

Guidelines for Choosing a Chant Schola at the Colloquium

When you come to the Colloquium, you will need to choose a chant schola for your participation during the week. There are few joys greater than singing in a well prepared Gregorian chant schola. While there is always a little tweaking done after the first day, i.e., singers moving up or down a level, most people find it relatively easy to choose.

Many returning attendees to the Colloquium find themselves advancing from Beginning Schola through Intermediate and finally Advanced. However, if you have not had many opportunities to refine your chant work during the year, you might consider staying at a level for more than one year. As all of our chant repertory is graded to suit the capabilities of each choir, the musical rewards and polish of performance are not always related to the level of the schola!

The following are some guidelines to help you find the right schola in which to sing for the week.

A note about styles: While the American Church has a long history with the traditional Solesmes Method of learning, teaching and singing Gregorian chant, and while this influence is clearly reflected in the CMAA's annual Colloquium, attendees will find a considerable variety of approaches to the interpretation of the chants sung. Happily, we find that each year brings new ideas utilizing the latest chant research, including interpretation of neumes, rhythm, tuning and other aspects of performance.

A note to counter-tenors: If you are a counter-tenor, you may choose to sing with either men or women.

Beginning Schola: Men & Women (Scott Turkington, conductor)

Typically the largest of the choirs because it includes both men and women, this choir is designed for people who:

- Are new to singing in choirs;
- Have never sung any chant before (Pange lingua on Holy Thursday doesn't count!)
- Have not sung difficult chants in some time and feel that a remedial course would be beneficial

This course will start from the beginning, learning all of the most commonly used neumes, working on ensemble singing, and polishing the chants to be sung at the Colloquium's Masses.

Intermediate Women (Arlene Oost-Zinner, conductor)

A good candidate for this schola might be described as:

- Having sung quite a bit of chant. You sing chant propers and ordinaries often, if not regularly.
- Having a working knowledge of the neumes, e.g., podatus, clivis, torculus, porrectus, climacus, scandicus, quilisma, etc.

Intermediate Men (Jeffrey Ostrowski, conductor)

(See description of Intermediate Women)

Advanced Women (Wilko Brouwers, conductor)

This course is intended for those with extensive experience in singing the chant, and fosters continued mastery in its artful execution.

For this chant schola and the one below (Advanced Men), we ask that you assess yourself honestly as one who has considerable experience in singing chant and a familiarity with the Gregorian repertory. Rightly, the most difficult chants of the week are reserved for the most experienced singers.

Advanced Men (Kurt Poterack, conductor)

(See description above, Advanced Women.)