

MUSE
Cincinnati's Women's Choir

Member Handbook

MUSE Philosophy

MUSE is a women's choir dedicated to musical excellence and social change. In keeping with our belief that diversity is strength, we are feminist women of varied ages, races, and ethnicities, with a range of musical abilities, political interests, and life experiences. We are women loving women; we are heterosexual, lesbian, and bisexual women, united in song. We commission and seek out music composed by women, pieces written to enhance the sound of women's voices, and songs that honor the common struggles and enduring spirit of all peoples. In performing, we strive for a concert experience that entertains, inspires, motivates, heals, and creates a feeling of community with our audience.

Revised September 25, 2002

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to make life with MUSE easier and more enjoyable for all of us.

We are women who have full lives outside of MUSE, volunteering our time, talents, and energy. In addition to pacing our schedules so that we avoid over-extending ourselves, we need to be aware of what we can do to reduce the stress of our everyday activities in MUSE. This handbook contains information about procedures, responsibilities and communications to facilitate these activities.

This handbook was developed in 1994 by a committee formed to work on issues that create hardships and stress for all of us. It is revised annually to accommodate our ever-changing organization.

The membership committee is responsible for the upkeep of this handbook and for reviewing and giving input on revisions.

We strongly urge you to become familiar with the information in the handbook so that we can all spend more of our time on “musical excellence and social change.”

MUSE Board Members

2005 - 2006

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Artistic Director | Catherine Roma | CaRoma@fuse.net 1839 Hanfield, Cincinnati, OH 45223 513-681-4419 |
| Administrative Coord. | Natalie Mathis | nataliemathis@hotmail.com 3415 Telford St. #2r, Cincinnati, OH 45220 513-961-3949 |
| Production Coordinator | Laura Talarek | ltalarek@yahoo.com 2517 Alexandria Pike, Ft. Thomas, KY. 41075 859-442-5404 |
| Secretary | Amanda Schear | aschear@cinci.rr.com 5899 E. Woodmont Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45213 513-731-4041 |
| Treasurer | June Huelskamp | june.h@fuse.net 4004 Sherwood Ave., Cincinnati, OH. 45227 513-527-4278 |
| Historian | Angie Denov | blickenov@fuse.net 1225 North Bend Rd., Cincinnati, OH. 45224 513-542-9213 |
| Membership Coord. | Jan Smith | 5787 Ranlyn Ave., Cincinnati, OH. 45239 513-923-2137 |
| SI Section Leader | Dawn Robbrooks | Robroodm@uc.email.edu |
| SII Section Leader | Ellen Brinkerhoff | elbrinke@alumni.uchicago.edu 4890 Hunt Rd. #303, Cincinnati, OH 45242 513-310-7330 |
| AI Section Leaders | Bev Diamond | bananastan@aol.com 3692 Kendall, Cincinnati, OH. 45208 513-321-8581 |
| | Mary Manera | marygrace372@yahoo.com 210 O'Bannon Ave., Loveland, OH 45140 513-697-8303 |
| AI Section Leader | Bennyce Hamilton | hamiltbe@email.uc.edu 3135 Bellewood Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45213 513-531-3692 |
| Member-at-Large | Denise Taylor | dtaylor4@fuse.net 1655 Westmoreland Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45223 513-541-0327 |
| Member-at-Large | | |
| Hunters & Gatherers | Kim Singleton-Filio | 1207 Beechwood Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45215 513-821-7774 |
| Dreamers, Eaters & Philosophers | Lois Shegog | elSuga@aol.com 3959 Parker Place, Cincinnati, OH 45217 513-281-1399 |

MUSE Survival Kit

MUSE “Whom to Call” List

| For: | Contact: |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Address Changes | Administrative Coordinator |
| Attendance Issues | Section Leader |
| Attire | Membership Coordinator |
| Marketplace purchases (at rehearsal) | Production Coordinator |
| Childcare (at concerts) | Production Coordinatr |
| Childcare (at rehearsals) | Membership Coordinator |
| Choir Wire Announcements | Director (by Sunday, 6:00 pm) or Membership Coordinator |
| Dues | Treasurer |
| Friends of MUSE donations | Treasurer |
| General Concerns/Issues | Membership Coordinator, Section Leader, or Board Member at Large |
| Leave of Absence | Section Leader |
| Mailing List Additions, Corrections | Administrative Coordinator |
| Music Needs | Music Section Leader |
| Performance Requests | Administrative Coordinator |
| Potential New Members | Membership Coordinator |
| Repertoire Input | Dreamers, Eaters, Philosophers or Music Section Leader |

Attendance Policy

Weekly Rehearsals

Regular attendance at rehearsals is important to assure that all singers learn the music. We learn to blend both within our sections and as a whole choir as we sing together at rehearsal. Word changes, dynamics and breath markings are often noted. The Choir Wire and the discussion which takes place around its distribution each week contain important information singers need to know and understand. Members are expected to be responsible to themselves and their sister singers by coming on time, not leaving early, or missing rehearsals unnecessarily. Absences should be reported as soon as possible to the section leader, music section leader or another singer who agrees to inform the section leader before rehearsal begins. If you have not reached a live human being by Monday afternoon, call the MUSE machine (221-1118) and leave a message BEFORE REHEARSAL BEGINS.

It is the responsibility of the Membership section leader to take weekly attendance for her section. She will mail Choir Wires to absent singers; and in instances when absences were not reported beforehand, she will communicate with the singer regarding the reason for the absence. The music section leader will also communicate with a singer after a first absence about her knowledge of the current music, the need for extra help or a rehearsal tape, etc.

Multiple absences will initiate a decision-making process regarding a leave for a singer. The section leader, a section member, and the artistic director will each attempt to speak with the singer about her participation in MUSE. If attendance does not improve, a letter from the Board regarding a leave will be sent by the membership coordinator to the singer. If there is no response to any of these contacts, the singer will be dropped from the membership roster.

Singers taking leave will be asked to submit leave forms obtainable from the handbook. The form asks for a starting date, ending date, length, and reason for the leave. If your leave is for an indeterminate length and runs through our annual auditions, you will be contacted by your section leader and will have to commit to a returning date so that we know whether or not we need to fill your spot. Singers will indicate on the leave form whether or not they wish to receive Choir Wires and other choir mailings. Completed leave forms will be copied for the membership coordinator and director.

Performance

It is our policy, whenever possible, that the choir as a whole make the decisions as to when and where MUSE performs. The choir likes to sing with at least 70% of its singers, which means that each individual needs to perform in about 70% of our performances each year. (The average number of appearances per season is 15 - 20.) However, there are several concerts each year where we expect the commitment of everyone, both for performances and dress rehearsals. A choir member who has committed to singing at a performance must not miss that performance for any reason other than an emergency of the utmost gravity. Advance notice of your absence is required. The director must know that there will be enough singers from each section to ensure an adequate vocal balance and blend. The absence of several singers from the same section could mean the cancellation of a performance, an embarrassing possibility for MUSE and the singers who do show up to perform. If some unfortunate situation should occur necessitating absence at a performance, the singer should notify the director, a coordinator, section leader or music section leader ASAP. If none of them can be reached, the message should be given to another singer in her section who agrees to relay it to one of the above mentioned persons ASAP.

MUSE Leave of Absence Form

Singer's Name _____

Section _____

Leave Starting Date _____

Leave Ending Date _____

Length _____

Reason _____

Other comments, especially related to your level of involvement while on leave:

Do you want the weekly Choir Wire sent to you? _____ If you wish to have the Choir Wire sent to you half the amount of dues will be expected of you (\$25.)

If you have not already paid your dues, please mail your check payable to:

**MUSE
P.O. Box 23292
Cincinnati, OH 45223**

Rehearsal Information

Ideally, rehearsals begin with a vocal warm-up. Often included are physical movements (jogging, twisting), mental warm-up (1, 1-2-1, 1-2-3-2-1), with some kind of vocal tune-up and breath exercise.

Choir members must always have a pencil (never pen) at the ready. (Often choristers highlight words or vocal parts after initial marking). It is best to have a light-weight floppy, three ring binder for current music.

During rehearsal time, not only is music learned, but invaluable discussions about the music, why we sing it, what it means, and how to sing it, take place. Insights about the music are shared and valuable dynamic marks, articulation marks, breath and choral phrasing are given. Rehearsals are critically important for outstanding music making.

Invaluable assets to good rehearsals:

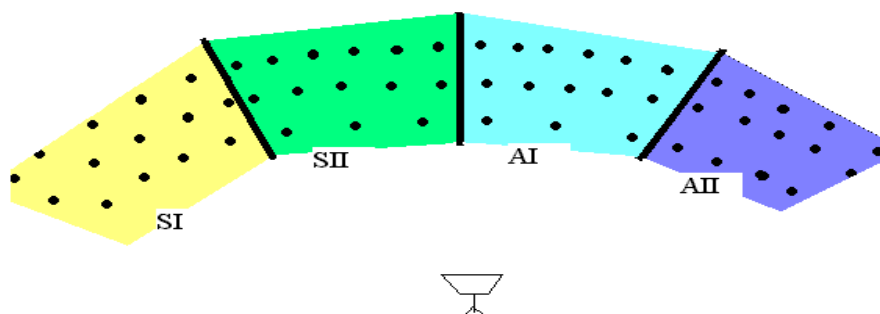
Hold music up, sit in a fashion which allows the breath to be free - at front of chair, feet firmly placed on the ground. Begin on time, and keep talking to a minimum.

Set-up and Clean-up:

Set up must be complete before 7:15 for a 7:30 start. Chairs need to be set up. (See diagram below.) Purple boxes, white board & bulletin board need to be brought down from office & set up on table in the side chapel. A more relaxed beginning is facilitated when all aspects of set-up are complete by 7:15. When choir starts at 7:00, set-up must be complete by 6:45.

IT IS VITAL THAT CLEAN-UP CREW NOT LEAVE UNTIL THE FULL JOB IS COMPLETE. Everything must be returned to the proper place including the bulletin board, music, flyers, birthday book, etc. that come down from the office. The MUSE office should be put back the way it was. We need to be mindful that St. John's is generous with the space - we are family (extended, not immediate) and need to respect our privileges.

Please --- do not park in the handicap parking places ! You may park in the Clifton School lot behind St. John's. Do not park across Resor in Annunciation's parking lot.



Concert Attire Guidelines

Keep the following criteria in mind:

1. All colors should be solid in any combination, including shoes.
2. Our dress reflects **us** - not the traditional choir model
Diversity in style (ruffles and suspenders side by side)
Philosophy (expression of individuality)
3. Use only scent-free products (no perfume, cologne, scented hair products, strong deodorants or strong throat lozenges) either for concerts or rehearsals. Several women in MUSE are allergic to these scents.
4. Refrain from the use of alcohol before performances.
5. If you are a smoker, please be aware of others' sensitivity to residue smoke in hair, clothes, etc.

Fall / Winter - Black and turquoise in any combination

This means your basic body coverage may be all black: black bottoms with turquoise top, all turquoise, or turquoise bottoms with black top. If you choose to wear all black, you must have a splash of turquoise that can be seen from the audience (so if you are anywhere other than the front row, your splash will have to be above the chest).

Spring / Summer - White and turquoise in any combination

This means your basic body coverage may be all white, all turquoise, white bottoms with turquoise tops or turquoise bottom with white tops. If you choose to wear all white, you must have a splash of turquoise that can be seen from the audience (so if you are anywhere other than the front row, your splash will have to be above the chest).

General rules for both seasons:

All items are to be solid (no stripes, checks, prints, etc.). Shoes are included in the color scheme (in fall/winter - black or turquoise, in spring/summer - white or turquoise). Bare feet or socks are acceptable. The colors are white white (no cream or off-white), black black and turquoise. **It is important that the shade be correct** - please use the attached swatch for matching the turquoise color. (If you need a replacement swatch, please request one from the rehearsal coordinator.)

Methods of Communication

MUSE would like to foster open communication between members and the leadership. All choir members are welcome at all meetings. You also have the option to speak to any committee members who can then represent your views at the next meeting. The choir leadership endeavors to communicate and facilitate communication through a series of mechanisms, the most important of which is **The Choir Wire**. Each week a page is printed with news important to the organization. A clipboard is circulated at each rehearsal for choir members to write announcements to be included in the next week's Wire. Alternatively, announcements can be communicated by e-mail or voice mail to the Director before Sunday, 6:00 pm. Board meetings will be announced in the Wire, and any issues, ideas, concerns, etc. you would like discussed by the Board should be given to your Section Leader, the Membership Coordinator or a Board Member-at-Large. Board minutes will be posted in the big turquoise book (see below).

One Monday a month, we will begin rehearsal at 7:00 so that we can have some extra time for discussion. This will help choir members stay informed about Board agendas, business topics, fundraising, etc. This half hour discussion may happen in the middle of rehearsal, so it is important to come on time that particular Monday.

The Big Turquoise Book is on the information table every week. It is a binder with Board minutes, music committee minutes, letters to the choir, invitations to sing, financial statements and budgets, etc. This is where all the daily affairs of the choir are kept.

State of the Choir Address is another means of communication. Each January (our official birthday), the Director delivers and prints up a *State of the Choir Address*, which includes creative, philosophical, and political reflections on the previous year.

The **MUSE NEWS** is an external (also internal) communication to friends of the choir (our mailing list). It is mailed out three times a year and contains information on all MUSE events: upcoming concerts, fund-raisers, workshops, etc.

The bulletin board is brought downstairs from the office and displayed during each rehearsal. Posted on this board will be a variety of current political, cultural, and social notices that are sent to MUSE through the mail and thought to be of possible interest to MUSE members.

An announcement board (erasable) will also be available for display during rehearsals. This board is for any MUSE member to write announcements. It will be cleared after each rehearsal.

Administrative Information and Procedures

The Office

The MUSE office is located on the second floor of St. John's at the top of the back stairs (Susan B. Anthony Room). There you will find the copy machine, the computer, music, organizational files, the telephone and answering machine, phone books, MUSE phone lists, office supplies, current newsletters from other choirs around the country, bulk mailing materials, an "archives mailbox" where you may place any materials you think may be appropriate for saving in MUSE's archives, and various other supplies. MUSE's Administrative Coordinator is the "keeper" of the office and can answer most questions you might have about it.

The Artistic Director, Membership Coordinator and Administrative Coordinator have mailboxes in, and keys for, the office. All MUSE members are welcome in the office. Although there are no set office hours, the office door is usually open before, during and after rehearsals. Because of the size of the office space and the number of people using the office, it is important that things be kept in their designated places-look for labels around the room to help with this, and please put all rehearsal and/or special event set-up materials away neatly in their places. It is a VERY small space! If you are unsure where something goes, ask the Administrative Coordinator.

MUSE Mailing Lists

MUSE maintains three separate address lists: 1. The membership directory and in-house information on both singers and staff, 2. The extensive mailing list, which holds over 2000 records as of September, 1994, is used for sending out the "MUSE News" three times a year, and, 3. The Public Service Announcement list, with 220+records, is used for publicity purposes to inform the press and other interested organizations of upcoming MUSE activities.

Note: If you, 1. Have any change in name, address, or phone number (home and/or work), 2. Have an organization you want to add to the PSA list, 3. Know of changes in address for persons on the Mailing List, or, 4. Have people you want to add to it, please email the Administrative Coordinator or put the information in her office mailbox and the update will be made. *Please do not make the corrections or additions in the office copy of the list yourself.*

MUSE Organizational Structure

Music

Artistic Director

The Artistic Director (AD) has the central role in Music; the AD and the Dreamers, Eaters and Philosophers (music committee) work closely together to select repertoire, program concerts, and facilitate the auditions process. Together they decide whether extra rehearsals, sectionals, or rehearsal tapes are needed. The AD is responsible for conducting rehearsals, run-outs and major concerts. The AD serves on the Board, Ujima, and the Dreamers, Eaters and Philosophers Committees.

Assistant Director

In 1994, MUSE appointed an Assistant Director, who conducts rehearsals, run-outs and performances as needed, in the absence of the AD. She also assists with the auditions process, and conducts at least one piece at each major concert.

Dreamers, Eaters and Philosophers

The Dreamers, Eaters and Philosophers (DEP) (the former music committee) consists of the Artistic Director, Assistant Director, and the Music Section Leaders. This committee is responsible for the selection, content, theme, programming, introductions, and quality of the musical performance, including individual and sectional music issues, distribution of music, rehearsal planning, section rehearsals, and auditions for new members as well as for solos within choral works.

Membership

Membership Committee

Membership Committee consists of the Membership Coordinator and the section leaders. The Director is an ex-officio member of the Membership Committee. The committee meets once a month or as needed. Its on-going work is done by its individual members in their sections and among the choir as a whole. Some tasks that it performs as a group are: auditions, planning the annual Grailville retreat, planning potlucks or other social events such as the Spring Concert party, writing or revising policies related to the membership to present to the Board for approval, discussing any general membership

concerns or problems and coming up with recommendations to bring to the Board or choir. Some of the tasks that individuals on the committee do are listening to members' concerns and bringing them to the Board, helping new members become familiar with people and the practices of the choir, and "creating" opportunities for communication from the members to the leadership bodies. **Membership Committee meetings are open to all MUSE members.**

The Diversity Committee

The Diversity Committee consists of MUSE members who want to help MUSE increase its diversity and nurture the diversity that already exists. This may include helping with special publicity for auditions, planning workshops or social events designed to increase our understanding of each other, and/or facilitate the hearing of each others' "stories".

Staff

The Staff of MUSE is a dedicated group of volunteers who support MUSE in its mission and productions. Led by the **Production Coordinator**, the staff are in a mutually supportive partnership with the singers. The Staff meets once a month as a group to coordinate their efforts, and, as needed, in smaller groups to plan the work of the various committees. The Staff is represented on the MUSE Board and works with the Administrative Coordinator to accomplish all the production and publicity tasks involved with concerts. Staff activities include: fundraising, MUSE Marketplace, ticket sales, house management (ushers, crowd control, information, set-up, clean-up), childcare, stage management, coordinating back-stage needs, bulk mailings, as well as Staff's visioning and planning. Anyone interested in joining the MUSE staff should call the MUSE office, 221-1118.

Ujima (Business)

Ujima is made up of the Artistic Director, the Administrative Coordinator, the Treasurer/Cashier and the Membership Coordinator. They meet once a month or when needed. They plan concerts, discuss themes, recommend guest artists and instrumentalists, approve contracts, oversee administrative activities, plan board meeting items for discussion, identify issues for choir discussions, and act upon items at the board's request.

Hunters and Gatherers

Hunters and Gatherers are the group of women who attend to the important task of raising money to pay our expenses. MUSE has an annual budget of over \$100,000. Our major expenses are paying for professional services, musical commissions, performance

space, newsletter production and distribution and office expenses. While we get about 20% of our income from ticket sales, we earn the rest of our money from a variety of sources. These sources include 30% from individual contributors (Friends of MUSE), 20% from grants and fundraisers such as the Silent Auction and Reds games, 20% from Marketplace sales and 10% from performance fees and dues. The Hunters and Gatherers work closely with the other groups to raise money to fund our work.

Financial Information

Grant Support

MUSE receives some money from a variety of public and private grants. Much of the energy expended by the Hunters and Gatherers involves grant application preparation, submission and compliance. While grant money is never assured from year to year, historically, we have received money from the city of Cincinnati and the state of Ohio. In addition, we have also received money from the Fine Arts Fund and the Greater Cincinnati Foundation. The current climate of philanthropic and government grant funding is not particularly stable and we are always planning for ways to reduce our dependency of this type of funding.

Fundraising

In an attempt to diversify our income stream, we also engage in other fundraising events. For the last three years, we have held a successful silent auction and wine/cheese reception in conjunction with a guest performer. MUSE members and friends donate items to be auctioned of during a festive evening of conversation, performance and refreshments.

We also have worked concession stands at Reds games. The Great American Ball Park has a program in which non-profit organizations commit workers to a minimum number of games and the non-profit organization earns money.

Other fundraising projects have included candle sales and calendar sales.

Dues

Dues for singing members of MUSE are \$50.00 per year, which are intended to cover operating expenses including music and communications for individual members. The total dues collected in a year cover purchase of music and about 70% of our photocopying costs.

Dues are to be paid to the Treasurer by November 1, unless other arrangements (monthly or quarterly payments or a need to forego dues for the year) are made in advance with the Treasurer.

Thank you!

MUSE Marketplace

MUSE sells a wide range of items, including T-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, bags, bumper stickers, tapes and CD's. Sales from the Marketplace net the choir a clear profit every year. The items are also a way of promoting MUSE.

Often we do a separate order for members, especially of concert T-shirts. When we do this, we set this special order aside to distribute at the next rehearsal, or as soon as we can. Please realize that we have special-ordered these items, so once you order it, you are obligated to buy it. The time to sell concert T-shirts is, obviously, at the concert. It can be difficult to sell leftover inventory at subsequent events. Thanks for your cooperation with this.

Friends of MUSE

You are invited...

We would like to invite MUSE members to become Friends of MUSE by making a financial contribution. Any amount is appreciated and helpful. Unless you specify otherwise, you will be listed with our Friends of MUSE in programs and newsletters at the level of your donation (Calliope=up to \$25.00; Erato=up to \$50.00; Euterpe=up to \$250.00; Thalia=up to \$500.00; Polyhymnia=up to \$1000.00; Sappho=\$1000 and up).

Friends of MUSE donations are set aside for the creative dimension of MUSE. They are used to commission new arrangements as well as new works for the choir.

In our discussions about inviting choir members to participate in the Friends of MUSE program, we heard many widely varying opinions, perspectives and feelings. We also know that there is a wide range of financial situations within MUSE. Therefore, *we want to emphasize this as an invitation.*

Please pick up a pledge form from the Administrative Coordinator.

Miscellaneous Information

Choir Member Ticket Sales

Although we want to be as flexible as possible and enhance your ability to sell tickets, certain procedures are a must, since it is a massive job to account for ticket sales in MUSE. These procedures are designed to eliminate mistakes and financial loss, facilitate the ticket coordinator's job, and avoid embarrassing mistakes / miscommunications at the ticket table.

For concerts produced by MUSE every section will be given a packet of tickets to sell to distribute to singers. Please allow yourself at least two weeks to sell the tickets. Money will be collected periodically, and additional tickets will be distributed upon request by the section's ticket designee.

If (when) you need additional tickets, please get them only from the designated ticket distributor, if possible. If you must get tickets from another choir member, please remember to then pay that choir member for the tickets - *the responsibility for the money/tickets rests with the person originally issued the tickets.*

There will be scheduled money / ticket collection times, usually beginning 30 minutes before rehearsal starts. If you have money and / or tickets to return, arriving early will prevent rehearsal disruptions. The final collection of money / tickets will be at the last rehearsal before the concert. *No money or tickets will be accepted on the night(s) of the concert - there will be no exceptions to this.*

Complimentary tickets will be given only with Board member approval, and ideally only with the approval of the Board member coordinating complimentary tickets. If you have a request for complimentary tickets, contact a Board member and have them submit the request.

Tickets may be held for friends / family at the door on concert night(s). These tickets should be paid for in advance with the money turned-in AND clearly marked as paid; on the rare occasion that you have tickets held to be paid for at the door, mark that clearly. This will avoid embarrassing situations at the ticket table. Requests made before the day of the concert would be much appreciated. The requests may be made as late as 4:00 p.m. on the day of the concert, but not after that.

Performance Requests

Often MUSE members are approached with performance requests. If you are approached about MUSE performing, please ask that the request be submitted in writing to: MUSE, P.O. Box 23292, Cincinnati, OH 45223. Please ask them to include as much information as possible: date, time, place, nature of event and the organization, fee offered, contact person, etc.

MUSE Caring and Concerns

MUSE is committed to expressing support to each other during times of difficulty and triumph. Collective expressions of support will be coordinated by the Caring and Concerns Committee. Members and staff can request such an expression of support to another member/staff by contacting the Caring and Concerns Coordinator, listed on the MUSE telephone list.

The coordinator may contact the member/staff in need to determine the most appropriate expression of support (i.e. food, flowers, card, etc.) and feedback may be sought from the entire choir. All MUSE members and staff are responsible for communicating potential opportunities to express support in this way. When an expression of support has been extended, it will be reported to the entire group through the Choir Wire.

This activity will be funded through a “split the pot” raffle at regular rehearsals, and through donations from members and staff. The Caring and Concerns Coordinator will manage the funds raised for this purpose.

Another duty of the Caring and Concerns Coordinator is to keep the MUSE birthday book. All members are encouraged to enter their birthdates in the book. On or near her birthday, each member listed will be serenaded with a special rendition of “Happy Birthday”.

Affiliations

Chorus America is an organization which promotes and supports professional choirs. We are a non-voting member, because we do not pay singers. The Voice their quarterly newsletter, lists the concert schedules of member choirs and includes articles on music and information on national art advocacy activities.

GALA Choruses (Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses) is an alliance of over 140 men’s, women’s, and mixed choruses dedicated to providing leadership and inspiration to the lesbian and gay movement through excellence in the choral arts. GALA produces an international choral festival every four years. GALA plans annual conferences for chorus leaders, facilitates networking between choruses, provides funding for the creation of new choral works, and produces reference publications for member choruses. Other regional festivals may be held in the interim.

Sister Singers Network is an association of approximately 35 women’s choruses from all over the U.S., Canada, and England. Choral festivals are held by the Network periodically. MUSE hosted the Sister Singer Festival at Northern Kentucky University in 1993. The Network’s mission statement is:

Sister Singers Network nurtures the spirit, energy and diversity of the women’s choral movement by serving as a resource for:

- * responsible music sharing
 - * communication among women's choral groups
 - * production of regional, national, and international choral festivals, and,
 - * active support of women composers and arrangers.
- Membership is open to women's choral groups, women composers and arrangers, and individual women.

Coalitions and Associations

Coalitions are important to MUSE. Sometimes we join forces with different groups for a particular reason; we joined with the men in the Cincinnati Men's Chorus to appear in opposition to Issue 3; we joined the Ohio Unity Choir to tour two women's prisons in Ohio; we have participated in several GALA festivals and Sister Singer Festivals over the years. We participate in Community Shares, a Cincinnati organization that promotes giving to social, economic, justice, and environmental organizations primarily through payroll deductions in the workplace. There is a continuous, healthy discussion about the value of these associations and coalitions, and we will continue as a group to evaluate and make decisions about them.

MUSE Job Descriptions

Administrative Coordinator Job Description

CORDINATE THE WORLD OF MUSE

- * Maintain and update the Turquoise Book by including weekly choir wires, board minutes, press releases, incoming/outgoing communication, concert programs & fliers, etc.
- * Attend & be available during run-outs and concerts
- * Attend & be available during choir rehearsals through the choir's break
- * Maintain organization and upkeep of office with completed filing system
- * Oversee all major concert timelines (concert, newsletter, program, and poster) and serve as point person with involved MUSE personnel, desktop artists and businesses for the creation of T-shirts, the MUSE News, posters, and programs.
- * Ensure that Friends of MUSE fundraising letter is distributed once a year
- * Coordinate distribution of merchandise for marketplace (all venues, including internet)
- * Oversee the production of MUSE News, including editing if needed

PUBLICITY

- * Create and mail press releases (via e-list when applicable)
- * Make calls to media personnel to follow-up press releases and encourage coverage
- * Obtain guest artist bios and include in press releases and PSA's distributed to media
- * Place concert ads in newspapers & programs and trace expenditures
- * Provide copies to posters, flyers and sign-up sheets for singers and staff; encourage complete sign-up
- * Assist in creating simple computer ads, flyers, signs.
- * Mail special letters to certain mailing lists when targeting particular populations/potential audience.
- * Place concert ads in newspapers and programs and trace expenditure
- * Send submissions to community monthly/quarterly newsletters, GALAgram, The Voice, etc
- * Participate in the creation/updating of brochure, web page, stationery, etc.
- * Arrange photo shoots for publicity photos, when necessary
- * Arrange still and moving photo shoots of major concert performances for archival purposes.
- * Continually update media list and sign-up sheets
- * Mail requested printed materials, photos, CD's, etc. to media personnel

REQUESTED PERFORMANCES/ RUN-OUTS

- * Upon receipt of performance requests, use checklist to obtain information, then immediately pass on this information to Ujima and/or the Board for discussion.

- * Contact individual (who has inquired) via phone or letter to inform her/him of the decision (yes/no) made by the Board and/or full choir.
- * Follow through with Production Coordinator using checklist
- * Update choir sign-up sheets for run-outs and give copies to Section Leaders

SELF-PRODUCED CONCERTS:

- * Work with Production Coordinator to meet deadlines of the concert checklist
- * Create an audience survey and ensure distribution in concert programs; collect surveys and desegregate information for future use
- * Oversee sale of internet ticket purchases and phone orders; coordinate with Production Manager to ensure will-call tickets are prepared for day-of-concert sale

MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES:

- * Attend UJIMA meetings
- * Attend Board meeting each month
- * Assist the Hunters and Gatherers Committee in research and grant writing, as necessary.
- * Attend staff meetings

COMPUTER DATABASES:

- * Maintain / update Mailing List, Membership, FOM, Rolodex, and Publicity databases
- * Print hard copies and / or labels, as needed, for mailings or distribution.
- * Design structures of any database tables, queries, forms and reports needed.

MUSIC:

- * Copy music and *Choir Wire* for choir members, Artistic Director, Accompanist & Interpreter
- * Maintain changes to music as given by Artistic Director or other personnel
- * Update member file boxes
- * Maintain music files including master copies
- * Ensure that new members receive packets of music as directed by the music committee

MUSE PHONE, FAX AND E-MAIL MESSAGES:

- * Retrieve, log, send and distribute all phone and e-mail messages, faxes
- * Update e-list of MUSE membership, Media list, publicity, etc
- * Update outgoing message on the office answering machine

MAIL COORDINATION:

- * Pick up mail at MUSE P.O. Box (2 - 3X per week) - open all mail and see that it is distributed according to job descriptions; respond to mail if necessary and notify recipients as needed
- * Remind Treasurer of upcoming bulk mailings to ensure funds are present
- * Keep log of incoming checks in the mail.
- * Write thank you notes for any contributions of money, time or in-kind services including FOM

Other duties as necessary and as contractor expresses interest.

Production Coordinator Job Description

PUBLICITY

1. Negotiate performance contract (including fee); sign and return it, along with a copy to be filed, a copy to Administrative Coordinator and one to the Artistic Director
2. Work with Administrative Coordinator to meet the deadlines set in the concert checklist

SELF-PRODUCED CONCERT PRODUCTION

1. Work with Artistic Director to determine all stage requirements and meet with staff to ensure that all requirements are met: risers, sound, lighting, piano (including tuning), music stands, stage set-up and changes, tear-down, equipment, hired technicians, etc.
2. Work with staff to provide for back-stage needs of choir and guest artists: dressing rooms, restrooms, water, lemons, food, place to store valuables, and any special requests/requirements for guests
3. Arrange for stage-call
4. Work with staff to coordinate MUSE Marketplace set-up and sales
5. Work with Administrative Coordinator to organize sale of tickets including outlets, on-line, will-call, child care, and day-of-concert sales
6. Handle signage for concerts
7. Tabulation of incoming money and coordination with Treasurer
8. Arrange for childcare for produced concerts
9. Arrange photography, video, and recording of concerts

REQUESTED PERFORMANCES/ RUN-OUTS

1. Organize sale of merchandise and staffing when needed
2. Assess venue when needed

MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES

1. Attendance is required at all Board and Ujima meetings
2. Meetings of staff should be organized on monthly basis
3. Attend all rehearsals
4. Develop staff membership

MARKETPLACE

1. Track and count inventory of merchandise
2. Order items as needed and/or approved

Membership Coordinator Job Description

- * Serves as Chair of the Membership Committee & ensures the committee meets as scheduled.
- * Participates in the “interview” process at auditions, giving input into the decisions on new members
- * Serves as primary contact to the singers for communication of information and changes regarding rehearsals, events, and performances (call times, directions, attire, etc.)
- * Sees that pertinent details regarding MUSE are communicated to the choir via announcements and/or Choir Wire. Gives input to the Director for the Choir Wire.
- * Is responsible for new member orientation, including working with the Administrative Coordinator on Member Handbook updates and planning new member orientation. Finds “Buddy” for each new member.
- * Serves on Ujima Committee and the MUSE Board.
- * Helps plan Grailville retreat.
- * Plans potluck, major concert parties and other social events with membership comm.
- * Helps coordinate childcare for rehearsals only.

Section Leader Job Description

- * Keeps attendance records for her section.
- * Mails the Choir Wire to absent members in her section each week.
- * Calls section members to give information as needed (e.g. changes in rehearsal time, place, call, etc.)
- * Talks to section members to be aware of their needs, happenings, goings-ons.
- * Serves on the Board, attends monthly Board meetings.
- * Serves on Membership Committee with other section leaders and rehearsal coordinator to tend to the non-musical needs/issues of choir members.
- * On rotating basis, organizes the section to set-up and clean-up at rehearsals.
- * Maintains a close working relationship with the music section leader.

Music Section Leader Job Description

- * Conduct sectional rehearsals as needed
- * Organize a sectional rehearsal for new members and members returning from leave to orient them to “standard repertoire”
- * Collect music for absent singers at rehearsal and make sure they receive it the following Monday
- * Monitor the musical progress of the section’s blend and ability to sing as an ensemble
- * Identify difficult musical passages; members of the section should make notes in

rehearsals and inform the music section leader after rehearsals as to difficulties with notes and rhythms

- * Inform the Director about especially challenging passages needing additional rehearsal time
- * Assist individuals to learn the music by working “one-on-one” and/or making tapes
- * Help the section develop a “buddy system” for learning music
- * Be available to talk with members of the section about musical problems in the section; if further intervention is needed, the music section leader will meet with the director and the other music section leaders
- * Serve as member of Dreamers, Eaters, Philosophers (DEP) / Music Committee
- * Participate in the audition process.

Fund-Raising Committee Chair Job Description

- * Convene, formulate agenda, and facilitate monthly committee meetings; Encourage productive search for creative, successful fund-raising ideas, not in conflict with the MUSE philosophy.
- * Initiate early planning for chosen fund-raising events, and oversee planning/production time lines.
- * Ensure that at least one fund-raising event each year is community-building in nature or consequence, e.g. coffeehouse, folk dance, silent auction, community sing-out with Ysaye.
- * Work with Staff and Membership Coordinators on securing additional volunteers from the staff and singers to carry out the tasks of fund-raising activities throughout the year.
- * Solicit / Maintain an adequate on-going membership of both “thinkers” and “doers”, i.e. those that research and plan and those that carry out the plans.
- * Coordinate the annual mail solicitation for donations and any efforts aimed at increasing the number of Friends of MUSE donors.
- * Ensure that a summary of this committee’s activities is presented monthly at each MUSE Board meeting by a member of this committee; Ensure that this committee member reports back to the committee any important Board discussion/response to this report.

Hunters & Gatherers Coordinator Job Description

- * Convene, formulate agenda for, and facilitate committee meetings; Encourage vigorous pursuance of researching grant opportunities and submitting applications; Oversee communication between grant researchers and writer(s).
- * Ensure that a summary of this committee's activities is presented monthly at each MUSE Board meeting by a member of this committee; Ensure that this committee member reports back to the committee any important board discussion/response to this report.
- * Solicit / Maintain adequate membership of grant researchers and grant writer-assistants for this committee.
- * Inform Artistic Director immediately upon notification of any grant awards and responsibilities of MUSE therein related to usage of this money.
- * Oversee all applications for new grant opportunities suggested by grant researchers. Meet all deadlines therein and carry out all necessary follow-up paperwork and on-going maintenance responsibilities, should grant be secured.
- * Oversee submission of annual applications for OAC, FAF, and City of Cincinnati grants. Meet all deadlines therein and carry out all necessary follow-up paperwork and on-going maintenance responsibilities, should grant be secured.

MUSE Herstory

MUSE was founded in January of 1994 by Cathy Roma, who had moved to Cincinnati from her native Philadelphia to enter the doctoral program at the U.C. College Conservatory of Music. MUSE began with about 25 singers and performed three concerts in that first partial season.

In our history, we have responded to a wide range of requests to perform at community events. The performance history that follows this page shows the diversity in events and issues we have chosen to support.

Perhaps the highlight of the first half of MUSE's herstory was the trip to Seattle to participate in the GALA Choruses festival. Lots of hard work, including rummage sales and working bingo's for pay, raised the money for the trip. It was an unforgettable experience for those who went; MUSE received spectacular praise from her brother and sister choruses.

In addition to the Seattle trip, MUSE has traveled to Chicago, Houston, Kansas City, Indianapolis, Columbus, Louisville, Lexington, Danville, KY, Bloomington, IN, Tampa, San Jose, London, and Sheffield, England for festivals and performances.

The past few years have brought much growth to MUSE:

- * Increased recognition in the Cincinnati community (and, of course, more performance requests every year).
- * Expanded and more diverse membership and audience
- * Rising expenses, and (thankfully) increased income as well
- * A growing volunteer staff with their own committees and leadership
- * Several professional recordings
- * Participation in Redwood Cultural Works' New Spiritual Projects
- * Opportunities to learn more about each other and each other's cultures through the music we do and the discussions we have

MUSE is now about sixty singers and a volunteer Staff of about twenty-five. We perform about twenty times each season across the Tri-State area.