

NARRATIVE-HOLLAND CHORALE

MCACA PROGRAM FOR OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

The Holland Chorale, a 70-member auditioned community chorus, is requesting a \$25,000 grant to support its concerts and events in the 2021-2022 grant cycle. <http://www.hollandchorale.org>

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND MANAGEMENT

The Holland Chorale is a community-based musical organization, and as such our [mission](#) is to enrich our community with outstanding concerts of fine choral music. We continue to pursue our mission through a tripartite emphasis on **artistry, community and engagement**, an outgrowth of our [strategic plan](#). We pursue **artistry** by constantly improving the Holland Chorale's vocal skills and technique, by honing our rehearsal process, and by programming music that is challenging both textually and musically. We serve our **community** by providing high-quality choral experiences either free or at reasonable prices, and by creating educational experiences designed to encourage lifelong music making. We **engage** with other artists and organizations that enhance the cultural life of the region.

The singers of the Holland Chorale are a tight-knit group of both professional and amateur musicians, bound by a volunteer-driven passion for the choral art and the conviction that artistic skills build well-rounded people and healthy communities. Our singers, staff and board members are invested as volunteers and contributors in area non-profits and faith communities, creating meaningful connections with our supporters and audience. High school and college singers participate free by virtue of the [Chorale's Choral Scholars program](#).

[The Board of Directors](#) comprises twelve members steeped in the arts and non-profit sectors and committed to the advancement of the Chorale. These include two collegiate music faculty, a Certified Public Accountant, an attorney, several business owners, high school instrumental teacher, and community arts patrons. All board members chair or supervise an element of the Chorale's activities, which include Strategic Planning, Artistic Committee, Ticketing, Development (grants, donors, sponsorships), Marketing, Communications, and Special Events.

[Our artistic staff](#) includes Dr. Patrick Coyle (Artistic Director), Kristin Goodyke (Principal Accompanist) and Nicholas Loren (Vocal Consultant). Staff includes Jennifer Brunk (Development Advisor), Betty McLarty (Operations Manager), and volunteer and concert support (Stage and Rehearsal Managers, Uniform and Volunteer Coordinators).

Dr. Patrick Coyle is a respected conductor in West Michigan and beyond. With degrees from Furman University, Converse College, Emory University and Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He is respected for his creative musical collaborations and is well known in the region for his body of work with Holland Chorale, Opera Grand Rapids, and for building one of the largest church music programs at First (Park) Congregational Church of Grand Rapids. Dr. Coyle understands our community and our audience and is masterful at programming to reach a broad range of patrons.

Vocal Consultant Nicholas Loren is renowned for his international opera career, and in retirement as the foremost vocal coach and instructor in West Michigan. His studio comprises over 100 singers, including many Holland Chorale members and professional singers who travel from New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Boston. He advises Holland-area high school vocal music educators, and he offers a free lesson to every new Chorale member.

Operations Manager Betty McLarty has been highly successful in her organizational and administrative roles with Holland Chorale, including executing contracts for streaming and recorded music for our virtual performances of the last year. In her retirement from vocal and instrumental music education, she maintains valuable contact with other organizations as a volunteer for the Holland Symphony and a seasonal employee of the Tulip Time Festival.

Principal Accompanist Kristin Goodyke is a graduate of Hope College with a degree in Vocal Music Education and Organ. She also serves as Director of West Michigan Children's Choir, Operations Coordinator at Second Reformed Church of Zeeland, and Rehearsal Accompanist at Holland Christian High School.

Our Development Advisor Jennifer Brunk has over fifteen years of experience in nonprofit management including having been an executive director and development director for other nonprofit organizations.

The Holland Chorale operates within [a yearly budget](#), with a performance and education-focused allotment of funds. Our fiscal year runs July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, and the budget is approved at the June board meeting. Board Treasurer, Julie Anderson, is a respected CPA working for a local firm. She provides the first layer of fiscal oversight, tracking cash position and expenditures, using standard accounting measures and practices. She regularly updates the Board President, and provides Cash Flow, Expenditure and Revenue Reports to the Board of Directors on a monthly basis. Artistic staff are accountable for expenditures within budget. Executive Committee approval is required for expenditures that extend beyond budgeted amounts. Although an audit is not required for a nonprofit organization our size, we do have an independent CPA review our 990 report and supporting documentation.

The Holland Chorale maintains contact with the community through [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages and our website. Our new weekly [Music Monday](#) videos have been popular with our supporters and audience members. We publicize upcoming performances on [HollandChorale.org](#), [YouTube](#) and FaceBook. Broadcast and print coverage comes from strong relationships with the local newspapers, radio and television media, including the Holland Sentinel, Grand Rapids Press, MLive, WHTC and Blue Lake Radio. Our Artistic Director appears regularly on WGVU (with host Shelley Irwin) to promote performances he is leading around West Michigan. Printed promotional materials generally include a [season announcement](#), concert-specific direct mail, [hand-out cards](#), [posters](#), and [printed programs](#) during regular seasons. Patrons can also find program notes and translations using a QR code in their programs. We maintain frequent contact through email blasts.

QUALITY OF ARTISTIC/CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

The Holland Chorale has several layers of assessment, ensuring that our performances and educational offerings are of the quality we expect. First and foremost is the standard set by the Artistic Director, who is trained by some of the foremost conductors in the United States. Dr. Coyle and Mr. Loren jointly audition the singers for healthy technique, sight-reading skill and the ability to respond to vocal instruction. Rehearsal planning is highly detailed, with time reserved for vocal technique, ensemble development, and concert preparation. Our quality of singing is developed during group and individual rehearsal through open, free and resonant tone; proper technique including posture, vowel and breathing production; and blended intonation with attention to phrasing, precise diction and rhythm, and uniform vowels.

The Artistic Committee, consisting of singers and other invested musicians, provide a sounding board for the Artistic Director in his choice of repertoire for concerts and longer-range planning for upcoming seasons. They program music that is of inherently high musical quality and culturally relevant. (Examples of programed music in the following section.) For a successful and excellent performance, the singers and audience alike must have a rewarding experience. The goal for the Chorale's performance is that the singers and audience take an emotional, aesthetic and intellectual journey; as Dr. Coyle often says, "they should have TLC – tears, laughter, chill bumps – in the span of a Chorale concert."

We regularly seek feedback from our audience by comments from our website and social media pages, plus verbal reactions to concerts and repertoire choices. As a result, the artistic director changed programming during the pandemic season to meet the growing musical and emotional needs of both singers and audience. As quoted in our area news publication *The Holland Sentinel*, Dr. Coyle said, “We realized very early on the singers needed a game plan to survive the pandemic. We were faced with trying to resolve three things,” Coyle said. “One was maintaining a musical connection with our audience and the community in general. The second was the connections between the singers themselves, because the Chorale, like most community groups, is a community in itself. And then the third was the viability of the Chorale. In other words, when this is all over, how do we ensure that the Chorale still exists?” We know we are successful when the Chorale is invited to perform for audiences outside our region, including for the American Choral Directors Association, Music Educators National Conference and Carnegie Hall.

The Holland Chorale is proud to present the best of [standard choral répertoire](#) often in collaboration with other musical organizations (Holland Symphony, West Michigan Flute Association, Opera Grand Rapids, Hope College and others). We also perform newly composed and socially relevant music, including [Inauguration](#) (John F. Kennedy/Ethan Wickman), [Even When He Is Silent](#) (Kim Andre Arnesen), and [Lux: The Dawn from on High, V - Creator of the Stars of Night](#) (Dan Forrest).

In the pandemic year, the Chorale postponed a joint performance with [Chanticleer](#), a professional vocal ensemble that rarely agrees to share the stage. Two members of Chanticleer are West Michigan natives. Also postponed was a 60th anniversary concert featuring alumni of the Chorale and all five of our previous and current artistic directors: Calvin Langejans, Gary Bogle, [Dr. Ryan Kelly](#), [Dr. Meredith Bowen](#), and Dr. Patrick Coyle. And finally, the Chorale was planning its first area-wide choral festival, directed by [Dr. Anton Armstrong](#) of St. Olaf College in Minnesota. These events (in whole or part) will be rescheduled when circumstances allow.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Per our strategic plan, **engagement** is one of our three priorities, along with **artistry** and **community**. Inherently, our art connects us to our audience by virtue of programming and performance. The music we choose for concerts and community service events is purposeful for our audience. During the pandemic season we performed music that was inspiring (Elizabeth Alexander’s [When the Song of the Angels is Stilled](#)), joyful (Cole Porter’s [You’d Be So Nice to Come Home To](#)), hopeful (Uzee Brown, Jr.’s setting of the spiritual [Hold On](#)) and healing ([One Voice: I Will Not Be Silent](#) from *Sing for the Cure*). We recognize the power of choral music to address cultural issues, and we program to that as well. For example, in the coming season we will perform James Deignan’s *Fueron Ángeles*, a recent composition composed with empathy for those impacted by the United States’ family separation policy.

The Holland Chorale has survived and thrived through the pandemic by pivoting from live performances to virtual and small ensemble performances. We also promoted our online presence through the creation of a new series, **Music Mondays**, which features [spotlights](#), [interviews](#), video revues, and solo or small group performances from chorale members in the form of videos shared with the community every week. The Holland Chorale has had a larger audience and created more music than in a typical season due in part to this increased online connection. In a time when many arts organizations are shuttered, our sponsors and donors have been eager to support the Chorale’s creative approach during the pandemic.

Our artists are primarily our artistic staff and volunteer singers. We are in weekly rehearsals with our singers, a number of whom participate in our Artistic Advisory Committee, informing Dr. Coyle's season and concert programming. Local music teachers help guide the educational offerings, both in planning and evaluation. During this past season we put our focus on the artistry of our singers. Through the process of rehearsing on Zoom video conferencing, later singing masked in small groups, and creating video performances, we brought music to the homes of our audience. Staff and volunteers alike became video recording and editing experts, all while learning to sing spaced apart and forced to "hold their own," not depending on neighboring singers. In the pandemic year, our guest musical collaborators have included a trumpet duo, harp-flute duet, the Chancel Choir of Park Church of Grand Rapids, the handbell choir of First Reformed Church of Holland, an area organist, and a keyboard/organ duet.

While public performance has been restricted, Holland Chorale committed to performing both virtually and safely in person. We have performed three full-length virtual concerts during our Live-ish from the Lakeshore season ([fall](#), [holiday](#) and [spring](#)), offering these free of charge to the community. A highlight of the season was when members of the Chorale formed small ensembles to perform small [Curbside Cabaret](#) concerts. These events were scheduled both as [walk-up audiences](#) in downtown Holland, and socially distanced outside gatherings for families and neighborhoods at [private homes](#), each giving our community live choral music during a time when other music options were limited. Our online Music Mondays provide easily accessible and free musical performances by the Chorale, [solo or duet singers](#) and local instrumentalists, along with occasional interviews and promotional pieces about Chorale personnel, all targeting a wide range of listeners while providing a variety of music.

The Holland Chorale is dedicated to [program accessibility](#) by providing boundary-free access to both performers and audience. Our rehearsal space has an elevator and ramps allowing those with mobility issues to participate. We accommodate older singers by providing either barstools or chairs (their choice) for rehearsals and performances when standing is a challenge. Our performance venues include audio induction loop for those with hearing aids, and we provide texts and translations in either our concert program or via QR code.

The Holland Chorale offers [Adventures in Harmony](#), an educational experience for high school singers. It is produced annually and alternates between soprano/altos and tenor/basses. This event - with six successful editions so far - connects the Holland Chorale to area high school music students and educators. Several students who participated in Adventures in Harmony have become singers in Chorale, and some have gone on to successful college studies in music. About 200 students and their teachers participate in this all-day clinic event run by a renowned music educator and assisted by members of the Holland Chorale. This year's Adventures in Harmony workshop (October 4, 2021) will be led by [Dr. Kimberly Dunn Adams](#) of Western Michigan University. Treble singers from six area high schools will join for a day-long teaching session with Dr. Adams, followed by a free concert in the evening under her direction. Adult Holland Chorale members sing alongside the students, cultivating lifelong singing and modeling good technique. Holland Chorale funds the cost of the conductor, the venue and the sheet music, which the schools keep for their music library. After the day-long multi-generational singing experience, the entire ensemble presents a free community concert. Adventures in Harmony brings together students who are diverse ethnically and socioeconomically. Therefore, the performance brings our art to an ethnically diverse audience, many whom rarely attend such cultural events.