

*The NC Baptist Singers & Orchestra is a ministry of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) and comprised of church musicians from across North Carolina.*

## Guidelines for Membership



### Who is Eligible to Join?

1. A church staff member, church pianist, or church organist in a cooperating church of the BSCNC.
2. A denominational music leader, Baptist college music professor, Baptist seminary or divinity school professor, or the spouse of a NCBSO member.
3. Other members of a NC Baptist church with approval.

**If the prospective member is *not* the staff person responsible for the worship & music ministry, a recommendation from the Minister of Music/Worship Pastor (or other title) in the cooperating church where the candidate is a member is required. The recommendation format is a brief online questionnaire provided by the office of Worship & Music. Prospective members do need to submit an audition audio file.**

There are a few veteran members who are no longer in a BSCNC church but were formerly with one. These members are "grandfathered" into our group as long as their membership participation continues without a lapse of time. **However, all new members must be from a BSCNC church.**

After meeting the above requirements, all members are expected to ...

1. **Attend the fall retreat.** The fall retreat is when the Singers & Orchestra receive their music for the season and have an intensive time of rehearsal, as well as times of fellowship and getting to know each other, especially those in their section. If a member does not attend the fall retreat, they must have a valid reason. Reasons would include an illness in the member's family, death in the family or church family, church activities over which the member has no control, and other justifiable reasons which are dealt with on an individual basis.
2. **If a member cannot attend the retreat because of one of the above reasons, they are required to be at the first concert day rehearsal that starts mid-morning for orchestra, and after lunch for the choir, and stay through the concert that evening.** If neither of these events can be attended, then they would need to postpone their membership until the following season.
3. **New members may only join at the beginning of the season.**
4. **All members are required to pay \$40.00 annually as membership dues.** This money helps to cover the cost of new music and other expenses. These dues should be paid in advance of attending the retreat. Please understand, no member will be allowed to attend the retreat or to sing in any concert unless these dues are paid.
5. **All members are required to wear the prescribed concert attire during concerts.**
6. **Respond promptly to the participation survey.** Before each concert, an email is sent asking for information about attendance at the concert, lunch arrangements and cost (if applicable) for lunch and/or dinner. Response to this email could not take more than 2 minutes, at most. However, we have many members who either do not reply at all or wait until the Friday before the concert to reply. Our office Ministry Assistant turns in the number of participants on Tuesday before the concert. We cannot expect her to keep asking for your information or ask the church to purchase and prepare food for the meals any later in the week. From now on, there will be only one survey sent out and no more than one follow-up reminder. Please fill out the survey when it comes. **If we do not have your reply by noon on Tuesday the week before the concert, we will assume that you will be absent and will not count you for meals or for seating.**

*Orchestra members' RSVP should come sooner for adequate planning by the orchestral director.*  
Please respect our office Ministry Assistant's deadlines and the preparation needs of our host. **Fill out the survey when it comes. No reply = no sing, no play, no food.**

7. **Concert days are on MONDAY. Each member is expected to attend at least 4 concerts during the season.** A list of concert dates and booked locations are on our web page at [www.ncbso.org](http://www.ncbso.org). Again, there are some valid excuses for being absent, and if necessary, decisions will be made on an individual basis.
8. **If any individual cannot meet the above requirements, they will need to step out of the group until the following season.** No refunds of membership fees will be issued.
9. Rehearsals take place on concert days, with the usual schedule being that the orchestra begins their rehearsals mid-morning, and the choir begins rehearsals after lunch. Because of our limited rehearsal time, **members are expected to work on their music between concerts** so that we are prepared to do more precise rehearsing on the day of our concert. Also, when asked, **members should come prepared to sing specified music from memory.**
10. **For a guest to sing or play with the group, permission is required from a choral or instrumental director in advance.** The guest must fill out the online RSVP and agree to wear concert attire that matches as closely as possible. A guest instrumentalist can play with the group for 2 times without joining. A guest singer may participate in no more than one concert without joining. *Exceptions may be made to instrumentalists needed to fill in vital parts of the orchestration for absent members.*

The final issue is a much more personal one. In addition to the other expectations such as conducting ourselves in a Christ-honoring manner, the ability to read music, and attending rehearsals and concerts, the Convention legal team has suggested that because of liability concerns for the BSCNC and the church which hosts the concert, we should set standards that protect all those involved. We have no control over the situations of the churches and auditoriums where we sing and play. Most were designed and built before the ADA was made law and are considered grandfathered unless some structural change is to be made. Because of that, **those wishing to participate should be able to stand, climb and descend steps and navigate uneven platforms as well as staging areas and choir lofts in the venues where we are invited to sing and play.** We will make provision for those who have problems standing for extended times but have good mobility as described above.

**The Baptist Singers leadership reserves the right to prohibit or limit participation by any individual whose participation creates a physical hazard for themselves or others.**

**Any appeals to allow variance in these rules for special circumstances will be taken to the section leaders and directors for a decision.**

It is also worthwhile to consider that as we age, our voices and breath support age with us. There are some 60-year-olds who have poor control of their vibrato and volume and some 70-year-olds who can sing as well as they did 20 years ago. Unlike the mobility issue, this is a matter for each member to consider on their own. The decision is not an easy one, but we all want to do what is best for our group as a whole. We ask that you pray about these issues and make decisions that are led by the Holy Spirit.

We are grateful for your understanding as we try to follow God's leading in our work with each of you individually and our full choir and orchestra. Our goal is to make the best possible choices in music and to offer nothing less than our best in worship to God and for His good in our concerts. May His grace and guidance help us each to make decisions that will be glorifying and pleasing to Him.