

# BABS Directors' College Prospectus

DCVIII Coventry January 11-13, 2008

## Introduction

BABS Directors' College - the place to be for current, new and aspiring directors, with the prime objectives to enhance their directing skills, and 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. There will be sessions on Directing Techniques, Leadership and Management, Video Analysis with Feedback and Critical Listening / observation. There will be an underlying thread of on-going self assessment through video analysis, review and evaluation undertaken by directors. Many of the sessions will be useful for anyone taking a teaching role within the club. If you have any aspirations to be a director, you need to be there. Everyone is 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 DCVIII are to address the issues of Directing Techniques and Rehearsal Techniques. 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. Directors' College has been designed so as to encourage everyone to attend as well as encouraging more experienced directors to come along and learn from the extensive knowledge and expertise of our visiting educator Royce Ferguson together with the DC VIII Faculty.

## 1. College Content

### Friday Evening

The College will start on Friday evening at 6.30 with dinner followed by the Keynote Speech by Royce Ferguson. It will be inspirational and motivating.

### Saturday

The day will be given over to Directing Techniques, video review (not novices only), observations, analysis, feedback and preparation for the coaching sessions on Sunday. These sessions are crucial to your personal development as directors. You will be paired with one of the Faculty Coaching team and they will stay with you during the teaching sessions and the video review on Sunday. They will focus on specific directorial issues. Some of these sessions will be devoted to your rehearsing techniques using your fellow directors as the singers. Where possible, the College Song will be the teaching vehicle for the rehearsing technique sessions. It is therefore very important that you all know the song

and can sing it without reference to the music, which should only be used as a reference/discussion tool. Interspersed with the Directing Techniques sessions will be a session on Leadership and Management with relevance to the Barbershop Chorus and a special session by Royce on critical listening which will link through to the parallel sessions on Sunday.

### Saturday Evening

After dinner, all delegates will come together to form the College Chorus which will be directed by a member of the Faculty and coached by Royce. The aim of this session is to watch and learn from a master coach in action.

### Harmony Temple

Arrangements are in hand to stage Jon Conway's "Harmony Temple" (featured in pick and mix sessions at the last two Harmony Colleges) in the hotel. This is an experience not to be missed.

### Sunday

All students will get a chance to direct, with coaching back up and video recording. Novices will direct the guest octet and the others will direct one of the guest choruses. After the session, the delegate will review the video with his / her coach. 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.

### 2. College Song

The College Song, to be used for the directing techniques sessions on Saturday will be 'For all we Know' (arranged by Lou Perry). The song will be performed by the delegates acting as the College Chorus on Saturday after dinner. Ladies coming to DC should note that the song will be sung in the mens key, and they can thus choose any appropriate part. Please come to the College knowing the song and being able to sing your part without reference to the music.

### 3. Enrolment

The enrolment process will be through the web site. Application forms will be available to fill in and post or email to the Accommodation and Enrolment Manager (Phil and Elaine Mobsby). There will also be a facility for Delegates to register and pay on line. Details of these entries will automatically be sent to the Enrolment Manager.

### 4. College Materials

During early December you will receive a package containing

- Music for the songs sung by the choruses and Octet.
- Music for the College Song
- A CD with recordings of the above including the learning tracks for the College Song

These are solely for use in the run up and during the college. They will be marked with your name and a reference number. To comply with Copyright restrictions, at the end of the College all materials will be collected and destroyed. Please be sure to bring your allocated copies to the college to hand in.

### 5. Streaming

Students will be streamed as Novices and Not-novices based on their own self assessment prior to the College.

## **Not Novices**

There will be no requirement, this year, to submit video tapes in advance of the college.

Instead, students wishing to be in the Not Novices group are requested to bring to the College a video recording of themselves directing 2 contrasting songs. These videos will form an important part of the course and the preparation for the delegates working with the College Choruses.

Details of what to include on the video and how to shoot it are given in a [separate note](#). You will also find reference to the video's that are needed if you wish to become a BABS Certified Director.

These videos and those made at the College may be left with the College Faculty for further analysis and assessment as part of the CD Certification scheme. Please make sure that your video is labelled appropriately.

- Note that the word video covers both Video tapes *and* DVD recordings

## **Novices**

Novices at DC VIII will benefit new and aspiring directors, assistants, music/performance team members, coaches or, indeed, anyone who finds themselves out in front of a chorus from time to time. This stream will provide the solid foundation of basic skills which is the starting point for becoming a proficient director. What you need to know: No prior experience necessary!

While there is no specific requirement for Novices to bring along a video, if they wish to do so they will get feedback on the content.

What you will learn: The course will help you to develop your directing skills in the following areas:

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

Please note that this list is independent of your experience as a Director. If you have been directing for years but have never been taught these fundamentals, you shouldn't be afraid to take the opportunity to learn the basic skills. If you are unclear about what any of these mean, there is a detailed description on the Directors' website at [Directing Theory Basics](#).

### 6. Guidance on Self-Assessment

To help you decide whether you should enrol as a Novice or not please refer to the previous section (5.) on Streaming. The list of Directing Skills and the detailed description available on the website should help you to make this choice. If in doubt please contact any member of the Faculty for assistance.

A list of the members of the [Faculty and contact details](#) can be found on the [website](#).

### 7. Visitors & Visiting Educators

We are delighted that Royce Ferguson – Director of the Westminster Chorus will be with us for this years College..

Royce is a highly valued Society Coach who teaches at BHS Harmony University each year. He is also an accomplished quartet singer who performed as a temporary replacement for the Tenor of O C Times when they visited Britain in October 2006.

He is perhaps best known over here for taking the youthful Westminster Chorus to First place in Denver in 2007. In addition to all this, he was the tenor of the Gold Medalist 'Revival', who were the BHS (then called 'SPEBSQSA') Quartet Champions in 1998.

Royce will be focusing his efforts on helping us to be better at Critical Listening. He will work on this with the whole College, then with the College Chorus and then on Sunday in small group sessions.

#### 8. Faculty Members

We will be drawing on the expertise and generosity of a number of people to provide all teaching, technical and administrative support (Note that we are still finalizing the details of the College and it is possible that some of the named people will not be at DCVIII). A full [Faculty List](#) is available on the [website](#).

#### 9. Supporting Choruses and Quartets

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

The Sounds of Three Spires, the BABS men's chorus from Coventry and The Belles of Three Spires LABBS ladies chorus from Coventry.

They will be working with not-novice directors on Sunday.

Retro and Cadence two quartets from the Grand Central Chorus will form an octet to work with novice directors on Sunday.

#### 10. Internet Support for Directors

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.

The [BABS Bulletin Board](#) has a Directors Forum which has replaced 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.

#### 11. Directors Certification scheme

We will be re-launching the scheme at the end of 2007. We have simplified the initial stages which will lead to the title "Certified Director". To qualify for this title applicants will need to have passed some of the web based tests and to submit a video for assessment.

The requirements will be as follows

- Pass a singing test
- Pass a Music Test
- Pass a presentation test
- Submit a video tape according to instructions that will be given

The tests will all be on the web site. The video will be reviewed by two people in our Certification team and a third will moderate any results where there may be discrepancies between the first two. The results will be fed back to the applicant.

All Directors should achieve this starting point before moving into higher level qualifications.

Details of what needs to be included in the video are given on the web site.

It is envisaged that anyone achieving the Certified Director status would be invited to receive their certificate at BABS Convention.

Most of the administrative details of the Certification Programme will also 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.

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