

# Constitution of

## *Atlantic Voices*

### *The Newfoundland and Labrador Choir of Ottawa*



#### **I. Name of the Choir**

The name of the Choir is “Atlantic Voices: the Newfoundland and Labrador Choir of Ottawa”. For brevity, the Choir may be referred to as “Atlantic Voices” and hereafter within this document may be referred to as “the Choir”.

#### **II. Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of Atlantic Voices is as follows:

- a. To establish and maintain an amateur community choir open to singers and musicians from any background and of all ranges and levels of experience;
- b. To provide its members with the opportunity to learn, rehearse, and perform choral compositions, while striving to become technically stronger;
- c. To represent and showcase Newfoundland and Labrador, Canadian Maritime, and Celtic culture and music;
- d. To offer, free of charge, musical entertainment to residents of retirement homes, hospitals, etc., via *in situ* community outreach concerts;
- e. To arrange and/or participate in exhibitions, festivals, and educational forums as opportunities arise.

Atlantic Voices is a non-profit organization. This organization shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other gains by the organization shall be used in promoting its objectives.

#### **III. Membership**

Atlantic Voices is open to any individual who is interested in learning and singing and/or playing Newfoundland and Labrador, Canadian Maritime and Celtic music. Membership in Atlantic Voices is not restricted to individuals born in Newfoundland and Labrador or the Maritime provinces. Atlantic Voices will not deny consideration for membership to any individual because of gender, age, race, religion, creed, national origin, handicap, marital status or sexual orientation.

The choir is a non-auditioned community choir. Auditions shall not constitute a barrier to membership; however, auditions for solo or chamber choir parts may be held.

As a condition of membership, all members are expected to demonstrate good attendance. Failure to attend rehearsals regularly negatively affects concert readiness for all members. Section representatives should be notified if a member will not be able to attend rehearsal. Inconsistent attendance may result in a member being asked to sit out of a concert performance; however this would be a last resort option, and would only be instituted based on a meeting with the Music Director to determine if the member is ready for performance. All members are expected to attend at least 75% of the regular rehearsals of the season, and a minimum of 4 out of the last 5 rehearsals (including the dress rehearsal) leading up to the concert. Exceptions to this policy may be made on an individual basis by the Music Director.

Any member who chooses to sit out from the choir for one or more seasons is welcome to re-join at any time. However, if there is a waiting list in place, former members who have sat out more than one or more seasons will be required to go on the list and wait for an opening before being allowed to re-join. If the member has only sat out for one season, they will not be required to go on the waiting list, but may re-join the group immediately.

There are five categories of participation within Atlantic Voices: Singing Member, Musical Director, Paid Accompanist, Non-Singing Member, and Non-Singing Volunteers.

- a. **Singing Members:** No audition is required to join Atlantic Voices as a Singing Member. Occasional, informal internal auditions may be held at the Musical Director's discretion to select soloists for specific pieces or to determine the range of an individual Singing Member's voice. Singing Members are Voting Members and are required to pay annual membership fees.
- b. **Musical Director:** An audition is required to join Atlantic Voices as a Musical Director. Auditions for Musical Director will be held with at least 50% of the Voting Members present and will take the form of a one or two hour rehearsal with the applicant Musical Director leading the rehearsal. Following the audition, the Voting Members may vote to accept the applicant, reject the applicant, or withhold their decision until all potential applicants have had the opportunity to audition. The remuneration paid to the successful applicant will be determined by negotiation between the applicant and the Executive Committee. A written contract outlining the Musical Director's obligations to the Choir and remuneration will be signed by the President, Vice-President, and Musical Director. The Musical Director is not required to pay annual membership fees and is not a Voting Member.
- c. **Paid Accompanist:** An audition is required to join Atlantic Voices as a Paid Accompanist. Paid Accompanist auditions will be held with the Musical Director and at least 50% of the Executive Committee present. Interested Members may also attend accompanist auditions. The form of the audition will be determined by the Musical Director. Following the audition, the Musical Director will make his/her recommendation to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may then vote to accept the applicant, reject the applicant, or withhold their decision until all potential applicants have had the opportunity to audition. The remuneration paid to the successful applicant will be determined by negotiation between the applicant and the Executive Committee. A written contract outlining the Accompanist's obligations to the Choir and remuneration will be signed by the President, Vice-President, and Accompanist. The Paid Accompanist is not required to pay annual membership fees and is not a Voting Member.
- d. **Non-Singing Members:** Occasionally, an interested party may wish to serve in an executive position within Atlantic Voices, but may not be interested in becoming a singing member. All Non-Singing Members are Voting Members and are required to pay annual membership fees.

- e. **Non-Singing Volunteers:** Occasionally an interested party may wish to volunteer to assist the choir with various tasks that no Member is available to perform, and may not be interested in becoming a singing member. Non-Singing Volunteers are not Voting Members and are not required to pay annual membership fees.

Any individual who pays fees to the Choir for the right to participate as either a Singing or Non-Singing Member is referred to hereafter within this document as a "Member".

At their discretion, the Executive may choose to create/allow other types of Memberships, such as Accompanist Member, or Honorary Associate.

**Accompanist Member:** Auditions may be required to join Atlantic Voices as an Accompanist Member. The form of the audition will be determined by the Musical Director and the Musical Director will be responsible for judging the ability of the auditioning individual. If the audition is successful, the individual will be invited to join Atlantic Voices as an Accompanist member. Accompanist Members are voting Members and are required to pay annual membership fees. An individual may choose to be both a Singing Member and an Accompanist Member. Individuals with dual membership are Voting members (one vote) and are required to pay membership fees.

**Honorary Associate:** From time to time, at the discretion of the Executive Committee, Honorary Associate status may be offered to individuals who have contributed significantly to the organization. Any member of Atlantic Voices may nominate an individual as an Honorary Associate. An Honorary Associate is not required to pay membership dues and is not a Voting member. The duration and benefits of an Honorary Association will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Committee.

#### **IV. Responsibilities of the Musical Director**

The chief responsibility of the Musical Director is to provide technical and artistic direction to the choir. In order to achieve this, the Musical Director must lead the weekly rehearsals of the Choir; provide instruction to Singing Members, and Paid Accompanist(s) during rehearsal time; audition Paid Accompanist(s) as the need arises; lead the Choir during public and community concerts and dress rehearsals for these concerts; and select appropriate music (subject to the approval of the Executive Committee) to be rehearsed and performed in concert. Music is to be previewed for the Executive Committee a minimum of one month prior to the start of each season, and should be presented to the Choir at the first rehearsal of each season. The Musical Director is also expected to arrange for production of recorded files (i.e. tape, CD, mp3, MIDI) of each part of the music selected to help choir members to learn their specific parts.

#### **V. Structure and Responsibilities of the Executive Committee**

The leadership/direction of the choir will rest with the membership via the establishment of an Executive Committee. All officers of the Executive Committee must be current fee-paying Members of Atlantic Voices. Voting Officers of the Executive committee of Atlantic Voices will include the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. The Music Librarian(s), Section Representatives, and Past Presidents with current Member status may also join the Executive Committee, but are Non-Voting officers. In the event of a tie vote, the current Past President will cast the deciding vote, so long as s/he has current Member status. If there is still a tie, voting shall extend to the other non-voting officers of the Executive Committee.

The President will Chair all Executive Committee Meetings of the Choir, with the Vice-President filling in if the President is absent. Quorum for Executive Committee Meetings is 50% of Voting Officers. No binding Executive Committee decisions may be made or motions relevant to Choir business introduced or passed if Quorum is not met. Additionally, no binding Executive Committee decisions may be made or motions relevant to Choir business introduced or passed if both the President and Vice-President are absent from a meeting, regardless of how many other Executive Committee Officers are present. All Voting Officers of the Executive Committee may introduce and vote on motions relevant to Choir business at Executive Committee meetings. A motion will be passed if 50% of the Voting Officers present (assuming Quorum is met) vote in favor of the motion.

Members who volunteer for other Choir Committees (e.g., Fundraising Committee, Events Committee, Publicity Committee, etc.) will be invited to join the Executive Committee as Ex-officio Officers for the duration of their contribution to the other committees. The Musical Director is also considered as an Ex-officio Officer of the Executive Committee. Ex-officio Officers may attend Executive Committee Meetings, offer suggestions and participate in discussions pertaining to the business of the Choir, but may not introduce nor vote upon Executive Committee motions. Ex-officio Officers may be asked not to attend specified Executive Committee Meetings at the discretion of the President (or Vice-President, in the absence of the President).

The positions of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary will be filled by election at the Annual General Meeting by the Members of the Choir. The term of the elected positions is two years. Any fee-paying Member may run for an Executive Committee position. There is no maximum number of consecutive terms for any Executive Committee position. If an Executive Committee position becomes vacant before the incumbent's term is finished, the position may be filled on an interim basis (until the next Annual General Meeting) through appointment by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee reserves the right and is responsible for approving the rehearsal and concert music selections of the Musical Director. The purpose of the proviso is to ensure that Atlantic Voices follows its mandate as presented in Article II.

In general, the Executive Committee is responsible for organizing all of the business affairs of Atlantic Voices, including but not limited to: determining the times, dates and locations of all performances; purchasing, renting, or borrowing music scores and distributing music to members of the Choir; arranging rehearsal space; collecting membership fees and maintaining a current membership list; participating in the auditions and hiring of Musical Directors and Paid Accompanists as the need arises; fundraising, advertising and staging concerts; paying the bills of Atlantic Voices in a timely manner.

Atlantic Voices will have a non-personal bank account maintained in its name. The President, Vice-President and Treasurer will have signing authority for cheques drawn from this account, and two signatures will be required for a cheque to be valid.

The Executive Committee is also responsible to ensure that all proper permissions are obtained for any pieces of music performed. In addition, all appropriate licensing/performance/recording fees will be paid. The choir pledges that it will not knowingly circumvent the regulations in place that ensure composers, arrangers, and publishers are paid accordingly for the use of their intellectual property.

While it is expected the officers of the Executive Committee will work together and share many of the aforementioned responsibilities, each position also has specific responsibilities. Detailed Job Descriptions for each position are maintained by the Executive Committee, and are available upon request. However, the following provides a brief outline of the responsibilities and authorities of each position:

**President** – Primary liaison between Members of the Choir and Musical Director; primary liaison between the public and the Musical Director, Executive Committee, and Members; Chairing Executive Committee Meetings and Annual General Meetings; overseeing all sub-committees; signing authority on Atlantic Voices' bank account; signing authority on contract with the Musical Director and Paid Accompanists.

**Vice-President** – Secondary liaison between Members of the Choir and Musical Director; secondary liaison between the public and the Musical Director, Executive Committee, and Members; signing authority on Atlantic Voices' bank account; signing authority on contract with the Musical Director and Paid Accompanists; fulfilling the duties of the President during his or her absence.

**Treasurer** – Collecting membership fees and issuing receipts to members; collecting money received through fundraising events, ticket distribution and sales, sponsorships, etc., and depositing this money into Atlantic Voices' bank account; preparation of financial statements as needed; paying the bills of the Choir in a timely manner; signing authority on Atlantic Voices' bank account. Ensuring that appropriate licensing, performance and recording fees are paid. Maintaining the choir's inventory of tartan scarves, tartan ties, pencil holders, or any other saleable merchandise, with the exception of CDs.

**Secretary** – Writing up Executive Committee and Annual General meeting RODs in a timely manner and maintaining a file for these documents; maintaining an archive of documents and other materials relevant to the Choir. Maintaining an attendance book to be signed by each member every rehearsal, and reporting to the Executive Committee if there are any attendance issues. Maintaining the choir's inventory of CDs, and reporting semi-annually to the Executive Committee on the inventory levels.

**Music Librarian** – Organizing and issuing music to members; collecting music from members at the end of each concert season and from members who choose to leave Atlantic Voices; return of music rented or borrowed from other choirs or organizations; storage of music not being used during the current season.

**Event Co-ordinator** – Co-ordinating all appearances of the choir, apart from the two main concerts; working with the rest of the Executive Committee, planning and executing other activities during the season, such as yard sale, BBQ, Christmas and year-end gathering, etc.

**Fundraising Co-ordinator** – Organizing, promoting and tracking all fundraising activities of the choir including, but not limited to, sponsorships, program advertising and donations; actively seeking out and investigating funding opportunities for the choir; working closely with the Choir Treasurer to ensure all funds are properly tracked, reported and submitted; working closely with the Silent Auction Organizer to ensure all funds are properly tracked, reported and submitted, and that all opportunities for donations to the Silent Auction are thoroughly investigated.

**Publicity Co-ordinator** – Arranging for advertising for the two main annual concerts using free services where available; actively seeking out new opportunities for publicity and spreading the word in the National Capital Region.

**Section Representatives** – Primary liaison between section members and the Executive Committee; ensuring that the section members have appropriate copies of sheet music for rehearsals and concerts; primary contact for section members in communicating cancelled rehearsals, etc; represent section members at Executive Committee meetings; arranging two to three sectional rehearsals per session; reporting any attendance issues within the section to the Executive Committee.

## **VI. Meetings**

Members of Atlantic Voices will meet weekly from September to May for rehearsals. Membership fees will be collected at rehearsals by the Treasurer, and may be paid in full at the start of each concert season (in September) or may be divided and paid in two installments (in September and January). A receipt will be issued by the Treasurer to each member. Members may occasionally bring interested guests to rehearsals to observe or to sing. Guests who attend more than three rehearsals per year will be asked to pay membership fees.

The Executive Committee will meet monthly to organize the affairs of Atlantic Voices. The Musical Director may attend any or all of the Executive Committee meetings, but is not required to do so. Interested Members may occasionally attend Executive Committee meetings as guests to offer advice or opinions. Members who attend more than three Executive Committee meetings per year may be asked to join the Executive Committee as Section Representatives if any positions are open.

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at the end of each concert season (in May or June). All Members of Atlantic Voices are requested, and all Officers of the Executive Committee are required, to attend the AGM. The purpose of the AGM will be: to review the previous Concert Season; to initiate plans for the next Concert Season; to provide a forum for all Members to discuss problems or to offer suggestions regarding the organization and goals of Atlantic Voices; and to elect the Executive Committee for the next Concert Season. Quorum is required for any decisions to go to vote during the AGM (e.g., Executive Committee elections) and is defined as 50% of the attending Members.

## **VII. Performances**

The rehearsals and performances of the Concert Season are detailed below:

- a. The Concert Season is defined as the period between Labour Day and early June.
- b. Regular Rehearsals – Rehearsals for Atlantic Voices take place on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm. Atlantic Voices starts its rehearsals on the first Tuesday after Labour Day and finishes its rehearsals around the middle of December, depending on the date of Christmas Day. The choir resumes rehearsals on the first or second Tuesday after the New Year, depending on the date of the New Year, and concludes rehearsals in mid-May or early June, depending on the events and schedule for that year. At his/her discretion, the Musical Director may schedule additional Sectional Rehearsals for any or all sections of the Choir, and is expected to make reasonable accommodations for extra sectional rehearsals upon request from any section of the choir.
- c. Regular Concerts - Atlantic Voices will perform two yearly concerts, generally in mid-January and mid-May. Both concerts will be preceded by dress rehearsals, usually the day or the

- morning before the concert. The time, date, and location of Regular Concerts will be determined by the Executive Committee in co-operation with the Musical Director.
- d. Community Outreach Concerts – Atlantic Voices may schedule occasional Community Outreach Concerts free of charge (e.g., singing at seniors' residences, hospitals, charity drives, etc.) during the Concert Season. These additional performances will vary from year to year and will be scheduled as far in advance as possible. The time, date, and location of the Community Concerts will be determined by the Executive Committee in co-operation with the Musical Director.
  - e. Public Performances – Atlantic Voices may schedule additional performances during the Concert Season, such as, but not limited to, participation in festivals or at the request of other community groups. Public Performances are distinguished from Community Outreach Concerts in that a fee may be collected by the Choir for these performances. These additional performances will vary from year to year and will be scheduled as far in advance as possible. The time, date, and location of the Public Performances will be determined by the Executive Committee in co-operation with the Musical Director.
  - f. Out-of-Town Performances – Atlantic Voices may occasionally participate in Out-of-Town Performances, which will vary from year to year and will be scheduled as far in advance as possible. The time, date, and location of the Out-of-Town Performances will be determined by the Executive Committee in co-operation with the Musical Director.
  - g. Other Performances – Atlantic Voices may occasionally schedule Other Performances such as, but not limited to, recording sessions. Other Performances are distinguished from typical performances in that no audience will be present. Other Performances will vary from year to year and will be scheduled as far in advance as possible. The time, date, and location of the Other Performances will be determined by the Executive Committee in co-operation with the Musical Director.

## **VIII. Choir Assets**

Music purchased by Atlantic Voices becomes the property of the Choir. This music will be distributed to the Members for use during the concert season and must be returned to the Music Librarian at the end of the season. Music that is not being used during the current season may be lent or rented to other choirs.

CDs of Atlantic Voices concerts are the property of the Choir, and will be sold to raise funds. Other items designated for fundraising (including, but not limited to: items bearing the designation "Atlantic Voices" such as t-shirts, cookbooks, etc.) are the property of the Choir until sold as part of the fundraising effort.

Tartan scarves and ties issued to Singing Members as part of their Concert Dress are the property of Atlantic Voices. Members are asked to pay a \$10 refundable deposit for use of a tartan scarf or tie.

## **IX. Concert Dress**

Concert Dress will be determined by the Executive Committee.