

The Bronze Foundation Member Handbook September 2011

Membership Terms

Membership in the Bronze Foundation is by audition. Auditions are held annually, in late spring. Ringers who wish to return to participate in the Bronze Foundation must attend the auditions for the following year.

New ringers who participate in a three-part audition process:

1. individual skills evaluation,
2. interview regarding goals and commitment, and
3. a group audition.

Ringers wishing to return for the following year participate only in the group audition.

Membership in the Bronze Foundation is for the period of approximately two years. After successful completion of the annual audition process, membership commitments begin late June and extend through to the following early summer (dates dependent on performance commitments). Please note that there may be overlap of the yearly commitments. For example, the new group is auditioned, selected and rehearsing before the previous year's group commitments are complete.

Some members of the Bronze Foundation have additional responsibilities to the group. The following members appreciate your support to complete the required tasks:

Director	J.-C. Coolen
Chairperson	Barbara Neal
Scheduling	Kelly Otway
Treasurer	Anita Crump
Concert bookings	Judy Queen
Equipment	David Keith
Librarian	Debi Sproule

Rehearsals

Regular rehearsals occur at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church 115 St. Andrews Road, Scarborough. The church is located West of McCowan Road, and South of Ellesmere Ave.

Ringers should arrive early enough to prepare themselves (visit washroom, set up chimes and bells etc.) to be ready to ring at the start time for the practice.

The entire group meets in June to receive assigned music and run through notes with the director to begin personal practice over the summer.

The group aims to have a music retreat in mid-August or early September. Three practices in quick succession (three weeknights in a row, or Friday night/Saturday combination) help build the group. We attempt to include one lunch or dinner at a local restaurant to include a social aspect and to get to know one another.

Regular rehearsals are three hours in duration, with a 15 minute break part-way through, generally scheduled Saturday afternoons or evenings, but may also be Sunday afternoons or an occasional Friday evening. On average, the Bronze Foundation requires one group commitment every two weeks. It is expected that each ringer puts in an equivalent amount of personal practice between each rehearsal.

Personal practice must include conversations with neighbouring ringers regarding shared bell assignments if required.

All rehearsal times are booked to schedule each rehearsal around every ringer's personal calendar so that all ringers can be present for every appointment. An online tool, Doodle, is used by our scheduler, Kelly Otway, to determine every member's availability before practice times are confirmed.

Remember to check for calendar schedules frequently and commit to your availability schedule.

When practice dates and times are confirmed, please mark these dates in your calendar and hold them sacred!

Rehearsal preparation and attendance

Bronze Foundation members rotate bell assignments on every piece. The director assigns individual ringers to specific positions by taking into consideration the demands of the position, special ringing skills (4ih, 3s), or a ringer's skill development. Once you are assigned to a particular position, you remain on that position for as long as the group performs that piece. Occasionally, extenuating circumstances require reassignment of a piece. If you are having trouble with a particular assignment, let the director know as soon as possible.

Bronze Foundation rehearsals focus not on note learning, but on ensemble and group and individual musicianship. Musicianship requires two highly important levels of commitment:

- Each ringer puts in an equivalent amount of personal practice between each rehearsal.
- Each ringer be in attendance at each and every rehearsal

The two mandatory components of commitment is not only for each member's own sake and rehearsal, but for the sake of all the other ringers in the group who need to rehearse ensemble and musicianship with the other ringers.

For the rare occasions when you miss a rehearsal, you must arrange a substitute ringer to cover your absence:

- Let the director know about your planned absence.
- Inform the unassigned ringer(s), if any, in the group of your absence.
- If no unassigned ringers are available, you must book a substitute ringer from the Bronze Foundation substitute list. The director maintains the sub list, and provides an updated copy to all members via e-mail. A current copy is available from the director upon request.

Dues

Ringer dues consist of an amount payable in two installments. The fee covers music score purchase, space/equipment rentals, insurance, remuneration for our director, and OGEHR dues. The dues are calculated only to cover the costs of membership in the Bronze Foundation.

All music and binders remain property of the Bronze Foundation. The cost of music fluctuates from one year to the next, based on the number of pieces of music the group purchases, and the cost of those individual pieces. The cost of the music is approximately \$50.00 per year.

The Bronze Foundation currently has a rental agreement with St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Scarborough, for the use of their space for rehearsals and of their instruments for rehearsal and performance. Our rental fee is a flat rate (\$600) plus a percentage of performance fees (20% to a maximum of \$600).

The remuneration for our director is a flat fee for directing rehearsals (\$400 per person) plus a percentage of performance fees (66% per concert). Since our director is self-employed, HST is added to his invoices.

The current fee is \$550.00 per person. Payments of \$275 are due in September and in January. If alternate payment arrangements must be made, please consult with the treasurer, Anita Crump.

Uniform

Our uniform is black, black, black--to best visually feature the bells as we ring:

- Top: Black, long-sleeved, turtleneck.
- Bottom: Black pants/skirt/etc., with black hose/socks and black shoes. No bare legs.
- Shoes (black) should be comfortable for the physical activity of ringing.
- Gloves: Black. It is the responsibility of each ringer to purchase, maintain and store their own gloves. Gloves may be purchased through Susan Carscadden-Mifsud of Handbell Graces in Ingersoll <www.handbellgraces.com>.

If we perform after April 30, we may substitute the black turtleneck with black, long-sleeved, collared shirts; if this occurs, you will receive notice.

Performances

The Bronze Foundation is a performing group; we exist to perform, and are actively looking for performance opportunities.

However, we evaluate and schedule any performance invitations in the same manner as we book rehearsals—in a group session with all our calendars present—as we need to have everyone available to participate in a performance.

We aim for six concerts per year. 3 replace rehearsals (maintaining the once-every-two-weeks group commitment schedule), and 3 are in addition to rehearsals.

Many of our performance invitations come through our ringers, and their connections to potential host venues. If you have connections, and can arrange for a Bronze Foundation performance invitation, please speak to our event co-ordinator, Judy Queen—we welcome your connections!

If, in the rare chance that it is impossible for you to meet a concert date, please let the director know ASAP.

Once dates/times (both for rehearsals and performances) have been booked, we expect you to hold those appointments sacred in your calendar.

Director Contact Information

J.-C. Coolen directs the group. His contact info is (905) 683-5757, <jjcoolen@sympatico.ca>