

# **General Audition Information for the Boys Choir and the Girls Choir**

## *Trinity Episcopal Church on the Green, New Haven*

### **Are the Boys and Girls Choirs actually one group, or two?**

The Trinity Boys and Girls Choirs rehearse and sing as distinct groups. The Trinity Choir of Men and Boys was founded in 1885 and has sung continuously at services at Trinity and in the wider community – it is the seventh oldest choir of Men and Boys of its kind in the nation. The Trinity Men and Girls Choir sang its first year of services and other appearances during the 2003-2004 season. Each choir sings most Sundays of the academic year at one of the morning services or, occasionally, at 5 pm Evensongs. The Choir season ends in June, unless a major trip is planned at the end of the season, and resumes with Choir Camp in August.

On Sundays, and at other choir appearances, the Boys Choir and the Girls Choir function as the soprano part of a full SATB (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) group. Having adults as role models singing alto, tenor and bass with them allows for a wider variety of music, and for a positive musical influence on the younger singers. This has been the case with the Men and Boys Choir since its beginning, and has proved to be an invaluable part of the experience.

Both the Boys and Girls choirs also function as groups that sing without the adult singers. This is often true if the choirs are “on the road” (at events outside of the Sunday morning or afternoon church services).

### **Who is eligible for an audition?**

Boys and girls do not have to be members of Trinity, nor of any particular faith, to audition for the choirs. We are looking for young people who have a natural voice and a musical “ear”, that is, those who can clearly sort differences in notes that they hear. Previous musical training or singing experience is NOT required for audition or membership.

We also look for families that will strongly support the membership of their child, by assuring the child’s regular attendance at choir rehearsals, services and concerts, and by being active members of the parents organization that supports the choir of which their child is a member.

We generally audition boys who will be entering grade 4 as of the Fall term (or grade 3 for those more mature for their age) and girls who will be entering grade 4 as of the Fall term. Exceptions are indeed made on a case-by-case basis, but priority is given to these age groups, and most auditions are done with children in those age groups.

### **What preparation is required for an audition?**

No prepared music is necessary for the audition, which consists of singing voice patterns, ear tests such as matching pitches given on the piano, and finding pitches in a given chord. No music reading is required, but often a short word reading sample is given to test reading ability, self assuredness and general word perception. Any previous musical experience is, of course, a plus, but not a prerequisite.

### **How are auditions arranged?**

Auditions are arranged when the parent or school music teacher contacts the Music Office to arrange an initial audition. The student's school music teacher may recommend that the parent make this call. Many members of the Trinity Boys Choir and Girls Choir have become involved after their school music teacher urged their parent(s) to have them audition – at the outset, many parents have expressed surprise that their child was known to the teacher as a singer.

School auditions are held only if the schoolteacher, school administration, and parents of children being heard are informed, in advance, that the Director of Music is coming to hear their child, and after they have given their permission. There are several advantages to a school audition, and we do ask for these when possible - the parents do not have to find a time to bring the singer to Trinity after school, and the Director of Music can actually hear more students in a single visit.

If the school audition process is not possible for some reason, then parents can call the Music Office to set up an appointment at Trinity. For auditions at Trinity, the parent(s) bring the singer to Trinity at a mutually agreeable time, and are most welcome to observe the actual audition and ask questions at that time. The Director of Music can also obtain (from schoolteachers or other interested parties) the name and email/number of the parents of potentially eligible boys and girls, and contact them to make an appointment for an audition at Trinity. Many parents of the Trinity Boys and Girls first hear of the choirs in this manner.

### **How is auditioning done?**

Auditioning is a two-part process. In the first or "screening" audition, the child sings a few simple note patterns or scales, and is asked to sing *Happy Birthday*, a song known to all! The whole process only takes a few minutes, with time for questions afterward. If the Director of Music feels that the child cannot be considered for the second and final round of auditions (see below), he will be honest with the children and/or parents at that time, as there will only be a small number of boys and girls he can invite for the final round of auditions. Every effort is made to communicate this clearly with each child, to prevent undue disappointment or misunderstanding.

### **What happens if the singer is invited back for a second audition?**

A second and final round of auditions is held sometime later in the season, at a time set by the Director of Music. Singers that have shown the most promise in the first, screening audition are invited back for this second audition (there are generally about 15 boys and girls each invited back for anywhere from 4-10 spots in each choir). At these auditions, the singers are heard in small groups, while the parents meet with veteran choirparents to hear a presentation on the choir, and to have a chance to ask questions. Shortly after this final round, invitations are issued to as many singers for whom there are spots open, and these parents and children are asked to decide (within a short but reasonable time period) whether or not they wish to accept membership in the choir, beginning with the August choir camp that precedes the next season. Should they need to decline the offer, then the next person(s) on the list are called.

Both choirs attend camp at the Incarnation Center in Ivoryton, CT, an American Camping Association accredited camp, supervised by both choir and camp staff. Each choir has its own week of camp, to build camaraderie within the group that will be singing together. Depending upon the date of Labor Day, the Girls Choir generally goes in the second or third full week of August, and the Boys Choir goes in the third or fourth full week of August. The Novices that are accepted into the choir go to camp for a portion of the week, generally from Wednesday noon through the Saturday family picnic that closes each camp.

### **What is the general schedule of the choirs?**

**The Boys Choir** rehearses on Wednesdays from 5:00-7:00 pm (with an hour overlap with their adults at 6:00 pm), and on Fridays from 4:30-7:30 pm (including dinner at the church on an average of three out of four Fridays).

**The Girls Choir** rehearses on Tuesdays from 5:00-7:00 pm and on Thursdays from 5:00-7:00 pm (with an hour overlap with their adult singers at 6:00 pm). The Girls have dinner together on one or two Tuesdays each month,

The parents work in rotating teams of three to provide these dinners, which offer an invaluable social time for the singers, and for the parents preparing the meals. There are occasional potluck dinners for all family members, as well, to facilitate both communication and community.

### **As a parent or teacher, how do I arrange an audition for my child/student?**

Please email the Director of Music, Walden Moore, in the Trinity Music Office ([music@trinitynewhaven.org](mailto:music@trinitynewhaven.org)) or call (203) 776-2616 (local to the entire New Haven area). Email is the preferred method of communication, as it gives us a written record of information exchanged. If you schedule an audition at Trinity, you will find directions to the church at the end of this information.

Please let us know if we can help you in other ways. You will find further information on our church website - [www.trinitynewhaven.org](http://www.trinitynewhaven.org), including our choir information videos, *A Tradition for All Time*. You can access the information on each choir on its webpage. We're excited about this new way of showing you more about our choirs!

R. Walden Moore  
Director of Music  
Trinity Church, New Haven

mailing address:  
129 Church Street - Suite 705  
New Haven, CT 06510  
email <[music@trinitynewhaven.org](mailto:music@trinitynewhaven.org)>  
(203) 776-2616 (voice, 24 hours)  
(203) 777-9499 (fax)

## **DIRECTIONS TO TRINITY CHURCH ON THE GREEN - NEW HAVEN**

**for use by choir auditionees and their families**

**FROM I-91 SOUTH (coming from Hartford), take Exit 3 (Trumbull Street). \* At the end of the ramp, go straight to your third traffic light (including the one at the end of the ramp). Turn left onto Temple Street. Continue straight on Temple Street through two traffic lights (corner of Temple & Elm Streets), at which point you will see the New Haven Green with three churches on your right. Drive down Temple Street past the two brick-and-white churches; Trinity Church is the dark brown stone church, the last church on your right, just before the corner of Temple and Chapel Streets.**

**FROM I-95 NORTH (coming from New York), at New Haven follow the signs to I-91 North (Hartford) and get off at Exit 3 (Trumbull Street). Continue from \* above.**

**Parking is generally available on the “apron” area directly in front of the church. Please enter the church via the center set of doors on Temple Street, unless there is a sign that indicates otherwise. When you are thru the first set of interior doors, turn right, right again, and go down the stairs to the area beneath the main church known as the “Undercroft”. The Director of Music will greet you there at the appointed time.**

**Should you need to call prior to your audition (in the days leading up to it, or even just before), please call the Music Office number (203) 776-2616.**