

# Constitution of



## **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, educational forums, and other events 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. Members are asked to sign in during each rehearsal they attend. 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 regular rehearsals of the session, and a minimum of 4 out of the last 5 rehearsals (including the dress rehearsal) leading up to each concert. Exceptions to this policy may be made by the Music Director based on individual ability/readiness.

Any member who does not sing with the choir for one or more sessions is welcome to re-join the choir. However, if there is a waiting list, former members who have sat out more than one consecutive session will be placed at the end of the waiting list until an opening is available for them to rejoin. If the member has only sat out for one session, they will be placed at the top of the waiting list. If a member has paid their fee for a session but a change in their personal circumstances results in them not being able to sing in the concert, they will be held **not** have missed that session for purposes of assessing their priority ranking to rejoin the choir.

There are five regular 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 3 of the 5 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: Operations, 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: Operations, 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 session and should be presented to the Choir at the first rehearsal of each session. The Musical Director is also expected to arrange for production of recorded files (e.g. tape, CD, mp3, MIDI) of each part of the music selected to help choir members to learn their specific parts and review the demo of the concert CD before final production.

#### **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: Operations, Vice-President: Media, 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: Operations filling in if the President is absent, or with the Vice-President: Media filling in if both the President and Vice-President: Operations are absent. Quorum for Executive Committee Meetings and virtual online voting decisions is 3 of the 5 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-Presidents 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 3 of the 5 Voting Officers present vote in favour 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-Presidents, in the absence of the President).

The positions of President, Vice-President: Operations, Vice-President: Media, Treasurer, and Secretary will be filled by election at the Annual General Meeting by the Members of the Choir. In the case of Officers who are part way through their elected term, they will be confirmed at the AGM. 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 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 or risers 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.

The Executive Committee is also responsible to ensure that all proper permissions are obtained for any pieces of music performed and that all appropriate licensing/performance/recording fees are 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.

Atlantic Voices will maintain a non-personal bank account in its name. The President and Treasurer will have signing authority for cheques drawn from this account. Additionally, one of the Vice-Presidents should have this same signing authority. Two signatures will be required for a cheque to be valid.

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: Operations** – Secondary liaison between Members of the Choir and Musical Director; secondary liaison between the public and the Musical Director, Executive Committee, and Members; alternative 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. Maintaining an attendance book to be signed by each member at every rehearsal and reporting to the Executive Committee if there are any attendance issues. Assisting the Librarians in producing and maintaining an email list of all current members

**Vice-President: Media** - Secondary liaison between the public and the Musical Director, Executive Committee and Members; alternative signing authority on Atlantic Voices’ bank account; prepares concert programs and concert day signage, and CD inserts; prepares surveys and collation of results; prepares necessary documents of appreciation; fulfills the duties of the Vice-President: Operations during his or her absence.

**Treasurer** – Collecting membership fees and issuing receipts to members if requested; 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** – Drafting/Preparing Executive Committee and Annual General Meeting Records of Decisions in a timely manner and maintaining a file for these documents, according to a

protocol established by the Executive Committee to ensure document maintenance and history. Responsible for producing name tags for new members and maintaining an email list, in consultation with the Librarians, of all current members.

**Music Librarian** – Organizing and issuing music to members; collecting music from members at the end of each concert session 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. Maintaining a list of current members and a waiting list of those interested in joining the choir and communicating with members/aspiring members as required to perform these duties.

**Event Coordinator** – 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 concerts and sing-outs etc.

**Fundraising Coordinator** – 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 Coordinator** – Coordinating the advertising campaigns 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. Section Representatives will also conduct a poll of returning members within their section one month before the end of each session and report the results to the librarian(s).

**Web Master** – Responsible for upkeep of the Atlantic Voices web site including updating information as directed by the Executive Committee.

## **VI. Meetings**

Members of Atlantic Voices will generally 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 instalments (in September and January). Membership fees must be paid by the end of September for the Winter session and by the end of February for the Spring session. A receipt will be issued by the Treasurer upon request from a member. Members may occasionally bring interested guests to rehearsals to observe or to sing. Guests who attend more than three rehearsals per year may be asked to pay membership fees.

The Executive Committee will meet monthly or as agreed upon 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.

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at the end of each concert season (typically 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/confirm 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. A concert session is defined as the period between Labour Day and the end of the first annual concert (session one) or, the period between the start of rehearsals for the second annual concert and, the AGM (session two).
- c. Regular Rehearsals – Rehearsals for Atlantic Voices generally 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 breaks for Christmas 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.
- d. It is expected that each section will organize and participate in at least two sectional rehearsals per session. These will be coordinated by the section representatives.



- e. Regular Concerts - Atlantic Voices performs two annual concerts, generally at the end of January and 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 and their dress rehearsals will be determined by the Executive Committee in co-operation with the Musical Director.
- f. 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.
- g. Other 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.
- h. 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.
- i. 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 session and must be returned to the Music Librarian at the end of the session. Music that is not being used during the current season may be loaned or rented to other choirs.

Risers are the property of the choir and can be rented to other choirs by completing the Riser Rental Agreement.

CDs of Atlantic Voices concerts are the property of the Choir until they are 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. Members can opt to keep the scarf or tie but will forfeit the deposit.

#### **IX. Concert Dress**

Dress for concert performances is a long-sleeved white shirt with a collar, black bottoms, and black shoes. Women may choose to wear a long black skirt with opaque black stockings. Men will wear a tartan tie, and women will wear a tartan scarf of their choice (Newfoundland, Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, or Cape Breton). During hot weather permission may be given for wearing sandals and short sleeves. Dress for other events will be determined by the Executive Committee.