

# BABS Directors' College VI PROSPECTUS

Bablake School, Coventry, January 6 - 8, 2006



## Introduction

BABS Directors' College - the place to be for current, new and aspiring directors, with the prime objective to facilitate their musical and leadership development. Enhanced skill levels in these areas will help directors enthuse and motivate chorus singers and make them want to return to their club week in and week out.

As well as being an educational experience, the College is also a forum where directors can share aspirations, concerns and ideas with like-minded people, who are keen to improve music making in their choruses. If you have any aspirations to be a director, you need to be there. ALL are welcome.

## Rationale

The very essence of chorus directing is in the performance of a song; the unification of the individual voices, expressions and emotions of the chorus members into a clear and unambiguous communication with the audience.

We are all involved with our chorus in many ways, some as coaches, some as planners, some as recruiting officers etc. However, directors are **THE** most instrumental group of people in the life and well being of our choruses. They are probably involved in many aspects of a club's life. They need to develop leadership and management skills, have singing ability and possess a range of non-verbal communication skills. Combined, these skills should enable them to facilitate a musical performance from the singers to the audience, from rehearsal to performance.

We all possess these attributes in varying degrees. Directors College will endeavour to strengthen yours.

The primary aims of DCVI are to address the issues of Directing Techniques and Leadership & Management. Other skills for the director such as singing ability, musical literacy and presentation awareness are taught at Harmony College and other workshops. DC will focus on those skills that are not taught elsewhere.

## College Content

### Friday Evening

The College will start on Friday evening with a keynote speech from Steve Armstrong addressing aspects of Leadership & Management.

### Saturday Morning

The Leadership & Management theme will continue in sessions involving the entire delegate body. The morning will end with a session looking at the college song, its musical/performance issues and how they impact upon directing techniques.

### Saturday Afternoon

Students will split into two 'streams', Novice and Other (see page 2) and the two groups will pursue different classes for the afternoon.

#### 1. *Novices*

Novice directors will attend classes aimed at establishing good basic directing technique.

#### 2. *Others*

A number of classes will be available, from which delegates will choose three, to address particular skills that they feel might need some work.

### Saturday Evening

All students will come together, late in the afternoon, for a slightly modified repeat of last year's successful 'Coaching under glass' session. After dinner, everyone will have the opportunity, with their individual coaches, to prepare for their directing sessions on Sunday.

### Sunday

All students will get a chance to direct, with coaching back up and video recording. Novices will direct our guest quartet and the others will direct one of our guest choruses. There will be an underlying thread of on-going assessment through video analysis, review and evaluation undertaken by all delegates.

In parallel with the directing sessions, there will be other teaching sessions to address further aspects of being a director. All delegates will attend these.

## College Song

The college song, to be used for the directing techniques sessions on Saturday, will be 'Bright was the night' (arr. David Wright)

## Streaming

There will be no requirement, this year, to submit video tapes in advance of the college. Instead, students are asked to make a self-assessment of their own skill level.

This assessment is purely related to Directing Techniques. Please review the list of directing skills at the end of this prospectus (page 4) and assess whether your directing skills are beyond the Novice level. It goes without saying that you need to be honest with yourself!

## Classes

### Saturday

There will be six classes on offer for those who are not Novices and each will run three times. Every student, therefore, will pick three of them.

#### 3. *Review of basics*

Get a firmer grip on those things you should be able to do in your sleep. Have a look at the self-assessment guide, at the end of the prospectus, if you're not sure what these are.

#### 4. *Anacrusis, cueing, crescendo and decrescendo*

Beyond basics but not quite advanced. Some more things you really must be able to do with confidence.

#### 5. *Length, Contour, Flow and Weight of hand and arm*

Beyond patterns, understand how the size of your directing gestures, their speed, their shape and the strength you put into them affects the way the singer responds.

#### 6. *Left/Right hand function and Independence of the Non-Dominant hand.*

Don't let the other hand flap in the breeze or aimlessly mirror your main direction. Learn how to do something useful with it!

#### 7. *Freestyle/rubato directing*

Learn some of the things that will enable you to direct a ballad with more confidence and a rhythm song with more freedom.

#### 8. *An hour with Steve Armstrong*

Steve has a lot of experience at the top of the heap. Come along and see if some of it will rub off on you.

### Sunday

There will be four sessions running in parallel on Sunday and all delegates will attend all four.

#### 1. *Direct a chorus*

Every student will have about 15 minutes directing one of our supporting choruses (or quartet, for novices), being videoed, receiving coaching and having the opportunity to review the video with a coach. The last session on Saturday is your preparation for this exercise.

#### 2. *Analysis & Recommendation*

Listen to some performances of the same song by different performers. Hear the differences. Identify the problems. Come up with solutions.

#### 3. *An hour with Steve*

An opportunity to meet discuss your directing role with Steve Armstrong.

#### 4. *Teaching/Learning*

The ability to impart knowledge efficiently is a skill that all directors need. This session will focus on teaching skills and methods that will help you become a more effective teacher.

## Certification

In order to support the development of aspiring directors, DCVI is designed with the BABS Director Certification Programme in mind. The programme provides a structured certification process for all levels of Chorus Directing. Attendance at Directors College will be part of that programme. Those skills not addressed at the College will be detailed for delegates to work on at home, or at other BABS educational events.

It is envisaged that the Certification process will take place over several years and each Director's College will provide suitable classes, at all levels of ability, to enable individual directors to achieve higher and higher level of certification.

The administration of the Certification Program will be web based on the Directors website. To participate, you need to register but, even if you don't, there are lots of resources there to help you develop your skills.

## Visitors & Visiting Educators

### **Steve Armstrong**

Steve was our guest for DCIV and his experience as a BHS Music Judge, a Chorus Director, an arranger and a leader provided some inspirational food for thought. He believes Leadership and Management to be at the heart of choral directing and we are hoping that he will bring some of these skills with him (and leave them with us!).

Steve has been involved in barbershop singing for almost 30 years, joining the Oshawa Horseless Carriagemen when he was just 13 years of age. He began his early directing career at the age of 19, as the director of the Oshawa Sweet Adelines, followed by the Oshawa Horseless Carriagemen and the Oakville Entertainers.

By the age of 32, Steve had directed both the Scarborough Dukes of Harmony and the East York Barbershoppers into international competitions. More recently, Steve has been the Musical Director and co-founder of the Toronto Northern Lights. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from the University of Toronto in 1984.

Steve has been a society judge for over 16 years, currently serving in the Music category and has spent 8 years on that category's Board of Review.

He also serves as choir director at his local Salvation Army church.

### **Colin Touchin**

This will be Colin's third visit to Directors College. Now a permanent member of the Faculty, he brings his wide experience to bear on our programme.

Colin is a conductor, composer, clarinettist and recorder-player. During eight years at Chetham's School of Music (including two as Head of Composition) and almost fifteen as Director of Music at the University of Warwick, Colin has a distinguished record of conducting, composing for, and encouraging young musicians in orchestras, bands and choirs.

He has founded several ensembles, including Warwick Orchestral Winds, the British Universities Honours Band, and the National Youth Recorder Orchestra, and has conducted the National Youth Wind Orchestras of both Britain and Luxembourg. He is a regular conductor of Essex Chamber

Orchestra, and for 9 years conducted at the Dartington International Summer School.

His compositions have been broadcast on national and local radio and television, and he is in demand to write, to commission and to lead workshops in conducting, clarinet, recorder, teaching and adjudication.

### **Andrew Padmore**

Andrew Padmore studied conducting under Sir Adrian Boult, has been Director of Music in an old-established Grammar School and has had a successful period as Cathedral Organist & Master of Choristers at Cork and Belfast Cathedrals.

Much of his work has been in the choral sphere, and he works with choirs internationally, from some of the small professional chamber choirs at the BBC to the largest forces like the famous "Huddersfield Choral Society". He is in demand as a guest conductor and for choral and orchestral workshops in schools, colleges and universities in the U.K. and overseas.

He is a busy adjudicator for International Choral Festivals and an examiner for the Royal Schools of Music (also being a mentor for their professional teaching qualification course).

Andrew's brief is to make an independent assessment of the College and he will provide feedback to the college team.

### **Manvinder Rattan**

Manvinder studied choral conducting with James Wild, John Coates and Jill Wild within the Sing for Pleasure organisation and then continued with Laszlo Heltay and Mike Brewer. He studied orchestral conducting with George Hurst and Colin Metters, professor of conducting at the Royal Academy of Music.

He is the Musical Director with the John Lewis Partnership. His tenure has seen the establishment and rapid development of The Cavendish Ensemble and The Cavendish Singers along with the substantial growth of Voices in Partnership.

Manvinder now teaches conducting himself and was instrumental in gaining ABSRM accreditation for the Sing for Pleasure conducting syllabus. He is also a representative on the TONSIL group.

Manvinder will be specifically looking at and advising us on the Certification Programme.

## Supporting Choruses

The following choruses will be providing the vocal support for your video sessions on Sunday.

### Anvil Chorus

BABS men's chorus from Birmingham. They will be working with non-novice directors on Sunday.

### Belles of Three Spires

LABBS ladies chorus from Coventry. They will be working with non-novice directors on Sunday.

### A Cappella Fellas

BABS quartet from Coventry. John Marshall (Bass), Sid Bennett (Baritone), Dave Reid (Lead), Stuart Hatch (Tenor). They will be working with novice directors on Sunday.

## Guidance on Self-Assessment

To help you decide whether you should enrol as a Novice or not, here is a list of skills that you need to have acquired to get beyond the Novice stage.

- Posture/body language
- Meaningful Eye contact
- Hand and Arm Position
- Planes of directing
- Ictus
- Prep beat
- Down Beat
- Onset of sound
- Release of sound
- Clarity of Patterns
- 4/4 pattern
- 3/4 pattern
- 2/4 pattern
- Facial Expression

If you are unclear about what any of these mean, there is a detailed description on the Directors website at

[www.babs-education.info/directors/certification/curriculum/dt1\\_theory.php](http://www.babs-education.info/directors/certification/curriculum/dt1_theory.php)

## www.support for DC



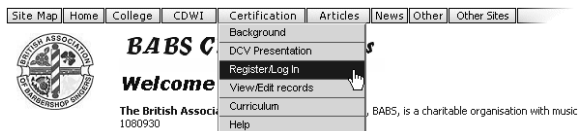
The BABS Directors website is one of our main means of communication with you, disseminating information, providing news updates and document downloads. Visit it regularly at

[www.babs-education.info/directors](http://www.babs-education.info/directors)



The BABS Bulletin Board has a **Directors Forum** which will be replacing the old CDNet mailing list. It provides a way for the directing fraternity to talk to each other, ask questions, get answers, broadcast the news in a relatively secure environment. If you are not already registered with the Bulletin Board, it will take only a couple of minutes. If you are, visit it regularly.

[www.babs-education.info/msge\\_bd](http://www.babs-education.info/msge_bd)



Most of the administrative details of the Certification Programme will be web-based. To subscribe to the programme, you need to be registered with the Bulletin Board and then visit the BABS Directors website where, under the Certification menu, you'll find Register/Login. You might want to read the Help file which you'll also find under the Certification menu.

[www.babs-education.info/directors/register/help.php](http://www.babs-education.info/directors/register/help.php)

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