

Choral Art Society

Report of the Strategic Plan Committee

2013-2014

INTRODUCTION

Since its earliest years the Choral Art Society has been guided by recommendations put forth by committees that have engaged in long-range strategic planning. This process has contributed to the successful development of a high-quality choral performance organization that is well respected in the Portland area and beyond. Since the report issued by the previous long range planning committee in 2006, CAS has continued our best-loved traditions as well as ventured in exciting new directions. With the devoted efforts of countless volunteers, a talented music director, and generous donors, CAS has been able to sustain and grow in the face of increasing financial pressures in a competitive marketplace.

The report of the 2005-2006 committee included recommendations in four areas: musical excellence, programming, finances, and board development. This 2014 report addresses the extent to which CAS has achieved each of those goals, and will offer new recommendations to guide policy for the next five years. It is recommended that the Board of Directors incorporate the strategic plan as integral to all policy, review this report on an annual basis, and update the long range strategic plan every three to five years.

REVIEW OF THE 2006 PLAN

A committee comprised of Richard van Bergen, Kathy Grammer, Anne Keith, and David Nicklas met in the spring of 2013 to review the 2006 report and made the following observations and recommendations:

Mission and Vision: appropriate intent; *recommend revision to simplify and clarify language*

Musical Excellence: CAS does foster a culture of excellence; *recommend improvement in communication of expectations to members*

Programming: three performance groups maintained, not equal in programming each season; goals of collaboration, recording, commissions essentially met; educational outreach initiative not achieved; *recommend exploring new paradigms for membership*

fees, performance opportunities, and skill development to optimize experience for all members

Finances and Cash Reserves: goal of 3-4 year program planning partially achieved, but impaired by unknown plans of PSO; current business model is not sustainable long-term; *recommend changes to cash reserve plan; create a committee to revise the business plan; develop strategy to hire part-time Executive Director and support staff*

Board Development, Management, Volunteerism: goal of moving board from function of operations to function of governance well advanced; executive committee meets as needed; operations manual not created; attracting volunteers is a persistent problem; *recommend review and update of by-laws and policies, establish operations manual; create an expectation of volunteerism*

PROCESS

In 2013 two committees were formed to address the above recommendations:

Financial Management: Barbara Kapp (chair), Peter Bagg, Lars Loren, David Nicklas, Robert Russell, Heidi Seitz

Organizational Management: Andrea Graichen (co-chair), Kathy Grammer (co-chair), Peter Bagg, Richard van Bergen, Robert Russell, Heidi Seitz

In response to the recommendation to hire an Executive Director, a third committee was formed, comprised of Richard van Bergen, Kathy Grammer, Tracy Hawkins, Larry Rubinstein, and Heidi Seitz.

Committees met several times over the period from September 2013 through August 2014. All members of CAS were given information about certain proposals that were deemed to have potential impact on members' experiences. Members were offered the opportunity to give feedback via an online survey, in small group discussions, and through individual contact with board members.

The discussions of these committees were often related, and the outcomes are presented together as one report. Thanks are due to Michael Bachem, Manager, for administrative support to all committees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mission Statement: The mission of the Choral Art Society is to advance the art of choral singing through performance, collaboration, and outreach. **approved 11/12/14**

Vision Statement: The Choral Art Society will be a model arts organization, enriching the cultural life of our community and the musical experience of our singers through:

- ~ high artistic standards
- ~ diverse programming
- ~ innovative programming
- ~ singers' education
- ~ outreach

approved 11/12/14

Musical Excellence/Programming

Auditions

I. Audition schedule **Music Director**

- A. Biennial auditions for Singers beginning May 2015
- B. Biennial auditions for Masterworks beginning May 2016
- C. Camerata auditions at the discretion of the Music Director
- D. Late summer auditions to accommodate singers who respond to Summer Sing invitation or are new to the area

II. Audition management **Music Director/Executive Director**

- A. Manager responds to audition inquiry via e-mail or phone
- B. Manager responds to audition inquiry with invitation to an open rehearsal
- C. Manager responds to audition inquiry with information about available audition/voice classes
- D. Manager tracks singers who have expressed an interest in auditioning
- E. Two lobby hosts welcome singers and answer questions
- F. Update CAS website to reflect these recommendations
- G. Audition auditors will not be current singing members

III. Offer audition readiness/voice classes/skills workshops during the year

IV. Audition feedback

- A. Letter of notification to singer within 2 weeks of audition
- B. Feedback from Music Director available upon request

Member Experience

approved 11/12/14

I. Membership fees

- A. Singing membership flat annual fee of \$75
- B. Non-singing membership annual fee of \$10
- C. Communicate to all members that if fee presents hardship they may speak to the President or Manager

II. New members **Music Director/President**

- A. Engage section leaders and attendance chairs as needed to facilitate orientation and make new singers feel welcome
- B. Host a new member meeting if appropriate

III. Registration **Executive Director**

- A. Include skills inquiry and volunteer opportunities on registration form
- B. Include photo/video release form in registration process

IV. Programming **Music Director, Music Advisory Committee, Board of Directors**

- A. Regular season programming includes Christmas at the Cathedral (Singers), Epiphany (Camerata), and PSO work (Masterworks)
- B. Remainder of each season is determined by the Board on recommendation of the Music Director and Music Advisory Committee, with the goal of providing optimal opportunities for all members, and with consideration of prudent financial management according to CAS bylaws and policies
- C. Prior to annual registration, announce upcoming season(s) to all members **ED**

V. Member feedback **Executive Director, President, Music Director, Music Advisory Co**

- A. Conduct post-concert evaluation survey
- B. Develop online annual member survey as a vehicle for checking in with members and collecting general feedback
- C. Seek feedback from departing members to discover why they leave

VI. Outreach **New Committee to be assigned**

- A. Promote caroling program, starting early in the season to allow ample rehearsal time
- B. Form standing educational outreach committee to raise awareness and foster understanding of upcoming CAS events, to operate on an event-specific basis
- C. Develop educational materials to take into schools and community settings
- D. Collaborate with other arts organizations' education and outreach efforts

VII. Personnel: hire assistant music director to assist with auditions and rehearsals

Executive Committee~ future

Financial Management/Operations

- I. Balance budget and strengthen cash reserve position
 - A. Balance annual budget **Treasurer**
 - B. Ally with Friends of the Kotzschmar Organ to share staff and office resources **done**
 - C. Develop opportunities for new revenue **Development Committee, Exec Director**
 - D. Partner with other organizations to expand marketing and fundraising potential
Development Committee, Marketing Committee and Executive Director
 - E. Diligently pursue fundraising, consider a board-hosted special event **Dev Comm**

- II. Develop two-year or three-year program cycle with partner organizations, including a coherent plan for financing each program prior to making a final commitment to program **Music Director, Music Advisory Committee, Executive Director**

- III. Create an Operations Manual to document activities as managed by all volunteers and staff, including but not limited to financial management, administrative tasks, program management, and general operations; evaluate procedures and make changes accordingly **Ad hoc committee: Exec Director, President, and board members Michael Boyd, Richard van Bergen**

- IV. Hire part-time Executive Director to professionalize administration and operations, provide a sense of overall direction for volunteers, and strengthen relationships with other arts organizations for purposes of public relations and mutually beneficial collaborations **Done**

- V. Strengthen the role of Board members in development and fund-raising
Development Committee, President, Executive Director