

Roanoke Valley Children's Choir

Handbook

Congratulations on being a part of the Roanoke Valley Children's Choir!

It is hoped that all choristers will find singing in this choir an enjoyable experience and that you will develop a love for great choral music which will last forever!

In order that the high standards of excellence be maintained, and that the organization of a choir program with over 280 choristers run smoothly and effectively, it is essential that all choristers and parents read the handbook and follow the rules and regulations accordingly.

Contact information

Roanoke Valley Children's Choir
Kimberly Davidson, Director
718 Joan Circle
Salem, VA 24153

Ms. Davidson's email address: kimdavidson@childrenschoir.com
www.childrenschoir.com

Choir Office Phone Number: 540-676-7265

2017-18 Choir Staff:

Concert Choir Director:	Ms. Kimberly Davidson
Accompanist:	Dr. Shelbie Wahl-Fouts
Advanced Bridge Choir Director:	Ms. Kimberly Davidson
Accompanist:	Mrs. Carla Crouse
Bridge Choir Director:	Ms. Kimberly Davidson
Accompanist:	Mrs. Carla Crouse
Appogiatura Choir Director:	Mrs. Pattie Clevenger
Accompanist:	Mrs. Carla Crouse
Musical Assistant:	Miss Kirsti Davidson
Clerical Assistant:	Mrs. Tracy Caldwell
Music Librarian:	Mrs. Sandra Church
Public Relations:	Mrs. Cindy BeMent
Treasurer:	Mrs. Michelle Sublett

2017-18 Board of Directors

Jay Sublett, Chair

Steve Caldwell, Vice-Chair

Kimberly Davidson

Leslie Berger

Frank Giannini

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Brooks Whitehurst
(Honorary Member)

Garnett Whitehurst
(Honorary Member)

Kimberly Ruse Davidson

Director, Roanoke Valley Children's Choir

Ms. Kimberly Davidson is the founding director of the Roanoke Valley Children's Choir (formerly known as the Roanoke College Children's Choir). She has served as both artistic director and administrative director of the Children's Choir since 1987. Her combination of enthusiasm and love for the children and music make this not only her life's work, but also her passion.

A graduate of Valparaiso University, Indiana, Ms. Davidson has taught music at the junior high and elementary school levels, directed youth and adult church choirs and taught piano lessons. She has served as adjudicator, Guest Director, and Festival Choral Director on numerous occasions. Currently, Ms. Davidson enjoys a full schedule of private piano students and the administrative and artistic leadership for the Roanoke Valley Children's Choir.

Ms. Davidson is serving her 30th year as director of the Roanoke Valley Children's Choir. Under her direction, the choir has grown from 23 young singers to a choral program including 280 children, ages 7-18 in 4 choirs.

This challenging program of voice and choral repertoire demands dedication and discipline from its young members. This commitment to excellence has resulted in an impressive resume for the Children's Choir, including a joint concert with the United States Army Band, being chosen twice as the Official Choir of the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, a featured solo choir twice at Carnegie Hall, and selected to sing at the 2008 and 2014 Southern Division ACDA Convention. In February 2015, the Concert Choir was a featured choir at the National American Choral Director's Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Children's Choir also performs regularly with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra and Opera Roanoke.

Objectives:

The Roanoke Valley Children's Choir provides an enriching supplement to school music classes. We offer an in-depth study of the voice in a specialized choral setting, while providing performance experiences in a variety of situations.

Each rehearsal includes vocal warm-ups and training to ensure a proper start for the young voice. Diction, stage presence and breathing techniques are taught in order to provide a well-rounded, high quality choral experience. All children are given the opportunity to sing both melody and harmony parts to help encourage the young voice to develop its entire vocal range.

The Children's Choir is committed to providing a musical experience designed to allow children personal as well as musical growth. Through expanding knowledge, self-discipline and self-expression, the child acquires a great sense of his/her own worth. A sense of community is developed in many ways: providing entertainment for community events such as festivals, seasonal programs and occasionally participating in liturgical music of worship services throughout the valley.

The RVCC Program:

Open to children ages 7-18, the program includes four choirs, each focusing on a specific level of development and musicianship. Students enter the program through a personal audition with the Director and are placed into the Appoggiatura Choir, Bridge, Advanced Bridge or Concert Choirs. Auditions are held in the spring of each year.

Appoggiatura (A) Choir: Director: Pattie Clevenger

- *Mondays, 4:00-5:30pm (DuPont Chapel, Hollins)
- *Drop off in the turn-around near the Hollins library or park and walk from the East lot. All choristers should stay on the sidewalk. No one is allowed within 10 feet of the creek.
- *In this beginning choir, proper development of the young voice is emphasized with much attention to vocal technique and theory.

Bridge (B) Choir: Director: Kimberly Davidson

- *Mondays, 4:00-5:30pm (DuPont Chapel, Hollins)
- * Drop off in the turn-around near the Hollins library or park and walk from the East lot. All choristers should stay on the sidewalk. No one is allowed within 10 feet of the creek.
- *Prerequisite: One year in "A" Choir or placement by Director after audition
- *Children build on the fundamentals established in the "A" Choir. Vocal growth and musicianship are further developed. Part-singing is introduced.

Advanced Bridge (B+) Choir: Director: Kimberly Davidson

- *Mondays, 5:00-6:30pm (DuPont Chapel, Hollins)
- *Drop off in the turn-around near the Hollins library or park and walk from the East lot. All choristers should stay on the sidewalk. No one is allowed within 10 feet of the creek.
- *Our B+ Choir will concentrate on further vocal development through the use of more advanced music. Students will have completed up to two years in the younger training choirs or have demonstrated the ability and maturity to participate in this advanced training choir as determined by the Director.

Concert (C) Choir: Director: Kimberly Davidson

- *Mondays, 7:00-9:00pm (DuPont Chapel, Hollins)
- *Prerequisite: Minimum of one year in "B+" choir, passing the theory exam, auditions or as determined by the Director. Choristers study a variety of music, from unison to four parts. Continued growth and expertise is stressed.

Attendance:

Good attendance is crucial to the quality of the choir. Although schedules are busy, choir must be made a priority. Attendance is required at all regular rehearsals, dress rehearsals, concerts and special events. Absences due to illness or other emergencies will be excused by calling or emailing Ms. Davidson. Students with more than two absences in a semester will have an attendance consultation with Ms. Davidson. Students with excessive absences (3 or more) may be asked to resign from the choir, or may not be able to participate in upcoming concerts.

Rehearsals:

The Roanoke Valley Children's Choir learns a large amount of music each year. It is essential that every minute be used wisely. Please observe the following:

1. Arrive in plenty of time to pick up new music and handouts and to sign in.
2. Bring all music, in your music binder, and 2 sharp pencils with erasers to all rehearsals.

Rehearsals are times of serious learning, study and musical growth. It is a challenge to achieve high standards in such a limited amount of rehearsal time. It is vital to our program to accept only well behaved students. Choristers must be ready and willing to work, learn and grow. Students may socialize before and after rehearsals and at break time. **Talking at any other time is not allowed!**

Discipline:

If any participant exhibits behavior that is truly disruptive or abusive, Ms. Davidson will contact the parents for a conference. Students with repeated disruptive behavior may be removed from the Children's Choir with no refund of tuition.

Music:

Each student will be assigned a music binder and warm-up folder which he/she will bring to each rehearsal. **This is a must!** Two sharpened pencils must be brought to record musical notations and directions. The folders and the music are property of the Roanoke Valley Children's Choir and should be kept in good condition. Doodling in your binder, on the music, or in the warm-up folder is NOT allowed. Damaged music and other materials will incur a replacement fee to be paid by the chorister and/or his/her family.

Home Practice:

All choir members are required to practice at home, **with** their music, three days a week. During this practice time, choristers should go through their practice CD in its entirety while looking at the music. Practice with the RVCC rehearsal CD is very important. This time can be spent in the following ways:

1. Reading the text aloud with proper, clear diction and inflection. This helps memorization and develops an understanding of the text, which leads to greater musical interpretation.
2. Singing the music on open vowel sound (ahh or ooh) to learn intervals and make the music flow.

3. Singing the songs with words, always with proper diction, good vowel formation and beautiful tone.

Music Markings:

Choristers should understand the following and be able to mark them in their scores:

Markings:

Meanings:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1) ppp | -- pianissisimo – sing as softly as possible |
| 2) pp | -- pianissimo – sing very softly |
| 3) p | -- piano – sing softly |
| 4) mp | -- mezzo-piano – sing medium softly |
| 5) mf | -- mezzo-forte – sing medium loudly |
| 6) f | -- sing loudly |
| 7) ff | -- fortissimo – sing very loudly |
| 8) < | -- crescendo – sing gradually louder |
| 9) > | -- decrescendo – sing gradually softer |
| 10) rall | -- rallentando – sing gradually slower |
| 11) rit | -- ritardando – sing gradually slower |
| 12) accel | -- accelerando – sing gradually faster |

Handouts/Communication with home:

The best method of communicating the details of costumes, schedule and other information is by email. Please make sure that we always have an up to date email address for your chorister. Important information will also be posted on our website, www.childrenschoir.com

Costumes:

The costume committee will provide a list of the specific components of the costume. The costume for girls in the A & B training choirs will be a formal full length black dress. The girls in B+ choir wear a formal full length black dress. The boys in the A, B & B+ choirs wear a white shirt, black pants and a black vest with black bow tie. In the C choir, girls wear a formal black chiffon dress and the boys wear black pants with a tuxedo style shirt, vest, and bow tie. Parents are encouraged to order the costume early, through the RVCC, in order to avoid ordering directly from the company at a higher cost. This will also allow plenty of time for alterations, if necessary. Detailed information about the costumes will be disseminated in the summer and early in the choir year from the Formal Costume chairperson(s).

Inclement Weather Policy:

In case of inclement weather, please check the RVCC website (www.childrenschoir.com).

Concert Information: Parents play a large role in the preparation of their child for a performance. The weeks of practice at home, encouragement, and early, thorough planning can make a performance a time of excitement and fulfillment for all of the hard work.

Concert Week:

1. Extra care should be taken to follow routine bedtime schedules.
2. Eat nutritious foods. Avoid sweets and junk food.
3. Eliminate unnecessary stress.
4. Stay away from people with colds or other illnesses.

The Night Before A Concert:

1. Enjoy an especially relaxing evening.
2. Talk through the concert, in fine detail.
3. Lay out concert costume, making sure everything is just right.
4. Get a good night's sleep.

Concert Day:

1. Eat limited amounts of dairy products throughout the day. (Dairy causes the mucous lining in the throat to produce excess phlegm)
2. Absolutely no dairy products at the meal prior to the concert.
3. Absolutely no sweets or chocolate.
4. Schedule a 30 minute rest prior to departure for the concert.
5. Eat a good meal 2 hours before the concert. (soups, crackers, fresh fruit, sandwich)
6. Leave plenty of time for grooming, dressing, arriving. No rushing means no forgetting.
7. In the car, talk about the concert; review the rules of concert etiquette and share the excitement of performing. Discuss with parents where you will meet after the concert.

Performance Etiquette:

1. Always think ahead.
2. **Keep your eyes on the director at all times.**
3. Do not look at the soloist.
4. Hands stay at your sides—no scratching, adjusting clothing or hair, pushing up glasses.
5. Feet are flat on the floor.
6. Make each song more beautiful than the last. Always strive to be better. Use your talents to their fullest.
7. Enjoy the music—let your face reflect the mood of the piece.

Performance Appearance:

1. Be clean and neat.
2. Keep a comb handy. Choose a hairstyle that keeps all hair away from your face. We want to see you, not your hair.
3. Black hair ribbons or headbands may be worn for girls in all four choirs.
4. No jewelry or watches—this includes earrings - they glitter in the lights.

Music Theory for B B+ and C Choirs

(The A Choir does not need to be actively studying theory.)

In the RVCC everyone in the B B+ and C choirs need to know the basic music facts: note names, note values and music symbols and continue on to Major and Minor Key Signatures, intervals and ledger lines. This amount of music theory is covered in the books, “Blast Off With Music Theory”, books #1 and #2.

The list below is the basic music facts that are covered in the “Blast Off with Music Theory” books 1 and 2. This amount of music theory is usually covered in about 3 years of piano lessons. If you have taken piano lessons less than 3 years and/or have not taken private music lessons that include music theory, please purchase “Blast Off with Music Theory!” book #1 and work on it throughout the year. By completing 2 short pages each week you can easily complete this book in the choir year. Book #2 is a continuation and teaches key signatures, intervals and ledger lines. All RVCC choristers should be working on music theory to confidently know this material through level #2 of the “Blast Off” books.

Blast Off With Music Theory Book 1

- Note Values
- Dotted notes
- Tied notes
- Rests
- Half notes and Whole notes
- Accidentals
- Major Key Signatures
- Intervals
- Time Signatures

Blast Off with Music Theory Book 2

- Major and Minor Key Signatures
- Intervals
- Ledger Lines

If you have had private music lessons for at least three years and have a strong understanding of each of the above areas of music theory – you do not need to purchase the “Blast Off” music book. All students will need to demonstrate an understanding of music theory with music theory quizzes throughout the choir year.