CDs. Participation in the choirs is, therefore, a combination of daily routine and special occasions.

“The choir program at St. Albans is inextricably part of the school’s identity and has been since the choir’s founding with the school in 1909.” —Canon Vance Wilson, former headmaster, St. Albans
Prospective Chorister Open House
Saturday, October 13 9–11 am

Boys’ Novice Open House
Sunday, January 27 9:50 am–12:30 pm

Boy Novice Winter Term
Wednesday, 4–5 pm, January through March

Boy Novice Spring Term
Tuesday & Thursday: rehearsal & Evensong 4:45–6:15 pm

Week of March 4

Parent conference

Every other Sunday: rehearsal & Evensong 2:45–5 pm

Every other Sunday: rehearsal & Evensong 2:45–5 pm

HOW TO JOIN

The novice program is the preparatory program for aspiring choristers. Novice choristers learn the basics of music theory, vocal production, and sight-reading. Even if a novice chooses not to become a chorister or is not successful in being admitted to the full choir, he will benefit from the experience and knowledge gained by being a novice.

Students with an aptitude and enthusiasm for music are encouraged to apply for the novice chorister program at the beginning of their third grade year. All novice choristers must be engaged in the admissions process for their respective schools. Enrollment application must be made at St. Albans School (STA) by November 2018. The open house for prospective boy choristers is scheduled on October 13, 9–11 am. Students should prepare a simple song or hymn and will have rudimentary ear and theory assessments. Youth and parents will have the opportunity to meet the music staff, current choristers, and parents; ask questions; and learn about the program. Those accepted into the novice program will attend the winter term musicianship classes listed below.

At the beginning of March the novice winter term ends and the music program waits for the schools to complete their admissions process. The music program is only able to offer 6–8 places for boys each year. Offers from the Cathedral music office and STA are sent simultaneously in early March. Successful candidates, who have also accepted places at STA for the following academic year, return to complete their novice training in the spring term. During this term they become more involved with the chorister program and participate in selected services. Novices are admitted as junior choristers during the last service of the year. Continuing membership in the choir is dependent upon ongoing acceptable academic performance at the Cathedral school and continued excellence as a chorister.
LIFE OF A CHORISTER

Participation in the choral program requires a significant commitment of time. The choristers’ schedule during the academic year is outlined in the table below.

In addition to the schedule of rehearsals and Evensong, choristers may be engaged in recordings, concerts, and tours until the middle of June, approximately two weeks following the close of the academic year. It is intended that the rest of the summer be free of chorister commitment.

During the last week of August, choristers are required to attend a week-long choir camp at the Roslyn Retreat Center in Richmond, Va. They spend this time working on new music for the coming year, giving community concerts, community service, fun field trips, and getting to know fellow choristers.

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<th>Boy Chorister Weekly Schedule</th>
<th>September through May</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday–Friday</td>
<td>during school hours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rehearsal at Cathedral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday &amp; Thursday</td>
<td>3:45–4:30 pm</td>
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<td>study hall &amp; snack</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday &amp; Thursday</td>
<td>4:45–6:15 pm</td>
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<td>rehearsal &amp; Evensong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Every other Sunday</td>
<td>10 am–12:30 pm</td>
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<td>2:45–5 pm</td>
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<td>rehearsal &amp; Eucharist</td>
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**BENEFITS**

Becoming a member of a Cathedral Choir is as serious a commitment as it is a beneficial experience. Choristers pursue a professional level course of musical training and play an important role in the life of both the Cathedral and their school.

**CHORAL STIPEND**

In recognition of the time commitment required of the students, the Cathedral offers a choral stipend equal in 2018–2019 school year to $6,000 for junior choristers (boys’ c and b forms) and $8,000 for senior choristers (boys’ form A, forms I and II).

**INDIVIDUAL LESSONS (VOICE AND PIANO)**

Each chorister is provided with voice and piano lessons throughout the year with professional voice and piano teachers. In addition to the full-time music staff faculty, the music department includes two private voice teachers and one private piano teacher drawn from the best the Washington, D.C., area has to offer. Voice lessons are invaluable not only from the point of view of developing technique, but also for managing the substantial workload placed upon young voices. Piano lessons are required as an important part of the music instruction of each chorister, enhancing their innate musical skills and adding to the overall foundation of musicianship. Choristers also participate in music theory lessons as part of their overall music education. Piano and voice evaluations are conducted near the end of the year, giving boys and girls an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned and how they have progressed. A vocal concert is offered at the end of the school year so choristers can display their talent to family and friends.

“The years that I spent in the Cathedral Choir were a highlight in my life and left me with memories that endure to this day. I always felt special being a Cathedral choir boy—I still feel special having been one.” — former chorister
**ACADEMIC EDUCATION**

Choristers receive school credit for being part of a Cathedral Choir and are assigned letter grades based on their performance and growth in the choir. It is generally accepted that being a chorister adds great weight to applications for education beyond high school.

**LIFE EXPERIENCE**

Cathedral choristers carry their experiences with them beyond their lives at the Cathedral. The development of time management, leadership, and cooperative skills are timeless and cannot be learned as a course of study. Likewise, they form lasting relationships with fellow-choristers through their unique shared experience.
CONTACT

For additional information, or if you have questions, please contact the chorister program manager at (202) 537-5730 or bglosh@cathedral.org.