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THE WILLAN CHOIR HANDBOOK

information, procedures &
singer's guide

A Community Choir of the
VCC School of Music

...singing since 1975



Broadway Campus
1155 E Broadway, Vancouver BC V5T 4V5

*Bach~Brahms~Bruchner~Buxtehude~Dvorak~Faure~Gounod~
Handel~Haydn~Pergolesi~Puccini~
Rachmaninoff~Rutter~Willan & much more*

WILLAN CHOIR

Community Choir of Vancouver Community College
 Broadway Campus
 1155 E Broadway (at Glen Drive), Vancouver, BC V5T 4V5

School of Music office hours: Mon-Fri: 9:30 AM – 12 PM and 2 – 4 PM
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## WILLAN CHOIR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### *History and Membership*

Founded in 1975 by conductor Jon Washburn, the Willan Choir, the largest of the School of Music's ensembles, is a mixed voice community choir of approximately 75 members who come together in a friendly, spirited atmosphere to work on principles of voice production, choral singing techniques and team work, largely through the classical choral repertoire. The choir's name was adopted in 1980 to honour the birth centenary of Canadian composer, **Healey Willan**, whose works include symphonies, orchestral works and much choral and organ music (see page 14). The choir performs two concerts a year in early December and early April, in appealing venues such as Christ Church Cathedral, West Point Grey United Church, West Vancouver United Church and the Bell Centre, as well as sharing their music through outreach concerts. Accompaniment in these concerts ranges from piano, organ and small ensemble to full orchestra. Soloists, School of Music faculty members and VCC choral ensembles: the Madrigal Singers and the VCC Concert Choir, add an extra dimension to Willan concerts. The choir enjoys achieving a high standard of music making while maintaining a welcoming learning environment. Membership is open to all with no audition or previous experience required. Members range in age from young adults to seniors and new members will find themselves quickly surrounded by interesting and helpful individuals as well as many experienced singers happy to lead the way! Individual practice and listening time between rehearsals contributes to the success of the repertoire challenges this choir continues to take on. Patricia Plumley has directed the choir since 1997. Pianist Eric Hominick completes the team of choral experts dedicated to fine music making and proud to be part of this wonderful organization. In 2000, founding director Jon Washburn and director emeritus Gerald van Wyck joined the Willan Choir and current conductor Patricia Plumley for a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.

The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Music Department was celebrated in February 2015. Guest conductors have included Diane Loomer, Steven Morgan, Alan Kline and Stephen Horning.

The Willan Choir experience brings the magic of music, singing and community together in a unique and life enhancing way. It is not to be missed!

### *Personnel*

#### **Patricia Plumley — Director**

Patricia studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, receiving scholarships for studies with Reginald Godden and Gordon Kushner as well as for participation in the Chamber Music Program under Greta Kraus. She attended the Courtenay Youth Music Centre where she returned over the next eight summers both as a student and pianist for the choral, vocal and chamber programs. In 1986 she studied with Kristina Sutor at the Victoria Conservatory of Music, where she worked as a vocal, choral, instrumental and ballet pianist. In Vancouver she has studied with Rena Sharon, piano, and Jacob Hamm and Lynn Williams, voice.

Her musical activities include teaching piano, theory and voice in Vancouver as well as founding the Kids Sing Inner City Chorus, which she directed for seven years. As an accompanist she has worked with the British Columbia Boys Choir in concerts with Maureen Forrester and Kevin MacMillan, and on their Australia-New Zealand tour.

At VCC she teaches piano, class piano, performance techniques, coaches the classical voice students, co-conducts the VCC Concert Choir and directs the Willan Choir. Plumley enjoys combining a love of yoga studies with music and has presented her workshop Body Awareness for Musicians at VCC, Douglas College and at Beethoven Studios in Hong Kong. She has also taught yoga at VCC.

Patricia now makes her home on Vancouver Island in Nanoose Bay, where she enjoys her private studio, the Island Chapter of The British Columbia Boys choir, the Vancouver Island Symphony Choirs as well as the new Directorship of Acapella Plus.

### **Eric Hominick — Accompanist (1983-present)**

Nova Scotian Eric Hominick studied piano at the Toronto Conservatory, received a BA in Music (Voice) from Dalhousie University in 1980 and a certificate from the Joseph Shore Voice Studio in 1996. He has been accompanist for VCC's choral program for over 30 years and, over that time, has also accompanied the pop voice, classical voice and musical theatre programs. In 2009 he was awarded the Joyce Maguire Award from the BC Choral Federation, "for outstanding long term service as a choral accompanist".

Mr. Hominick has worked with such notable Canadian choral conductors as Jon Washburn, Wayne Riddell, Rupert Lang, Nancy Telfer, Diane Loomer, Iwan Edwards, Barbara Clarke, Janet Galvan, Doreen Rao and Bruce Pullan, and has accompanied many of Vancouver's preeminent choral ensembles. He has also played in the voice studios of Dr. Marvin Regier, Joseph Shore, Phyllis Mailing, Dr. Jacob Hamm and Nicolai Kolesnikov. He has had the pleasure to play under international illuminaries Eric Ericsson, Tonu Kaljuste, Rodney Eichenberger, Helmut Rilling, John Jacobson, Roger Emerson, Richard Nace, Dinah Hegelson, Don Besig, Andre Thomas, Rollo Dillworth and Mark Hayes. Eric was a performing participant at the 1993 Choral Espoo in Helsinki, and the 1993 (Vancouver) and 1996 (Australia) World Symposia on Choral Music. As a singer he has toured internationally and recorded with the Vancouver Chamber Choir. As an accompanist he has played for, toured internationally with and recorded with Elektra Women's Choir, Vancouver Children's Choir and BC Girls Choir; and he has accompanied Chor Leone Men's Choir, Vancouver Cantata Singers and Vancouver Bach Choir as well as several gospel groups and local singers. Further, Eric has played musical theatre productions for the Dunbar Theatre, Gateway Theatre, White Rock Summer Repertory Theatre, and has been a cruise ship pianist with World Explorer Cruises.

In high demand as an audition and rehearsal pianist, Eric has been a regular accompanist and clinician for BC Choral Federation events; occasional lecturer for the UBC School of Music piano program; and has served on the staff of the VCC School of Music and the faculty of the TOOBA Physical Theatre Centre. Currently, he accompanies the Choral Program at VCC, accompanies BC Girls Choir, and is staff pianist/accompanist for West Coast Amateur Society Summer Music Camp. A member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, he runs an active voice studio and freelances as vocal coach, baritone soloist, piano teacher, special events pianist and arranger.

## **PROCEDURES**

### ***Rehearsal Times and Performances***

The choir meets every Tuesday evening from 7:30 PM — 9:40 PM, at the Broadway Campus auditorium (level 2) from early September until the end of term performance in late November. After a holiday break, a second term extends from early January to the spring performance in mid-April, often an orchestral collaboration involving extra rehearsal time. Additional sectional rehearsals may be held periodically (from 7:00 - 7:30 PM) to assist singers in preparation of their parts prior to rehearsal. These will be announced ahead of time and attendance is considered very desirable. A schedule will be provided for any extra rehearsal times, dress rehearsal and concert times, outreach concerts and social events.

### ***Registration and Fees***

**Willan Choir members, new and returning, MUST be registered with VCC for EACH term. Pre-registration by mail, phone, or in person is encouraged. If you prefer, VCC staff will be in the auditorium at the 1st rehearsal to assist with registration (cheque only).**

If you pre-register before the Labour Day weekend, your registration paper and receipt will be available for pick-up at the first rehearsal in September. For the winter term, those members pre-registered before the Christmas break, will receive their registration paper and receipt at the first rehearsal in January. All other receipts will be mailed out. A reduced fee is available to senior citizens with CARE cards. Your registration paper entitles you to get a student card, available through the Registrar's Office, located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. The Registrar's Office is open M-T-Th-F 8:30 AM – 4 PM, and Wednesdays from 8:30 AM – 7 PM. The student card entitles you to use some college facilities including the library, and may also be used to qualify for student discounts around the Lower Mainland.

**NOTE: After the third week of rehearsals, a \$50 late enrollment fee may be applied by the registrar's office. Registration is imperative in order to continue singing in the choir.** Late registrations are accepted through the School of Music office, 604-871-7000 – ext.7297.

### ***Musical Scores & Other Expenses***

Performance music should be purchased at the first rehearsal (cash or cheque only). There is ample campus pay parking, and refreshments are available in the cafeteria up to 8:30 PM each evening. The purchase of CDs, choir social events, and minor fund-raising may involve additional optional expenditures.

### ***Voice Classification***

All new singers should arrive early and see the director or accompanist on arrival for a brief discussion. A simple voice test, to determine classification (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), may be done at one of the rehearsals.

### ***Attendance & Punctuality***

Regular attendance and punctuality at rehearsals is considered very important. The goal is to begin the rehearsal at 7:30 PM sharp. From time to time, volunteers for set-up and tearing-down are much appreciated.

Please notify the conductor if you expect extended absence; you will need to discuss your participation in performance if you miss three or more rehearsals. After absence or late arrival, please discuss the material covered with your neighbour in order to mark your score appropriately. New members will need to contact our e-mail liaison regarding current information and updates.

### ***Name Tags***

Name tags will be issued at some point during the term and are invaluable in creating a close social atmosphere and in aiding your aging director's memory!

### ***Personal Safety***

Anyone who requires assistance or wishes to have an escort to their car, may request help by contacting Security through the yellow phone, located near the cafeteria entrance (same level as the auditorium). There are a number of other yellow phones located throughout the campus for your convenience. The security office itself is located in the north entrance to Building B, just across the outside walkway connecting buildings A and B.

## CHOIR COMMUNICATION

### ***Pre-Season Notice to all Previously Registered Members***

By the middle of August you should receive a letter via email advising you of the upcoming Willan Choir dates and all registration information including mail, fax & phone procedures. **All singers will be subject to a \$50 late registration fee after the 3rd rehearsal**, so early phone registration is advised for those who expect to be away for the first two rehearsals.

### ***Weekly Notices***

Your director, president or other executive members may, from time-to-time, alert you to current business, either during rehearsal or by e-mail.

### ***The Choir Newsletter - 'VIVA VOCE'***

This publication is produced once a term for the delight of the membership!

The editor welcomes appropriate articles and notices from the singers for publication, as time and space allow.

### ***Survey***

Suggestions are welcome at any time; however, an annual survey is prepared in the spring by the executive and passed out to the members prior to the end of the season. This is an opportunity to express opinions, make suggestions and offer repertoire preferences. This information is an integral part of the decision making process for the upcoming year, and your effort in completing it with careful consideration is greatly appreciated.

### ***Severe weather and other disruptions***

Please check the VCC web site ([www.vcc.ca](http://www.vcc.ca)) for possible college closures. For other disruptions, such as labour dispute, director illness, etc., the choir executive will attempt to alert members via phone or email.

### ***Individual choir member's contact information***

Privacy of information laws prevent the college from releasing student phone numbers, street addresses or email addresses. At the beginning of each term, the choir executive will ask you to provide them with a contact email or phone number. This information will only be used to provide choir-related messages, such as emergency cancellation of a rehearsal, or information on where to locate music practice files.

You are not required to provide this contact info, but if you choose to do so, please assist us in keeping our records up-to-date when asked.

## ADMINISTRATION

### ***College Responsibility***

The college is responsible for registration, term administration, hiring of personnel, booking and paying for rehearsal and performance halls, risers, and hiring professional musicians and singers when required. The School of Music is responsible for ticket sales and assists with publicity, posters and programs. The college provides duplicating services as required by the executive.

### ***Executive Responsibility***

The Willan Executive consists of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Concertmaster, Social Convener and Newsletter Editor elected from the membership each spring. They meet a few times each term and liaise with the director to assist with the business of choir operations.

### ***Membership Responsibility – Volunteering***

Your skills, time and energy are an invaluable part of the Willan Choir mechanism. The choir welcomes volunteers for the many routine or specialized jobs needed to facilitate the concert/rehearsal process. Please make an executive member aware of your desire to help and any specific skills you may be able to offer. You will learn about your choir and your choir will benefit immeasurably from your input.

## **CONCERT INFORMATION**

### ***Publicity & Ticket Sales***

The School of Music or our orchestral collaborators will assist with publicity, production of posters, programs and tickets as well as ticket sales the evening of the concert. Pre-concert ticket sales will be handled by the Treasurer both at the dress rehearsal and one or two regular rehearsals before the dress. Discount prices are available to members on pre-concert sales and student and senior rates are available at the door. Members are asked to distribute posters through e-mail or as they are able to in their neighbourhoods, avoiding city property, hydro poles and bus stops.

### ***Dress and Extra Rehearsals***

Prior to each concert, a dress rehearsal will be scheduled (NB: it is not as literal as it sounds — actual concert dress is not necessary). The date and time of the rehearsal will be given to the membership as early in the term as possible, both verbally and in a written notice. **Attendance is mandatory** as riser positions, balance, entries and exits as well as last minute musical decisions arising from the distinct qualities of each concert venue and any accompanying instruments, will be addressed. Extra rehearsals and sectional practices may also be scheduled throughout the term at the discretion of the director. Attendance at these rehearsals is strongly recommended as every new level of preparation brings with it the excitement and satisfaction of a more comfortable and polished level of music making.

### ***Concert Dress***

**Women:** Floor-length black skirt or pants, simple white (not cream) long-sleeved blouse, black shoes, black socks or stockings, very simple jewelry if desired.

*All black* is often required for collaborative concerts.

**Men:** Black tuxedo or dark suit, white shirt, black bow tie, black shoes and socks.

All members require a regulation black music folder, which may be purchased at any music store.

**ALLERGY ALERT: NO** perfume, aftershave, hairspray, strongly scented shampoo, soap or lotion should be worn on the day of performance or at any rehearsal.

### ***Performance Night***

Call time for each concert is generally an hour and a half prior to the performance, i.e. 6:30 PM call for an 8:00 PM concert. Call time means members have parked (if applicable), settled their belongings in the designated warm-up area, arranged music in their folder and are awaiting the call

to the risers at 6:30 PM. After the warm-up and rehearsal a secured place for valuables will be provided and members can retire to the backstage area to relax and prepare themselves for the concert, as they wish.

Once the director has given the five-minute signal for the concert, quiet and quick response to the concertmaster's directions for line-up and entry are much appreciated.

A few concert reminders:

- folders in the hand closest to the audience
- purposeful movement onto and off the stage
- awareness of posture and facial expression
- await director's signal to open music prior to beginning
- keep music at a high enough level to read it and watch the director simultaneously
- quiet page turning, especially between movements or sections
- watch the director, remembering that he/she is your collective ear and decision maker
- trust your level of preparation and let the inspiration of the music and the moment guide your experience

ABOVE ALL, WE ENJOY THE MUSIC, THE SINGING AND THE CAMARADERIE!

## **VCC SCHOOL OF MUSIC SINGERS' GUIDE**

### **PREPARATION FOR REHEARSAL & PERFORMANCE**

#### ***Meals***

Since singing is an athletic endeavour, a modest meal one or two hours before rehearsal is suggested. Avoid spicy or strongly aromatic foods or 'repeat' items such as beans; but don't come hungry or weak! A small "pickup" snack at break and regular water intake throughout the rehearsal may be helpful in maintaining your energy level.

#### ***Voice Quality***

Voice quality is said to be improved by abstaining from dairy products, sugar, and chocolate for 24 hours prior to a performance. Avoid foods that could irritate your throat, such as crackers or rice cakes, before performance as well. Plenty of water (not too cold), sliced raw apples, a banana and herbal lemon tea are also said to aid the voice. Every singer has his or her magic formula. Experiment and find out what works best for your body and voice.

#### ***Hygiene***

Do take appropriate action in view of the fact that you are in close quarters with large numbers of people for hours at a time.

#### ***Allergies***

Do not use perfume, aftershave, hairspray or strongly scented cosmetics on the day of rehearsal or performance. They can seriously affect your fellow singers.

#### ***Punctuality***

Arrive early to enable on-time start to rehearsals.



### **Equipment**

A black folder is required for performances. A pencil with a good eraser is absolutely indispensable. A yellow highlighter marker is recommended to mark your own part. Paperclips are useful to skip over large solo or tacet sections. Magic tape is handy for controlling loose pages, photocopies, etc. Whiteout helps to clean up the score.

### **Mark your Score**

Review the previous rehearsal, clearly marking in and interpreting all those scribbles you made in the heat of the action (see "**Score Marking**" on page 9).

### **Know the Music**

Prepare upcoming material; if you have difficulty reading music, say the text in rhythm, or sing along with a recording. If sitting at a keyboard *try to sing your part first before playing it*; this is the quickest way to improve your reading ability and learn your part. The **cyberbass** web site ([www.cyberbass.com](http://www.cyberbass.com)) has many major choral works broken down by vocal section, and these are playable on a home computer with speakers or headphones.

## **VOCAL CONSIDERATIONS**

If you can remember the word **PASTA**, you can easily access the five main components of good singing:

- P** = Posture: Comfortable feet, well-grounded body, lifted spine, carefully placed neck/head alignment, relaxed jaw, arms, hands, knees and alive face.
- A** = Air: The fuel for your vocal machinery, not to be neglected! Understand the source of your air (i.e. the involuntary duties of the diaphragm in relation to the lungs) and examine the musculature that supports those duties (intercostals, abdominals etc.) and drives the engine. Take full advantage of what your body already knows about breathing and think of simply refining and enhancing this knowledge to gain control of your engine.
- S** = Shape: Once you have the air going through the vocal cords, your job in making sounds is to find the right resonating shape to produce the correct vowel sound for the word you are singing. Tongue shape, lip shape, jaw placement, lift of the soft palate and position of the larynx are all factors that contribute to the shape/sound of the vowel and the success of its resonance capabilities. Small adjustments can make huge differences in vowel quality and intelligibility especially in varying ranges of the voice. Start with the basic wide, flat tongue position for "ah" and natural speech placement of the vowel as your guide and experiment with the adjustments needed to create other vowels like ee, ay, oh, oo etc.
- T** = Tone: Beautiful sound is always a balance between warmth and carrying power. Experiment with your speaking voice. Make a sound that sounds hollow (too much warmth) and a sound that is cutting and harsh (too much carrying power). You will soon hear that neither is very desirable! Balancing these two qualities varies within registers as well- head voice, middle register and chest register. The key is to learn how it "feels" when it "sounds" right in the room. Then you can enjoy the magic of letting your body create the sound you wish to hear.
- A** = Articulation: Very important for intelligibility of text and "starting the engine". Practice saying "the tip of the tongue, the teeth and the lips" over and over very quickly to arm up your articulators! Notice how the production of a consonant affects the breathing mechanism.

Sing with your ears and trust your voice in the ensemble. Learn to hear a mix of you, your neighbours and the whole ensemble. In a large group, the tendency is to over sing in order to hear yourself. During rehearsal, cup a hand behind your right ear to check on your own pitch or sound. Breathe just enough to carry you to the end of the phrase to avoid hyperventilating (caused by taking too big a breath and not expelling all the air, leaving stale air in the lungs). Inhale on the vowel you are about to sing. Strive for pure vowels (consistent sound, carefully timed diphthongs). Pace the voice to avoid fatigue.

Most of all, enjoy letting your voice flow freely and appreciate the unique qualities it contributes to the colour of the ensemble!!!!

### **Tense or dry? Try these brief exercises:**

1. Chewing: relaxes the jaw, lubricates the chords (1 to 2 minutes)
2. Bubble the lips on "brrr" to relax them. Phonation not required!
3. Flap the uvula, keeping the tongue low and flat.
4. Yawn easily a couple of times, to stretch and relax the throat and jaw.
5. Move the head gently from side to side, forward and back, but never rolling the neck; discreet shoulder rolls also help.
6. Drink lukewarm water (never cold), sip fruit juice or suck a hard candy (avoid excess sugar).

## **THE REHEARSAL**

### ***The Three Cs of Group Dynamics***

1. **Concentration:** discourage chatter (including your own)
2. **Consideration:** towards other singers, the accompanist and the conductor
3. **Circumspection:** in asking questions, consulting other singers and pointing out errors

### ***Holding Music***

In order to *minimize* eye and distracting head movement, and to *maximize* vocal projection (i.e. creating as straight a column for the air stream as possible) and eye contact with the conductor, lay the music almost horizontally in your left hand, level with your shoulders and out from your body rather than in your lap or up vertically. Consider switching hands in rehearsal and making slight shifts in your position to avoid strain or fatigue.

### ***Turning Pages***

Holding the music flat in your left hand, turn pages with your right hand from bottom right-hand corner of the page efficiently, discreetly and quietly, but *never* during solos or long tacet sections. Paperclip those sections together.

### ***Asking Questions***

If your neighbour, upon discreetly being asked, can't answer the question, and if you *know* it is crucially important at that time *and* you're absolutely sure it can't be saved for the break, **always ask questions**. Refer to the music in the following order: page number, staff or system, measure or bar number, and beat, i.e. "Page 12, third system, fifth measure, beat two", much like your address, but in reverse.

### ***The Essential Pencil***

Truly the sign of the professional! Mark the score immediately and liberally upon any indication from the conductor (if only to prove him/her wrong at some later date). "Spare not the lead, rather spare the head"; i.e. you cannot possibly remember everything from one rehearsal to the next, and in high-pressure performance situations, visual clues and reminders marked on your score are a must.

### ***"Dead time"***

**Remember there is no such thing as "dead time" in a rehearsal because anything that is relevant to the music is relevant to you when in an ensemble!**

Here are a few ideas of what to do when the conductor is rehearsing another section.

- 1. Pay attention:** chances are it is relevant to your part too. If not,
- 2. Follow along anyway** to learn rehearsal techniques or sightsinging, **or**
- 3. Mentally review your own part** (especially the tricky bits).
- 4. Play conductor:** Challenge your listening skills to see if you can hear what improvements can be made and foster a true appreciation for the challenges being met in other parts of the ensemble. Always ask yourself if you are making the same improvements in your own part!!!!
- 5. Relax and listen.** Take a break, close your eyes and soak in the music. Enjoy hearing the progress being made and celebrate the individual efforts being made to create beautiful sounds. Marvel at this phenomenon called the Willan Choir!

## **SCORE MARKING**

### ***Preparation***

Highlight your own part, either at the beginning of each system or continuously throughout. If there is more than one part on your system (i.e. soprano 1 and 2) pencil out or opaque out the other part, or highlight your own exclusively. Highlight dynamics, tempo changes, expression marks, etc. If more than one language is given, highlight the proper one, or pencil or opaque out the unused one (translations can be written elsewhere in the score).

### ***During rehearsal***

Circle or place a question mark or draw a pair of spectacles above all trouble spots, surprising or unexpected markings. Never presume to remember. Consult your section leader or conductor during break for clarifications.

### ***Music reading***

Always look for repeated patterns of notes or rhythms and mark them with brackets. Learn notes in groups: try to identify familiar patterns such as scales, triads or sequences of identical rhythmic or melodic patterns. Identify tricky intervals by number, or by a familiar tune (i.e. Major 6th = "My bonny lies over the ocean"). Indicate the direction you need to compensate for if you keep getting it wrong. As simple as it sounds, most stubborn note problems can be solved if you merely ask the question, "does this next note go up or down?".

### ***Finding your note***

Try to find your own starting note by checking the accompaniment or another voice part a measure earlier: circle their note and connect it with a line to your own. Or you can take a prominent note in

the accompaniment or someone else's part and mark how your own relates to it, i.e. "same note", "one note higher/lower", etc.

In a large choir you may be able to get away with humming a pitch softly to sustain it over long rests until your entrance; but make sure you've got the note right or you may be looking for new neighbours. It is often most helpful to piggyback along with another voice part (i.e. altos sing with sopranos, tenors with basses) until you come to your own part; it is usually quite easy to learn how to hop from their part back on to your own.

### ***Tuning problems***

Mark the offending note with an upward or downward arrow placed in brackets in front of it, according to whether you need to tune it sharper or flatter. Poor tuning is often the result of improper vowel colour: check the word you are on and the sound you are making. Finally, occasionally stop and listen to the others singing that note: is it you or them? Bring it to the attention of your section leader or the conductor.

### ***Rhythm***

The blacker they are, the faster they go! However, if that is no help, mark in the beats. It is always imperative that you know where you are within the measure. Mark in the beats with a vertical stroke at their exact location in each measure. If the duration of the notes is a problem write the number of beats above the note and use an arrow; bear in mind that it may be better to mark this nearby the text since the rhythmic problems are often related to placement of text, and a simple reminder to elongate the vowel usually does the trick.

To aid visual reading join the eighth notes or sixteenth notes into their proper groupings by connecting their stems with a horizontal line. Count carefully, mentally, or "in the shoe" but never visibly - conductors can't stand the competition!

Always mark the number of cue beats the conductor will give at the beginning of a section; mark the number of beats per measure he/she will conduct the section in.

### ***Diction***

Mark the text with reminders to put the consonant before the beat (vowel on the beat). At phrase endings indicate exactly where the final consonant or syllable is to be sung. Mark in all the comments regarding vowel production, such as "bright", "open", "covered", "forward", "high", etc. Transliterate all instructions concerning pronunciation (especially English!) and mark close nearby the text in question, or even replace the text with the transliteration.

### ***Murphy's Law***

The most difficult interval or most awkward note will always be the first note of a new page or system of music: always mark the first note of the new system at the end of the system above or on the preceding page by extending the preceding staff and writing in the offending note(s).

### ***Important trivia***

If the accompaniment continues after the singing is done, write "Freeze" – it isn't over until the next movement has begun or the applause has started. Indicate all stand or sit cues at the appropriate point in the music. Smile incessantly: it promotes proper resonance, and makes the audience feel that you are having a good time performing!

## ITALIAN TERMS

|                         |                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Accelerando             | Gradually getting faster                                         |
| Accent                  | Accented note is to be performed with a stronger, sharper stress |
| Adagio                  | Very slowly                                                      |
| Agitato                 | Agitated, excited                                                |
| Allargando              | Broaden, slowing down                                            |
| Allegretto              | Not as fast as allegro                                           |
| Allegro                 | Quickly, lively                                                  |
| Andante                 | Not too slowly, at a walking pace                                |
| Andantino               | Not as slowly as Andante                                         |
| Animato                 | Animated, lively                                                 |
| A tempo                 | Return to original speed                                         |
| Cantabile               | With a singing tone                                              |
| Con espressione         | With expression                                                  |
| Crescendo               | Getting gradually louder                                         |
| Da Capo. D.C.           | Repeat from the head (beginning)                                 |
| Dal Segno, D.S.         | Repeat from the sign                                             |
| Decrescendo, Diminuendo | Getting gradually slower                                         |
| Dolce                   | Sweetly                                                          |
| Dolente                 | Sadly                                                            |
| Forte (f)               | Loud                                                             |
| Fortissimo (ff)         | Very loud                                                        |
| Fortepiano (fp)         | Loud and immediately soft                                        |
| Fine                    | The end                                                          |
| Giocoso                 | Humorously, playfully                                            |
| Grave                   | Serious, solemn                                                  |
| Grazioso                | Gracefully                                                       |
| Larghetto               | Not as slowly as Largo                                           |
| Largo                   | Slowly                                                           |
| Legato                  | Smoothly, connected                                              |
| Leggerio                | Lightly                                                          |
| Lento                   | Slowly                                                           |
| L'istresso tempo        | At the same tempo                                                |
| Maestoso                | With dignity, in a stately manner                                |
| Marcato                 | With a marked accent                                             |
| Meno                    | Less                                                             |
| Meno Mosso              | Less motion. slower                                              |
| Mezzo forte (mf)        | Medium loud, moderately loud                                     |
| Mezzo piano (mp)        | Medium soft, moderately soft                                     |
| Moderato                | At a moderate speed                                              |
| Molto                   | Much                                                             |
| Morendo                 | Dying away                                                       |
| Non troppo              | Not too much                                                     |

|                                         |                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Ottava, 8va                             | Octave                                          |
| Pianissimo (pp)                         | Very soft                                       |
| Piano (p)                               | Soft, softly                                    |
| Pause (Fermata)                         | Hold the note or rest for longer than its value |
| Piu mosso                               | More motion, faster                             |
| Poco                                    | Little                                          |
| Presto                                  | Very quickly                                    |
| Prestissimo                             | As fast as possible                             |
| <u>R</u> allentando, <u>R</u> itardando | Gradually slowing down                          |
| Sempre                                  | Always                                          |
| Senza                                   | Without                                         |
| Simile                                  | Continue in the same manner, similar            |
| Sonore                                  | Sonorous, with a full sound                     |
| Sotto voce                              | Literally " under the voice", in an undertone   |
| Staccato                                | Detached, not connected                         |
| Subito                                  | Suddenly                                        |
| Tempo primo                             | Return to the first speed                       |
| <u>T</u> enuto                          | Hold, sustain the note(s)                       |
| Tutti                                   | Performed by all as distinct from solo passages |
| Vivace                                  | Briskly, lively                                 |
| Volto Subito (V.S.)                     | Turn the page quickly                           |

## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HEALEY WILLAN, 1880 – 1968

James Healey Willan was born in London, England on October 10, 1880. His forebears were not particularly musical, being mostly doctors, teachers and clergy, but he claimed that he was born with the ability to read music. By age four his mother and governess had taught him to play the piano and at eight he was sent to St. Saviour's Choir School at Eastbourne. There he proved to be a most promising student and progressed fast. By age ten he had composed *A March in A for Piano* (since lost). By eleven he was accompanying evensong on the organ and directing choir practice for boys older than himself. When his voice broke at fifteen he was kept on for an extra year of schooling because he was so useful to the headmaster.

He studied organ and piano privately and then sat the exams to become an Associate of the Royal College of Organists. He failed to pass on the first attempt because his feet skidded on the slippery organ pedals. Six months later, aged sixteen and equipped with billiard chalk, he passed easily – though his walk to the organ was clearly marked with white footprints. At eighteen he became the youngest person ever to become a Fellow of the College. In later years he claimed that the organ was a dull instrument and jested that the only organ recitals he could sit through were his own!

Willan's proficiency on the organ led to a variety of posts around London as organist/choirmaster until in 1900, he was appointed to St. John the Baptist Church, where he remained for the next thirteen years. He became an authority on plain chant in the vernacular thus effecting an acceptable compromise during a time of conflict in the Anglican Church.

In 1905 Willan married Gladys Hall, a teacher and pianist; by 1913 they had a family of four children. Financial difficulties undoubtedly motivated his move to Toronto, where he was invited to become head of theory at the Toronto Conservatory of Music (later vice principal for sixteen years). He soon became choirmaster at St. Paul's Anglican Church and lecturer and examiner at the University of Toronto (later professor from 1936-1950).

He served as music director for Hart House Theatre where he wrote and conducted incidental music for fourteen plays. He became a prolific composer and once boasted that he could write music anywhere, at any time, regardless of noise and disturbance. Some of his friends put him to the test, so Willan proceeded to set to music a poem by J. E. Middleton while seated on a stage with Ernest MacMillan playing the piano, Elie Spivak practicing a Bach violin concerto beside him and a gramophone blaring out jazz in the background!

As for Willan's compositional style, his early works are richly romantic in flavour, strongly chromatic and heavily scored. His larger works are much influenced by his admiration of Wagner. This contrasted with his lifelong love of plainsong, and his preoccupation with Renaissance music was reflected in the economy, effectiveness and beauty of his church music and choral style. He formed the Tudor Choir (ten voice) to perform these works. Of his early songs, Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians states "The vocal lines are always rewarding both for singer and listener and the accompaniments are always apt." Willan did not like or understand mid-20<sup>th</sup> century music ("I hear only strange sounds which surprise and disturb me.") This did not alter his relationship with his students whom he instructed by example and encouragement.

An amiable man, he was for thirty years a member of the Arts & Letters Club of Toronto. This convivial place was an outlet for stimulating intellectual conversation and the companionship of fellow artists. One of his jests was to set the club constitution to music!

In 1921, his friend Griffith Hiscocks, rector of the small, mid-town Anglican church of St. Mary Magdalene, persuaded Willan to become organist/choirmaster. He was given sole charge of all aspects of music and form of service. Here he established the Ritual Choirs and Gallery Singers, made up of volunteers. He insisted on careful phrasing and shaping of the vocal lines, demanding a straight tone which enabled him to obtain good tuning and blend from singers who may not have had vocal

training. Thus began one of Willan's most notable associations which ended with his death 47 years later. By example he influenced church music across Canada, the US (he was guest lecturer at UCLA and U of Michigan), and Britain.

Willan was organist, choirmaster, teacher and composer of more than 800 works of symphonic and church music. He was fortunate to receive countless honours in his own lifetime, including honorary president of, and life membership in the Royal Conservatory. He was commissioned to write the anthem *Oh Lord our Govenour* (sic) for the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953, as well as *Coronation Suite*. He considered that his greatest honour. He was one of the first to be made Companion of the Order of Canada (created in 1967), when his last orchestral composition, the *Centennial March*, was written. He died in Toronto on February 16, 1968. A commemorative stamp was issued in 1980.

Willan claimed to believe in ghosts and said he would come back to haunt St. Mary Magdalene Church. We can make contact with him any time by viewing the films *Music in the Wind* and *Men of Music*, viewing the CBC feature *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*, or by sampling some of the many CDs readily available.

## OUR NAMESAKE



### HEALEY (James) WILLAN

- b. October 12, 1880 Balham, England
- d. February 16, 1968 Toronto, Canada



Considered Canada's leading composer, **Healey Willan** was trained as an organist. He taught at Toronto's conservatory and university and was Precenter (choral director) at St. Mary Magdalene Church. His works included much choral and organ music reflecting plainsong and renaissance influences while his orchestral scores followed the late Romantic style. Willan was an influential teacher on the Canadian music scene and an amiable person – he liked to say that he was Irish by parentage, English by birth, Canadian by adoption and Scotch (sic) by absorption!

The Willan Choir is pleased to have such an illustrious namesake. A number of his works are available on disc, including the Vancouver Chamber Choir's 1996 JUNO Award nominated '**Apostrophe to the Heavenly Hosts**,' a CD on the Virgin Classics label.

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This handbook was first brought to you in September 1996 on behalf of the Executive of the Willan Choir.

The contents are reviewed periodically. Current edition: Fall 2015
Special thanks to all contributors, past and present.