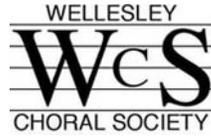


Wellesley Choral Society



Welcome to the

Wellesley Choral Society

2019 - 2020

Edward Whalen, *Music Director*

Hisako Hiratsuka, *Accompanist*

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1. Overview

History

The Wellesley Choral Society was founded in 1947 after several choruses in the town of Wellesley joined forces for a holiday festival. We have performed every year since then. In 1994 Edward Whalen became the Society's tenth director. Each year the Wellesley Choral Society performs three major concerts, as well as several smaller concerts, including a fundraising program.

Singing Season

Our season begins the first Monday after Labor Day and continues through May. Singers of high school age and over are welcome. Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 PM in the Sanctuary of the Unitarian Universalist Society located at 309 Washington Street, Wellesley, MA.

Contact Information

Use our website to keep up-to-date on all the latest information about membership, concerts, practice recordings, and upcoming events.

www.wellesleychoralsociety.org

Contact by mail: Wellesley Choral Society
P. O. Box 81060
Wellesley Hills, MA 02481-0001

Membership Dues

Dues for the season are \$150, which includes the cost for the entire season's music. All fees are due by the first rehearsal in October. If you have a question or concern about your dues, please see a board member. Don't let dues keep you from singing!

2. Rehearsals

Weekly Rehearsals

In order to achieve a consistent sound and level of competence with our music, members are required to attend rehearsals. We all have many obligations, so please notify your section leader if you need to be absent from rehearsal. Unless otherwise noted, we do rehearse on Monday holidays. Just a reminder—rehearsals begin promptly at 7:30 PM. We start with warm ups and vocalizations. See our challenging favorites listed below under Vocal Warm-ups!

Extra Rehearsals

During the final weeks before a concert, it may be necessary to hold extra rehearsals, particularly if we are working on a difficult piece. We appreciate your efforts in attending these additional sessions. Dress rehearsals are usually a day or two before the performance and attendance is mandatory. Please give proper notice if you have a schedule conflict.

Section Leaders

The section leaders are responsible for attendance, member information changes, schedule updates, notes from the Music Director, and general section assistance. If you are interested in this voluntary post, please let us know.

Vocal Warm-Ups

Although each rehearsal begins with vocalizing, there are some drills you can do to get your voice warmed up before a choral rehearsal. Try these for several minutes, focusing on the middle voice range before visiting the higher and lower ends of your range. Doing these in the morning before using your voice all day can help set you up to speak resonantly and efficiently. (Try these in the car if you commute alone!)

- **Lip trills or humming over a descending 5th.**
- **Octave pitch glides down on /i/ or /u/.**
- **Sing 5- or 9-note scales on /a/.**
- **Messa di voce on /e/, /i/, and /a.** (Messa di voce is crescendoing and decrescendoing.)
- **Our famous tongue-twister warm-up: "The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue (repeat), enunciate, articulate, exaggerate." And then there's "rubber baby buggy bumpers."**

3. Concerts

Concert Dress

For major concerts men are to wear a black tuxedo, white tuxedo shirt, black tie, black socks, and black shoes. Women are to wear a long black skirt, long-sleeved black top, black stockings, and black shoes. Please choose tasteful, moderate jewelry that does not glitter under stage lights. Pearls work well.

Allergy Alert

Please be considerate of those people who have respiratory considerations and refrain from using perfume and other scented toiletries when attending rehearsals or concerts.

Tickets

Regular admission for major concerts is \$20 for the general public, \$15 for seniors, and students, and free for anyone under 12 years old. Each member of WCS is urged to sell at least two tickets per concert.

4. Musical Staff

Edward "Ted" Whalen was appointed Music Director of the Wellesley Choral Society in 1994. During his tenure with the ensemble, he has led the chorus in wide scope of repertoire including Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Handel's *Coronation Anthems*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Great Mass in c minor*, Bloch's *Sacred Service*, Rachmaninoff's *Sacred Vespers*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, requiems of Brahms, Fauré, and Duruflé, and Poulenc's *Gloria*. In May of 2015 the chorus presented a program of

Mr. Whalen's own compositions including *Dialogues*, a piece written especially for the group. In Spring 2018, the ensemble premiered his composition *Stars*, written in honor their 70th anniversary season and for the Spring 2019 concert, held on Mother's Day, the chorus premiered a special work entitled *Love and Prayers* in honor of Mr. Whalen's mother, Janet Whalen.

Ted is a graduate of New England Conservatory, University of Rhode Island, and studied at Tanglewood Music Center and the Aspen Music Festival. He has appeared as conductor with the Boston Aria Guild's performances of Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel*, the Wakefield Festival Chorus, King's Chapel, Waltham Philharmonic Orchestra, Rhode Island Gilbert and Sullivan Society, University of Rhode Island, and other ensembles. He has prepared choruses for performances at Monadnock Music Festival and conducted gala celebration performances for Boston Baroque.

As a vocal soloist, Mr. Whalen has performed with such groups as the Boston Lyric Opera, The Des Moines Metro Opera, Lake George Opera Festival, and Boston Aria Guild. He made his Boston Symphony Hall debut singing the role of Dancairo in the critically acclaimed Chorus proMusica performance of *Carmen*. Mr. Whalen also sang with Boston Baroque (Banchetto Musicale) for 25 years appearing on all of the ensemble's Grammy-nominated recordings. Since 1995, Ted has been the director of Upper School Choruses at Milton Academy.

Hisako Hiratsuka joined the Wellesley Choral Society in 1990 as a singer and became our accompanist in 1993. She is a graduate of the Tokyo University of Arts and Music. Her teachers include Yasuko Tani and Victor Rosenbaum.

Ms. Hiratsuka is an active chamber music player and accompanist. In recent years she has performed in the Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Baltimore, and Boston areas as well as in Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Zushi, Chiba, and Kamakura, Japan. She also has accompanied flutists for music festivals in Ecuador and Columbia.

Ms. Hiratsuka has also been a featured soloist with the WCS performing such works as Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* and the two-piano arrangement of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, accompanied by her daughter.

Prior to coming to the United States in 1989, Ms. Hiratsuka taught piano in Japan. She currently teaches piano and coaches chamber music groups at Tufts University.

5. Learning the Music

Individual Responsibility

We are very lucky to have a Music Director who is a conductor, a performer, and a music educator. He cannot, however, teach every note in every part to every individual. For major works, we have parts CDs available to assist with your outside practice. There are also helpful websites where music can be downloaded for practicing (see the WCS website for links). If you need additional help, speak to your section leader. The better prepared we are when we come to rehearsal, the more we can accomplish while we're there.

Master Classes

From time to time, our Music Director will be coaching classes focused on improving our singing technique. The class is limited to 25 people, and the total fee is \$50. The sessions will be on non-rehearsal time with dates and times to be announced. A fabulous opportunity—don't miss it!

Tips for Learning a Song (source unknown)

- **Look and listen.** When available, listen to a good recording of the song while looking at the music. This is a good way to familiarize yourself with the general sound and tempo of the song.
- **Learn the melody.** Learn the melody of the song at a slower pace. Use the piano to sound out the pitches. Focus on the melody by singing on a single vowel sound such as *ah* or *oh*.
- **Learn the rhythm.** Write in counting (1+, 2+, etc.) if necessary. Practice speaking the rhythm on a single syllable such as *tah*.
- **Learn the words.** Perfect the pronunciation of each syllable. If you are singing in a foreign language, find a translation if you need it. Speak the language as a poem. Then, speak the language in rhythm. **NOTE:** this step involves no singing so it can be practiced anywhere, even without a keyboard and even if you are not vocally healthy. The speaking of a text has a direct effect on your singing.
- **Put it all together.** Add text to the melody and sing the song!
- **Musical markings.** Translate musical markings if you need to. *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* is an excellent resource.
- **Poetry and music.** Discover the relationship between the poetry and the music. This is where singing becomes creative and fun. Use your imagination to find ways that the composer has added meaning to the poem through music. This is how you develop your personal interpretation of a song.
- **Memorize.** If you have spent sufficient time practicing your song, it is likely that you will have nearly memorized it. Break the song into sections and memorize one section at a time.

6. Financial Matters

Funding

Like nearly every other performing arts group, the Wellesley Choral Society depends on financial support from members and nonmembers to underwrite our concerts. Member dues, donations from members and the community at large, advertising, and our special events provide funding for some of our operating costs. These costs include the salaries of our music director and accompanist, payments to professional orchestra members and soloists who perform with us, rental for concert and rehearsal space, and procuring musical scores. We sincerely thank you for your efforts—we couldn't have done it without you!

Cabaret Concert Fundraising

Annually we host an evening of music in a less formal setting. In the past, our cabaret programs have included salutes to Gershwin, Porter, and Gilbert and

Sullivan; famous opera choruses; songs from different decades; and *Trinklieder*—songs on the theme of wine and beer. The cabaret is an opportunity to perform pieces as soloists, duets, and small ensembles, as well as with the full chorus. The evening includes a wonderful assortment of food and beverages, as well as the ever-popular silent auction. The generously donated auction items have run the gamut from gift certificates to get-a-ways, babysitting to Bose speakers, paintings to theme baskets. It's a fun event and our biggest fundraiser of the season.

7. Supporting Organizations

Wellesley Cultural Council

This local organization is a member of the Massachusetts Cultural Council and provides valuable funding through an annual grant application procedure.

Greater Boston Choral Consortium

The consortium consists of approximately 80 Boston-area singing groups, including the WCS. We benefit from our participation in two ways. First, the GBCC provides a means for relatively low-cost publicity for its members, such as an ad in a back-to-school issue of the *Boston Globe*, a summary concert schedule for all participating members inserted in the concert programs of each other member group, and the use of the GBCC web site at www.bostonsings.org.

The website has links to each group's home page with a summary of concert dates, times, and venues and other valuable information.

The second benefit is the monthly meetings and seminars at which topics of common interest are presented. The cost of a basic membership plus the publicity component is nominal and well worth the expense. We have received responses from interested singers and potential audience members through our association with the GBCC.

8. Legal Structure and Governance

Boards and Committees

The Choral Society is registered as a not-for-profit organization, a 501(c)(3) organization, meaning we are not required to pay taxes, and donations are tax-deductible for the donor. Our bylaws state that our mission is to “foster the singing and enjoyment of choral music and to present public concerts.”

Executive Committee. We are governed by an elected Executive Committee consisting of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Past President, with the Music Director as a non-voting member.

Board of Directors. The Executive Committee, the chairpersons of standing committees (publicity, membership, music committee, music library, fundraising, concert management, advertising, special events, and program booklets), and additional directors appointed by the President constitute the Board of Directors. The Board is scheduled to meet once a month during the concert season to discuss and resolve issues of importance to the Society. Board meetings are open to all

members. The conclusion of our season is the annual meeting at which the Executive Committee and standing committee chairpersons present brief year-end reports to the membership at large and a new Executive Committee is elected.

Volunteering

The Wellesley Choral Society has been a continuously running organization since 1947 thanks to the willingness of our members to volunteer their time, expertise, and energy to the many committees that support our group. Publicity, program preparation, membership, fundraising, music selection, special events, program ads, nominating, website management, music library, concert and ticket management, and database administration are some of the committees that require member staffing. If you would like to volunteer in any capacity, please speak to a board member or committee chair. A few hours of volunteering go a long way. *All help is greatly appreciated!*

9. Opportunities

We Need Everyone

These days, there is a serious shortage of funds for the arts. The grants are smaller, the competition for grant money has increased, and some funding has disappeared completely. We need everyone's help to enhance our membership, our audience, and our treasury so that each September, on the Monday after Labor Day, our doors will open, we will have a Music Director to lead us, a pianist to accompany us, friends to greet us, concerts awaiting us, and music to inspire us.

Members and Money

The two most important factors in our ability to continue to bring music to the community are *members* and *money*. Here's how you can help:

- Invite a singing friend or family member to join our group. Increased **membership** strengthens our sound, allows us to perform larger works, and provides income.
- Sell **tickets** to our concerts. (Or give them as gifts!) If we all sold six, we would always have a full house!
- Make a **donation**. Any amount is appreciated, and it's tax deductible to the donor!
- Encourage your employer to make a corporate or matching donation. Or perhaps they'd like to help **sponsor** an event.
- Sell **ads** for the program. Business-card-size through full-page ads—all

produce much-needed revenue.

- Get the word out. Help **distribute** flyers to businesses, employers, family, and friends and put them anywhere people would notice. Send concert info to everyone on your email distribution list. If you are a member of another organization that produces programs for their events, talk to us about an ad exchange.
- Don't be shy! All **ideas** for advertising, fundraising, and outreach to increase our membership and audience are appreciated and welcome.

Join the effort ~ Join the fun