

Nashville Children's Choir (NCC)

Handbook

2022-2023



Nashville Children's Choir (NCC) is a not-for-profit organization, in residence and in cooperation with Belmont University, with a current enrollment of approximately 100 choristers in three choirs. Choir members range in age from eight to eighteen and are from varying racial, socio-economic and religious backgrounds. NCC is dedicated to the philosophy that through the learning and performance of excellent choral literature, the lives of the choir members, as well as the lives of their families and the community, will be enriched both artistically and personally.



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I. BACKGROUND

Nashville Children's Choir was founded by Marilyn Shadinger and Frederica Braidfoot in 1989, in cooperation with Belmont University. Madeline Bridges joined Mrs. Shadinger as co-director in the fall of 1990. Upon Mrs. Shadinger's retirement in 2007, Madeline Bridges assumed sole directorship. Elaine Bailey and Josh Wright shared directorship following the retirement of Madeline Bridges in 2019, and in 2022 Tyler Merideth assumed sole directorship. Since 1989, the choir expanded from a single choir of twenty-five singers to four choirs enrolling approximately 200 singers: Preparatory Choir, Concert Choir, Touring Choir, and Nashville Youth Choir. After the pandemic of 2020, the program reformed into three choirs: Foundations Choir, Touring Choir, and Nashville Youth Choir enrolling approximately 100 singers.

II. RELATIONSHIP WITH BELMONT UNIVERSITY

The College of Visual and Performing Arts of Belmont University provides weekly meeting space for choirs. NCC functions as an ensemble of the university and could not exist without the support and encouragement of Belmont University's College of Visual and Performing Arts.

NCC is a part of the pre-college music program, Belmont Academy. This organization provides private instruction in piano, string, woodwind and brass instruments, Suzuki string instruction, as well as choral instruction for children from grade 3 through high school thru NCC.

NCC provides observation opportunities for Belmont music students, serves as a demonstration choir when needed for Belmont music education workshops, provides internship opportunities for undergraduate and graduate music students, and performs with university choral organizations.

III. GOALS

- To foster the personal and social growth of choristers with goals of promoting agency, teamwork, accomplishment, and pride.
- To attain the highest possible level of excellence in performance.
- To make choir membership available to children and youth of all racial, cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- To contribute to the cultural life of Nashville and the nation, and enhance the quality of singing in area schools and churches by providing additional quality choral experiences.

IV. CURRICULUM

NCC is a special learning environment designed to provide a rich and rewarding musical experience for each member by engaging their vocal instruments through exercise, posture, breath, and tone production. Choristers study and perform a variety of music from simple unison folk songs to more challenging choral literature spanning from Renaissance, Broadway, folk and patriotic music to commissioned works from living composers. Concepts such as melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre, dynamics, form, style and performance practice along with musical skills (singing, music reading, etc.) are taught systematically throughout the rehearsals. It is hoped that the experience of artistic singing will form the foundation of a life-long relationship with music for singers and their families.

V. ENSEMBLES

FOUNDATIONS CHOIR is an entry-level choir for the young singer, including students who have the ability to match pitch and have a desire to learn more about singing.

TOURING CHOIR is an intermediate-level choir for pre-high school students who demonstrate intermediate vocal and note-reading ability.

NASHVILLE YOUTH CHOIR is a mixed choir of grades 9-12 and changed male voices. This choir builds on the foundation of the younger choirs and performs four-part literature including a cappella compositions.

VI. MEMBERSHIP

Children and youth, ages 8-18, are eligible to audition for membership in NCC. Enrollment into NCC is for the season (September-May) and each member is expected to remain active and committed to the program for the entire year. Children who enter in younger choirs are encouraged to stay in the program for multiple years so that they may progress in musical skills that will allow them to move up to the next choir.

VII. AUDITIONS

Open auditions for Touring Choir and Foundations Choir are held both in the spring and fall for the following school year. Auditions for Nashville Youth Choir are held by appointment in summer. Special auditions may be arranged by contacting the NCC directors. Every attempt is made to place every singer who auditions and meets the musical criteria into one of the choirs in the program.

VIII. COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL AND CHURCH MUSIC PROGRAMS

The success of NCC is dependent on the support of music teachers and church choir directors of the choristers. NCC singers are encouraged to remain in their school and church choirs and are to be leaders in these ensembles.

IX. DEPORTMENT

It is expected that all choir members display a positive and encouraging attitude. Common courtesy, appropriate behavior and good manners to each other, directors, and other adults are expected at all times (rehearsals, performances, retreats, trips, and other choir activities). Inappropriate behavior will be reported to parents immediately and may result in probation or dismissal from the group.

X. TUITION

The first tuition payment and confirmation form shows a commitment to participate for the 2022-2023 season. Tuition balance may then be divided into 3 additional payments due the first rehearsals in September, October and November. If a family chooses to pay the full tuition payment up front, that is also welcomed. **Payment in full is required for concert participation. All payments are non-refundable.**

Ensemble	Tuition in Full	4 Installments
Nashville Youth Choir	\$350	\$87.50
Touring Choir	\$450 (Covers Day Camp and January Jubilee)	\$112.50
Foundations Choir	\$350	\$87.50

Families with more than one singer enrolled in the NCC program will pay full tuition for the child in the **most senior/advanced choir** and half tuition for each additional child. A limited amount of financial assistance is available. Need-based scholarships are granted at the discretion of the choir directors. A scholarship application may be requested when the initial payment is submitted. Under special circumstances, Nashville Youth Choir has allowed a chorister to join at the start of the second semester; in these cases, the tuition is \$225 and is due in full at or before the first rehearsal. Please direct any questions to ncc@belmont.edu.

Tuition fees do not cover all of the operational expenses of the NCC. Donations are always accepted and welcomed.

PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR TOURING CHOIR AND FOUNDATIONS CHOIR

There are two ways to submit payment for Touring Choir or Foundations Choir.

1. Log into PayPal
2. Go to Send and Request and select “Send”
3. Type in NCC’s email address: ncc@belmont.edu
4. Select the amount you wish to send
5. **List chorister’s name and choir (Touring or Foundations) in “Add a note” Field**
6. Select “Send Payment Now”

OR

Bring a check to rehearsal or mail a check payable to

Nashville Children’s Choir
% Belmont University School of Music
Wilson Building
1900 Belmont Blvd
Nashville, TN 37212

**BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE NAME OF YOUR CHORISTER AND CHOIR
(TOURING OR FOUNDATIONS) ON THE “FOR” LINE OF THE CHECK.**

PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR NASHVILLE YOUTH CHOIR

Online payments can be made to @Robert-king-177 in Venmo WITH A FOLLOW-UP EMAIL SENT TO robert.king@lipscomb.edu to provide notification.

OR

Bring a check payable to Nashville Youth Choir to rehearsal.

XI. FUNDRAISING

NCC occasionally holds fundraisers to help offset expenses of the choir not covered by tuition. Full participation of each family will ensure the success of the activities.

XII. FEES AND HONORARIA

All fees and honoraria earned as a result of a performance contracted by NCC become property of NCC.

XIII. REHEARSAL SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR

Monday Afternoon Rehearsal Schedule	
Nashville Youth Choir	4:30-6:00 p.m.
Touring Choir	4:30-6:00 p.m.
Foundations Choir	4:30-5:45 p.m.

All choirs rehearse simultaneously with staggered end times each Monday afternoon in the lower level of the Massey Performing Arts Center on the Belmont University campus unless otherwise noted in choir communication. A roster of choristers will be issued to facilitate transportation arrangements. Expect the following additional events and rehearsals:

- An extra dress rehearsal on the day of each major concert (Winter and Spring). Occasionally, additional rehearsals are necessary during the year. These will be communicated to families through semester calendars and email reminders.
- In addition, the **TOURING CHOIR** has a three-day camp in July, and a Friday evening and Saturday retreat early in January named “January Jubilee.”

Attendance:

Membership in the NCC program is a commitment to faithful, consistent, and punctual attendance. It is expected that rehearsals take a very high priority in each chorister’s life. Each semester includes approximately 14 Monday afternoon rehearsals. Missing one rehearsal in a semester is comparable to missing more than a week of school in a semester. Every rehearsal is critically important to the individual and to the choir. Much can be learned by being present in rehearsal, even if the choir member cannot actively participate due to non-contagious conditions. Parents are expected to notify the director in advance if a choir member will be absent from rehearsal. More than two absences in a semester greatly hampers a choir member’s contribution to NCC. Patterns of lack of attendance (missing more than 2 rehearsals per semester), lack of punctuality (numerous tardies to rehearsals), and habitually leaving early from rehearsals do not demonstrate commitment to the choir and will result in probation and possible dismissal from the choir.

Dress Rehearsals and Performances are Mandatory. An absence, for any reason, from a dress rehearsal may result in the singer not singing the corresponding performance. An absence from a performance needs to be cleared with the ensemble director well in advance and may result in dismissal from the choir.

2022-2023 NCC SEASON Fall Semester

June 30th	Confirmation and First Tuition Payment Due
July 25-27th	Touring Choir Day Camp at Brentwood UMC-July 25-27
July 27th	Touring Choir Sings National Anthem at Nashville Sounds Game
Aug 27th	Touring Choir Mini-Retreat and Fun Day at Brentwood UMC
Aug 29th	Touring Choir and Foundations Choir Audition Day Belmont University 4:30-6:00 p.m.
Sep 12th	Rehearsal #1 and Second Tuition Payment Due Foundations and Touring Choir Combined Informational Meeting at 5:40
Sep 19th	Rehearsal #2
Sep 26th	Rehearsal #3
Oct 1	Touring Choir Performance at RYZE event
Oct 3rd	Rehearsal #4 and Third Tuition Payment Due
Oct 10th	Rehearsal #5
Oct 17th	Rehearsal #6- LOCATION @Lipscomb Academy-BELMONT FALL BREAK
Oct 24th	Rehearsal #7
Oct 31st	Rehearsal #8
Nov 7th	Rehearsal #9 and Final Tuition Payment Due
Nov 14th	Rehearsal #10
Nov 21st	Rehearsal #11
Nov 28th	Rehearsal #12
Dec 3rd	Possible Touring Choir Performance Christmas at Belmont-Fisher Performing Arts Center 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Dec 4th	Possible Touring Choir Performance Christmas at Belmont-Fisher Performing Arts Center 2:00 p.m.
Dec 5th	Rehearsal #13
Dec 10th	Winter Concert 4:00 p.m.

	Belmont University-McAfee Concert Hall Call Time: TBA
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2022-2023 NCC SEASON

Spring Semester

Jan 6th-7th	Touring Choir “January Jubilee” Retreat at Brentwood UMC
Jan 23rd	Rehearsal #1
Jan 30th	Rehearsal #2
Feb 6th	Rehearsal #3
Feb 13th	Rehearsal #4
Feb 17th-20th	Touring Choir Tour to Atlanta
Feb 20th	Rehearsal #5
Feb 27th	Rehearsal #6
March 6th	Rehearsal #7 LOCATION@Lipscomb Academy-BELMONT SPRING BREAK
March 13th	Rehearsal #8
March 20th	Rehearsal #9
March 27th	Rehearsal #10
April 3rd	Rehearsal #11
April 10th	Rehearsal #12 LOCATION@Lipscomb Academy-BELMONT EASTER BREAK
April 17th	Rehearsal #13
April 22nd	Possible Performance for Touring Choir and Nashville Youth Choir President’s Concert Belmont University Fisher Performing Arts Center Call Time: TBA
April 24th	Rehearsal #14
April 29th	Spring Concert 4:00 p.m. Belmont University-McAfee Concert Hall Call Time: TBA

Rehearsal Procedures:

Choristers should arrive at least five minutes before rehearsal, mark attendance on the roster, go directly to the assigned seat, and begin studying music or complete early arriver activity as planned by the director.

Snow/Holiday Policy:

NCC generally follows the Metro-Davidson County snow day policy. Exceptions are made when most roads are clear. A staff member will notify choristers and families through email regarding rehearsals on days when weather is questionable. NCC does not take most of the holidays that most school systems take. Please take note of the calendar in the acceptance packet. All NCC holidays will be indicated on this calendar. Any other school holidays (teacher's meetings, etc.) are generally NOT holidays for NCC unless noted.

XIV. PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

Performance attire will be concert black. Families may choose appropriate clothing for each chorister. If a dress or skirt is worn, legs must be covered with opaque black tights. If pants are worn, plain black dress socks and plain black belt (if needed) are to be worn with a solid shirt or top. Long or three-quarter length sleeves are preferred. No black t-shirts, black polo shirts, or black jeans are allowed. Black low-heeled shoes (not athletic shoes) are to be worn by all choristers. All black clothing must be free of design, pattern, and embellishment. Shiny jewelry or sparkles on the outfit that draw attention to the individual are also prohibited. Hair must be out of one's face. Touring Choir will utilize a small affordable accessory to accent the concert black attire. Please see an NCC director if you have any questions about the uniform policy. The goal is to look like an ensemble and not a group of individuals.

XV. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The parents of choristers are vital to the success of NCC! Parents are encouraged to assist choristers in punctuality, rehearsal attendance, and performance responsibilities. The organization will need volunteers in the areas of music librarian, helping with refreshments, publicity, fund-raising, transportation, nurse and as chaperones for tours. If you are interested in assisting in any way, please contact ncc@belmont.edu to get connected!

XVI. STAFF

Tyler Merideth

NCC PROGRAM DIRECTOR

NASHVILLE YOUTH CHOIR ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR AND COLLABORATIVE
PIANIST

Oversees every aspect of the organization and assists in rehearsals and performances of NYC.

James Wells

NCC ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

TOURING CHOIR DIRECTOR

Provides vision and direction for NCC and conducts rehearsals and performances of TC.

Samantha Altmann

TOURING CHOIR ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

SOCIAL MEDIA DIRECTOR

Assists in rehearsals and performances of TC and maintains NCC's social media presence.

Kyle Hankins

TOURING CHOIR COLLABORATIVE PIANIST

Assists in rehearsals and performances of TC.

Elaine Bailey

FOUNDATIONS CHOIR DIRECTOR

Conducts rehearsals and performances of FC.

Michelle Carr

FOUNDATIONS CHOIR ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR AND COLLABORATIVE PIANIST

Assists in rehearsals and performances of FC.

Robert King

NASHVILLE YOUTH CHOIR DIRECTOR

Conducts rehearsals and performances of NYC.