

Tahoma Choirs

HOW TO REACH US

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INTRODUCTION

Objective

The Tahoma Choirs offer a rigorous yet positive approach to choral music for girls and boys ages 7 to 20 throughout the South Puget Sound region. The program provides concentrated instruction in vocal and choral technique, performance skills, music literacy and theory.

Tahoma Girls' Choir

Mission: "Empowering young women to develop their artistic and intellectual gifts, cultivating confidence and personal growth through the pursuit of choral excellence."

The Tahoma Girls' Choir (TGC) was founded in 1988. Under the direction of Dr. Gregory and Nancy Vancil since 1990, TGC has gained an international reputation for Choral excellence.

TGC consists of three ensembles for girls:

- ◆ Cherubim, a preparatory choir for our youngest singers;
- ◆ Intermezzo, an intermediate-level choir for developing choristers;
- ◆ and Cantabile, our premier touring ensemble.

Tahoma Boys' Choir

Mission: "Developing character and artistry in young men through excellent music education, enhancing leadership skills and intellectual growth through the joy of music."

Tahoma Boys' Choir (TBC) was inaugurated in 2003. The choir welcomes both unchanged and changed voices, and provides special attention to voices in transition.

Performance History

TGC ensembles have performed at state, regional and national music conventions, and at international choral festivals. Significant performances in TGC's history include:

- ◆ August, 2005: All three TGC Choirs are the first American choirs to perform in Riga, Latvia International Girls' Choir Festival, following a tour of Sweden, Russia and Estonia.
- ◆ July, 2004: Cantabile travels with Latvia's Riga Girls' Choir to perform at the Idaho International Choral Festival, Pocatello, Idaho.
- ◆ July, 2002 and 1999: Cantabile performs at the Idaho International Choral Festival, Pocatello, Idaho.
- ◆ August, 2000: TGC is the only choir from the Americas to be invited to perform in the *Vivace 2000* International Choral Festival, Veszprem, Hungary.
- ◆ March, 1999: All three TGC Choirs perform at the Washington State *Arts Time* Convention.
- ◆ December, 1998: All three TGC Choirs perform with the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra.
- ◆ July, 1998: Cantabile and Intermezzo perform for the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians Regional Conference.
- ◆ February, 1998: Cantabile and Intermezzo perform with the Olympia Symphony Orchestra.
- ◆ November, 1997: Cantabile performs at the National Convention of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association.
- ◆ December, 1996: All three TGC Choirs perform with the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra.
- ◆ July, 1996: Cantabile performs at the International Choral Kathaumixw, Powell River, BC, Canada.
- ◆ March, 1996: Cantabile performs at the Northwest Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association.
- ◆ February, 1996: All three TGC Choirs perform for the Washington State Music Educators' *Arts Advocacy Day*.
- ◆ In addition, TGC has performed annually since 1996 on the *Argosy Christmas Ship*.

TGC has performed world premieres of several significant choral works, including Daniel Gawthrop's "Sea Visions," and the "Cedar House Songs" and "Bugs and Birds" by Gregory Youtz. In 2002, TGC received a grant from the Pierce County Arts Board to produce the world premier of Gregory Youtz' "To Bethlehem".

ARTISTIC STAFF

Gregory K. Vancil

Dr. Vancil earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Music from the University of Southern California and spent a year of musical studies at the Salzburg "Mozarteum". He has served on university music faculties in Texas, Washington and Wisconsin. Choirs under his direction have performed at several international, national, regional and state music conventions and festivals. Dr. Vancil is currently Director of Choirs and Instructor in Fine Arts at Franklin Pierce High School in Tacoma, and Artistic Director of the Seattle Bach Choir. He serves as the Artistic Director of the Tahoma Choirs program, and is the principal Music Director of Cantabile Ensemble.

Nancy Failor Vancil

Mrs. Vancil holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Washington and spent a year of musical studies at the Salzburg "Mozarteum". She has served as Music Director of the Los Angeles Music Theatre Company, on the faculties of San Antonio College, Texas and St. Martin's College, Olympia; and as Instructor of Piano and Voice at The Annie Wright School, Tacoma. Mrs. Vancil is currently Instructor of Voice at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, and she is the Accompanist for the Seattle Bach Choir. She serves as Accompanist and Vocal Coach for Cantabile Ensemble and TBC, and Co-Music Director of Cherubim Ensemble.

Ken Owen

Dr. Owen has the Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in conducting from Arizona State University. He earned the Master of Music degree in choral directing from Brigham Young University and has an undergraduate degree in piano performance and pedagogy. Ken enjoys performing from the piano as a soloist and accompanist as well as conducting, and maintains a private piano and voice studio. Dr. Owen currently directs choirs and teaches music courses at Pierce College. He has directed women's choirs at BYU and ASU, and now serves as the director of Intermezzo Ensemble.

Nancy Nole

Mrs. Nole is in her thirty third year as an elementary music specialist for the Puyallup School District. She is a graduate of University of Washington with a bachelor's degree in Music Education. Since receiving her Masters Degree in Creative Arts in Learning (1999) from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, she has written a number of music programs which integrate the arts into the elementary academic curriculum. Fruitland Elementary in Puyallup has three choruses under her direction where she also teaches twenty general classroom music classes. She has been the manager of the Washington State Elementary Honor Chorus for two years. She is an adjunct professor in music education at Pacific Lutheran University. As president of PLU's Choral Union, she has participated in three European tours. The Puyallup Daffodil PTA Council honored her with their Outstanding Educator Award for 2006-07 school years.

Mike Byrd

Mr. Byrd is an elementary music specialist in the Franklin Pierce School District. He graduated from Pacific Lutheran University in 1976 with a bachelor's degree in Music Education. He completed the Orff-Schulwerk Levels courses through Level III and continues to write and teach music using the Orff philosophy. A number of his pieces are published in a book of children's music which he co-wrote with a friend and colleague. In 2004 he received his Master's Degree from Leslie University in Cambridge Massachusetts. Mr. Byrd is very active in church music where he has served as music director and organist at several area churches. He has directed choirs of all ages including the Elementary Honor Choir in the Franklin Pierce District. Mr. Byrd is musical director of the Tahoma Boys Choir.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Expectations

Parent involvement is vital to the success of the program. Parents are expected to:

- ◆ Volunteer for Tahoma Choir activities
- ◆ Attend all concerts
- ◆ Participate in fundraising events and ticket sales
- ◆ Act as Rehearsal Parents twice a year
- ◆ Participate in Tahoma Choir phone tree

Tier Representatives

Each Ensemble will be assigned a Tier Representative. Tier Representatives are parents who:

- ◆ Organize "Safety Rehearsal Parent" program
- ◆ Organize and initiate phone trees
- ◆ Aid in parent orientation
- ◆ Work with Music Directors and Board of Directors to organize activities
- ◆ Address parent questions
- ◆ Aid in uniform and music distribution and collection
- ◆ Provide volunteers to assist staff

Rehearsal Parents

For the safety of our choristers, parents are expected to serve as Rehearsal Parents at least twice a year. **Tier Representatives will organize Rehearsal Parents to:**

- ◆ Meet all choristers as they arrive
- ◆ Supervise to ensure each chorister enters the building safely
- ◆ Determine that all choristers are accounted for; phone parents of any missing choristers
- ◆ Assist in issuing music
- ◆ Remain on-site with the choir and Music Director during the entire rehearsal
- ◆ Escort choristers to the bathroom
- ◆ Supervise the safe *exit* of each chorister at the close of the event

Concert Promotion

Live performance is an important component of the comprehensive education each chorister receives. Performing before large and appreciative audiences significantly enhances the chorister's experience. All families are expected to help promote concerts and events by disseminating posters, fliers and postcards. Families are also provided with tickets to sell for major concerts. The Board of Directors determines ticket prices as appropriate to the venue. Please encourage extended family, teachers, clergy, church members, friends, and business associates to attend performances by Tahoma Choirs.

TUITION & FEES

Tuition

Tuition, based on the instructional year (September through June), is divided into nine equal payments. Payments are due the 1st of each month, September through May.

TGC Cherubim	\$55.00
TGC Intermezzo	\$70.00
TGC Cantabile	\$80.00
TBC	\$55.00

Discounts

Family Members: If more than one chorister from the same, immediate family is enrolled, the following tuition scale will apply. However, the maximum tuition charged to a single family will not exceed \$150 per month.

1st chorister – (highest level) – full tuition

2nd chorister – (next highest level) – 25% reduction in tuition

3rd chorister – (next highest level) – 10% reduction in tuition.

TLC Members: As part of Tahoma Choir's agreement with Trinity Lutheran Church (TLC) for use of their facilities, members of TLC are offered a 50% reduction in tuition.

Payment Policy

- ◆ All payments are to be made by check, payable to **Tahoma Choirs**, and mailed to:
Tahoma Choirs
P.O. Box 45548
Tacoma, WA 98448
- ◆ **Music Directors will not accept payments.**
- ◆ Cash payments will not be accepted.
- ◆ To assure proper crediting to your account, please be sure to include the appropriate month's payment coupon.
- ◆ Payments will be considered delinquent on the 16th of the month and will be subject to an assessed 1% late fee for each month the payment is delinquent.
- ◆ Tahoma Choirs reserves the right to suspend a chorister from participation in rehearsals and/or performances if tuition payments are not current.
- ◆ Tahoma Choirs does NOT pro-rate payments for missed rehearsals and/or performances.
- ◆ For choristers joining after the season has begun, tuition is due and payable for the month in which participation begins.
- ◆ Tuition for a chorister promoted to another choir will increase accordingly.
- ◆ Withdrawing choristers must give 30 days written notice of permanent withdrawal.
- ◆ Withdrawing choristers will be charged for all months preceding and including the 30 days written notice.

Other Fees

Additional fees will include:

- ◆ Commitment fee of \$50 per chorister per year.
- ◆ Retreat and/or tour costs.
- ◆ Lost or damaged music, or theory books.
- ◆ Uniform Purchase.

Tuition Assistance

Limited needs-based tuition assistance is available. Please contact the choir office at (253) 537-7004.

SCHEDULE

Rehearsals

Instruction is given on a ten-month basis, September through mid-June, with a two-week break at Christmas, a one-week spring break (accommodating several different school schedules), and approximately ten weeks of summer break. Detailed yearly calendars will be issued at the beginning of regular rehearsals in September.

Regular weekly rehearsals take place at Trinity Lutheran Church in Parkland:

TGC Cantabile	Mondays	5:00 - 7:30 p.m.	Fireside Room
TGC Intermezzo	Mondays	5:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Fireside Room
TGC Cherubim	Mondays	4:30 - 6:00 p.m.	Fireside Room
TBC	Thursdays	5:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Fireside Room

Regular and punctual rehearsal attendance is the most important aspect of a chorister's participation in the program. Consistent weekly rehearsals ensure that each chorister will:

- ◆ Learn the music
- ◆ Understand the nuances of interpretation
- ◆ Build vocal instrument and technique
- ◆ Work comfortably and efficiently with colleagues
- ◆ Blend personal sound within vocal section
- ◆ Become fluent in the reading of musical language
- ◆ Experience a sense of accomplishment and commitment.

Performances

Detailed yearly calendars will be issued at the beginning of each season. Most performances are scheduled before the September rehearsals begin, but others may arise during the course of the year. Any changes or additions to the calendar will be announced in the newsletter, on the website, or in fliers sent home with the choristers, with as much advance notice as possible.

Choristers are expected to arrive at all performances at the assigned call time, usually one hour to two hours before the concert time. They should arrive promptly and in full uniform (girls with their hair braided).

Each family may purchase a CD of any concert in which their chorister participates. These CDs are not to be distributed or copied, in accordance with copyright law.

Retreats and Tours

Retreats, summer camps and tours are important elements of Tahoma Choirs. These events provide incomparable opportunities for choristers to bond with each other and become ambassadors to other communities and the world. **Choristers are expected to attend and participate in all retreats and tours scheduled for their assigned ensembles.**

Costs for each retreat or tour are determined on a case by case basis. Fund raising opportunities are offered throughout the season to assist choristers and their families. Funds raised are applied directly to the credit of the chorister who earned them, and may be used to pay retreat, summer camp or tour costs. Funds not used in the current year may be carried forward and applied toward future retreat, summer camp or tour costs. To ensure the success of tours and retreats, choristers and families are encouraged to participate in planning these events and in fund raising endeavors.

Open Rehearsals

The first rehearsal of each month, except December and June, is Open Rehearsal. Each chorister may bring a guest who is interested in choral music; guests may observe or participate in the rehearsal. Please contact the Music Directors in advance of bringing a guest. On Open Rehearsal days, all choristers are encouraged to wear their TGC or TBC t-shirts or sweatshirts to school and rehearsal.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Absences

A pattern of tardiness and/or absences may place a chorister on probationary status, or may lead to dismissal from Tahoma Choirs.

Regular and punctual rehearsal and performance attendance is the most important aspect of a chorister's participation in the program. Choristers may be excused from rehearsals for the following reasons:

- ◆ Illness or injury
- ◆ Family emergency
- ◆ School activities
- ◆ Brief family vacation

Schedule Conflicts: At the beginning of each term, Choristers planning on participating in extra-curricular activities that conflict with the Tahoma Choirs calendar must provide Directors with commitment schedules. Commitment schedules must specify the dates and times of anticipated absences, and include the coach/teacher's contact information.

Planned Absence / Tardiness: Choristers must notify the Directors of planned absences with a written explanation at least one week in advance.

Unplanned Absence / Tardiness: Please call the Choir Office at (253) 537-7004 whenever there is an unanticipated tardiness or absence.

Parents will be contacted whenever there is an unexplained absence.

Transportation

- ◆ Transportation to rehearsals, performances, and other events is the responsibility of the Tahoma Choirs families.
- ◆ Tahoma Choirs will provide a membership roster to aid in the organization of car pools.
- ◆ On occasion Tahoma Choirs will hire a bus to transport choristers to other locations; such arrangements will be made, and families notified, well in advance.
- ◆ For older choristers who drive themselves to Tahoma Choirs events, we request they ride with at least one other chorister, for safety reasons.

Drop Off / Pick Up Procedures

- ◆ A staff person or parent volunteer will be responsible for checking attendance.
- ◆ **Choristers must be escorted into the rehearsal room.**
- ◆ **Choristers must stay in the building after rehearsal until a parent arrives and signs-out choristers with the staff person or volunteer.**
- ◆ Please be prompt dropping off and picking up your chorister.
- ◆ Choristers who drive themselves are asked to walk in pairs whenever possible and also to check in and out with the staff members or volunteers.

PREPAREDNESS

What to Bring

All choristers are expected to bring their choir bags to every rehearsal and performance. Please make sure the chorister's name is on the bag, and that the bag contains:

- ◆ 1" three ring binder with all assigned music
- ◆ current theory book
- ◆ a sharpened pencil with eraser

Choristers are invited to bring a snack with them to be eaten during the rehearsal break. All choristers should have a stopper-top water bottle with them at all rehearsals and performances.

Care of Music

- ◆ Assigned music is the property of Tahoma Choirs. Choristers are responsible for any damaged or lost piece of music.
- ◆ Choristers are expected to purchase a black, 1-inch, 3-ring binder to hold the music
- ◆ Black binders may be used during concerts. Do not decorate them with stickers, tape, or markers. Add nothing, as it will cause a distraction.
- ◆ Choristers are to bring music folders to choir rehearsal each week
- ◆ Do not write on the music unless told to do so by the director – and then only in **pencil**.
- ◆ Do not tear, chew or in any manner cause damage to the music or the folder.
- ◆ Do not remove the music from the folder unless told to do so by a director.
- ◆ All music **MUST** be returned, undamaged, when requested.
- ◆ Music must be returned upon request after performances. **No music will be kept by a chorister after any final performance.**
- ◆ All lost or damaged music will be charged to the chorister. The charge for each piece of music will be the greater of \$2 or replacement cost.
- ◆ One theory book will be issued to each chorister per theory level. Each lost or damaged theory book may be replaced for a \$5 charge.

Tips for Vocal Health

- ◆ Drink 7 to 10 glasses of water each day.
- ◆ Learn to use your voice with increasing physical efficiency.
- ◆ Always warm up your voice before singing.
- ◆ Balance voice use time.
- ◆ Desirable fatigue occurs in your breathing muscles, not your throat.
- ◆ Maintain a strong immune system:
 - ◆ Avoid Stress
 - ◆ Eat a balanced diet
 - ◆ Avoid milk products and potatoes before singing
 - ◆ Maintain regular sleeping and waking hours
 - ◆ Avoid alcohol—it causes swelling of the vocal folds, dehydrates and reduces the sensitivity of the sensorimotor nerves
 - ◆ Avoid caffeine—it causes dehydration.
 - ◆ **Drink water**

CHORAL UNIFORM

Uniforms

Each chorister is required to purchase a uniform for the concert season. Choristers are to keep uniforms clean, repaired and “concert ready”. The uniform may be worn only for Tahoma Choirs functions.

Fitting Sessions: All choristers will be required to attend fitting sessions before the December and June concerts to assess the fit and condition of current uniforms and facilitate orders and exchanges. Any chorister who does not own a uniform to standard will be required to exchange or purchase a uniform. One Saturday in late September and March will be scheduled and published on the season calendar for fittings. Any chorister who cannot attend a fitting session as scheduled must make an appointment for a private fitting at least 8 weeks prior to the concert. Fitting sessions will not be scheduled during rehearsal times.

Used Uniforms: Only uniforms in usable condition will be accepted. All alterations, including hems, must be removed. Tahoma Choirs reserves the right to refuse to repurchase uniforms for any reason. Choristers may use the uniform credit towards the purchase of a new or a used uniform.

New Uniforms: Orders for new uniforms must be placed at least 8 weeks prior to the December or June concert to allow for backorders. **Payment for the purchase of a new uniform must be received in full before placement of the order.**

Cantabile Uniform

The Uniform for Cantabile consists of black dress, black bolero jacket, black shoes and hose, and faux-pearl necklace.

- ◆ The black dress should be hemmed exactly two inches at the heel from the floor, with the proper shoes on. If the hem is too long, excess material may be cut, leaving at least a three-inch hem. ASK FOR GUIDANCE from the Uniform Manager before cutting the dress material.
- ◆ The faux-pearl necklaces will be issued and returned at the concert to prevent loss of these small items.
- ◆ Wash the uniform in cold water, gentle cycle, and hang dry, then iron on cool setting. DO NOT dry clean.

Cherubim and Intermezzo Uniform

The Uniform for Cherubim & Intermezzo consists of a wine-colored dress, black shoes and sheer black hose. The dress must fit loosely in all dimensions to allow freedom of movement and full breath support.

- ◆ The wine-colored dress should be **hemmed exactly two inches at the heel** from the floor, with the proper shoes on.
- ◆ If the gown is overly long, excess material may be cut, leaving at least a **three-inch hem allowance**. The raw edge must be SERGED to protect from fraying.
- ◆ ASK FOR GUIDANCE from the Uniform Manager before cutting the dress material.
- ◆ **Use an invisible hemming-stitch** that may be removed easily without damaging fabric by stretching, fraying or tearing. DO NOT double-fold the fabric.
- ◆ **DO NOT use hemming tape** that is difficult to remove and will damage fabric by leaving a sticky residue.
- ◆ **DO NOT alter the dress** other than to adjust hem length. Contact the Uniform Manager if you have any concerns about the fit.
- ◆ **Hand-wash** the uniform in **cold water**, and **hang dry**, then use a **cool iron**.

TBC Uniforms

The Uniform for Tahoma Boys' Choir consists of black tuxedo pants, black vest, black bow tie, white tuxedo shirt and black shirt studs.

- ◆ The uniform pants should be hemmed exactly one inch at the heel from the floor, with the proper shoes on. If the hem is too long, excess material may be cut, leaving at least a three-inch hem. ASK FOR GUIDANCE from the Uniform Manager before cutting the pant material.
- ◆ The bow tie and shirt studs will be issued at the concert, to prevent loss of these small items.
- ◆ Wash the uniform in cold water, gentle cycle, and hang dry, then iron on warm setting. DO NOT dry clean.

Shoes

Uniform shoes for TBC and TGC are classic, plain, black flat dress shoes. All TGC ensembles will follow these guidelines:

- ◆ Flat heels are recommended; a slight wedge heel is permitted. No “chunky” heels are permitted.
- ◆ Toes should be rounded, not square or pointed.
- ◆ No straps, buckles or other ornaments
- ◆ No patent leather
- ◆ **Comfort is important.**
- ◆ Young Cherubim having difficulty finding shoes may use black ballet slippers.

Tahoma Choirs try to maintain a “shoe bank” of shoes for those choristers who cannot find the appropriate shoes. Please consider donating usable shoes after your chorister outgrows them.

Hair

- ◆ **Girls:** Single or double French braid held with thin black elastic for all performances
- ◆ **Boys:** Neatly groomed, trimmed, away from face

Hosiery

- ◆ TBC - **Black** dress socks
- ◆ TGC - **Black** opaque nylons, with no patterns
- ◆ Knee-highs are recommended.
- ◆ No runs, please
- ◆ Carry an extra pair, in case of emergency

Accessories

- ◆ No jewelry or hair accessories of any kind
- ◆ No visible piercings
- ◆ No perfume or cologne
- ◆ No gum
- ◆ No excessive make-up
- ◆ No nail polish