

WELCOME TO HEAVEN BENT GOSPEL CHOIR

Mission Statement

The mission of Heaven Bent Choir Incorporated is to sing, perform and enjoy spiritual, African and African-American gospel music.

Choir structure

Heaven Bent is an incorporated society governed by a Constitution (2008) which is available in the Members Section of our website www.heavenbent.org.nz

We are a non-profit organisation and have registration as a charity which allows us to apply for funding grants to cover e.g. our rent, or extra budget for specific creative projects. We are also a member of the New Zealand Choral Federation where our annual fee covers song copyright. The Federation also lists workshops, musical events, directorships, etc. on its website

<http://www.nzcf.org.nz/>

Day-to-day running of the choir is handled by the Co-ordinating Committee in consultation with the Musical Director who is appointed by the choir at the AGM (held mid-year). The committee consists of five voting members: the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, plus representatives from the Membership, Music and Performance (Gig) groups. This provides a regular forum for the groups to be kept up-to-date with each other's activities and decisions. The Co-ordinating Committee is also responsible for communicating with the choir, and resolving any issues that may arise. The Musical Director attends Co-ordinating Committee meetings but does not have a vote. All choir members have the right to attend group and committee meetings and contribute to debate, but only elected financial group or committee members may vote. The Co-ordinating Committee and the groups may ask non-elected members of the choir to help with specific tasks, but this does not affect the voting structure.

Basic membership criteria

- A love of spiritual and African-American gospel music
- Ability to sing in tune, to carry a harmony and have a voice range compatible with one of the existing sections of the choir
- A commitment to attending weekly practices, arriving promptly
- A commitment to learning new music as well as possible - many parts are posted on the Members Section of the HB website: www.heavenbent.org.nz
- Payment of choir fees promptly
- A commitment to public performances

- A commitment to participating in the management of the choir, including attending the AGM and other meetings called by the choir
- A willingness to follow the artistic direction of the Musical Director (MD)
- A commitment to maintaining a good working atmosphere at rehearsals, showing respect for the Musical Director, having regard for the wellbeing of your section's members, and to the choir as a whole.

New members

Once a prospective member has been auditioned and membership has been confirmed, payment of fees will be due from the date of confirmation. Section leaders will ensure that new members have access to the members' section of the choir's website which contains practice tracks and recordings of past performances. There is also a list of current members with their contact emails and phone numbers which can be downloaded for your information. As mentioned above, the website also contains the Constitution (2008) which sets out the rules governing the choir. Choir members are expected to familiarise themselves with the general rules and to abide by them. This information sheet contains the most important ones translated into slightly more user-friendly language.

Rehearsal protocols

Rehearsals are a time for learning. While we like to enjoy ourselves, members are expected to be respectful of the Musical Director (MD) and other choir members during rehearsals by not chatting amongst themselves or interrupting the MD or the other sections. Any questions related to singing should be raised at an appropriate time. If you wish to make suggestions about repertoire, musical style, gigs or anything else, please talk to your section leader or the MD - preferably not in the middle of a rehearsal.

Matters affecting the whole choir are discussed during our tea break time (8.30pm). Please let the MD or your section leader know prior to the break time if there is anything you would like to bring to the choir's attention. If you are unable to attend a practice or are going to be late (n.b. rehearsals start on time at 7.30pm), please advise your section leader by text or email as soon as possible. It is not necessary to email the entire choir.

We sometimes schedule extra rehearsal time prior to a performance, and on performance days expect choir members to be in time for sound checks, etc.

Solos or small group parts

There are opportunities from time to time to be a soloist - or part of a small group performance. These parts are usually auditioned and the final decision rests with the MD in consultation with the Music Group (MG = leaders of each section). Individuals within the choir may wish to form a small group and perform a particular song/s independently. The MD and the MG will decide whether these are suitable for inclusion in the choir's repertoire or for a particular performance.

Fees

Fees are set at a level estimated to produce a slight surplus on budget. They are ratified at the Annual General Meeting. Current fees are \$300 (\$260 unwaged) per two-term year (1 April -30 September // 1 October - 31 March). Members will receive an invoice of \$150 (\$130) at the end of each term. In the case of genuine hardship, the Treasurer may negotiate a payment regime with individual members. No concession is available on the \$ amount of fees. Any choir member who has not paid their fees within six weeks of a term starting and has not negotiated a payment regime will be deemed to be in default. s/he will be asked to discuss the situation with the Treasurer in conjunction with the Membership Group, which has the power to suspend the member until the fees are paid.

If a choir member is absent for four or more consecutive weeks of a term and gives reasonable notice, s/he may ask for the fees to be waived for those weeks. In all other circumstances, full fees are expected to be paid for each term as long the person remains a member. If a member has already paid for a term and fees are waived as above, a credit will be put towards the fees for the next term. A member leaving the choir permanently may apply to the Treasurer for a refund of fees paid in advance. The MD receives a modest weekly payment set at the AGM and receives a proportion of any profits earned by the choir through paid gigs.

Current office holders (elected):

Chairperson: Priscilla Collins

Secretary/Membership Committee Convener: Diane Wilson

Treasurer: Mike Wilson

Music Group Representative: Nancy Synnestvedt

Performance/Gig Group Representative: Chrissie Cullen

Website Co-ordinator: Lindsay Gregory

Other important roles:

Music librarian: Shona Fisher

Tea person: Paul Freeman

Sound setup for rehearsals: Lindsay Gregory, Megan Williams (and assorted blokes usually)

Sound/lighting setup for performances: Lindsay Gregory

Marketing: John Wishart

CD Library: Nancy Wilcox

Attendance: Kara Wishart

Section Leaders:

Soprano: Sophie Gibbs

Alto: Nancy Synnestvedt

Tenor: John Wishart

Bass: John Graves

Section Leaders are elected by the singers in their section. Their function includes:

- To represent their section on the Music Group
- To be the point of contact for and monitor attendance at practices and performances
- To learn new songs
- To teach the section new song
- To support and develop singers in their section
- To make new members feel welcome, support them in new learning, ensure they have sheet music and website access to practice tracks
- To lead the choir in practices and performances during the temporary absence of the Musical Director.

Attendance

Heaven Bent is a performing choir so we do ask for a serious commitment to regular and attendance at practices and to our gigs. Apologies must be made to your section leader if you are going to be absent from a rehearsal or for a period of time. If attendance prior to a performance is inconsistent, a member may be asked not to perform.

Leave

If necessary, leave of absence from the choir for personal or professional commitments may be arranged in consultation with the Musical Director.

Short leave: Members who take up to three months' leave from the choir will not be replaced in their absence and may rejoin the choir on their return. If there are two or more members from any section of the choir on short leave, new member/s from the approved waiting list may be included at the discretion of the Musical Director in consultation with the section.

Long leave: Members who have taken leave from the choir for more than three months and less than one year and one day may be replaced in their absence. When they apply for readmission to the choir, they will not be required to audition, but they may have to wait until a place is free. However, they will be given priority over new applicants, even those who have auditioned successfully and are waiting for a place to become free.

Further information about the choir is available on our website www.heavenbent.org.nz