



Larimer Chorale's Strategic Goals 2017 – 2022

Brief Description

The Larimer Chorale, founded in 1977, is an adult, auditioned, avocational choir. We are the largest classical choral group in northern Colorado, featuring over 115 voices. Our diverse repertoire includes works by the masters of classical choral music, including Bach, Mozart, Brahms, and Beethoven. We also perform lighter music, such as pieces by Leonard Bernstein, Andrew Lloyd Webber, and other 19th- and 20th-century composers. The Larimer Chorale has enjoyed significant growth, both artistically and financially, over the last 40 years. The Chorale Board has as its primary goal the continuance of the Chorale's excellence in performing choral masterworks. Under Dr. Michael Krueger's leadership and musical direction the Chorale has performed many large scale classical works with full orchestration: Brahms' *German Requiem*; Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*; Hayden's *Creation*; Mozart's *Requiem*; Handel's *Messiah*; and Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*. In celebration of our 40 anniversary, we commissioned a work from world-renowned composer, Jake Runestad. We premiered the Runestad work, called *CLIMB!* in February 2017, with the composer conducting.

The Larimer Chorale is active in local arts consortia and contributes to the community conversation about the importance of the performing arts in the economic and cultural life of Northern Colorado. The Larimer Chorale tours internationally every three years and is unique among performing arts groups in its ability to represent Fort Collins and Northern Colorado to an international community

In addition to bringing outstanding choral music to Northern Colorado, the Chorale has steadily grown its Singing for Seniors program, an outreach effort that provides an avenue for active and older adults to engage in recreational singing. The choir is open to all in the community who self-identify as seniors and who want to sing for the joy of it. After six years, the choir has an attendance of over 170 senior citizens per session and has gained enough recognition to receive major awards from Group Publishing and Chorus America. This ongoing program of the Chorale continues to demonstrate the significant health and wellness benefits of singing.

Operating Environment

Fort Collins has a vibrant arts scene – one that provides both challenges and opportunities for the Larimer Chorale. The residents are well-educated and poised to take advantage of local recreational opportunities. Fort Collins is a retirement haven. In addition to being the home base for the Larimer Chorale, the town also supports a symphonic orchestra, a ballet company, an opera company, several independent theaters, plus dozens of other professional and amateur choirs and bands. School and university performing arts organizations add to the mix. Throughout the year, live music and entertainment can be found in cafes, churches, performance halls, and street corners throughout the historic downtown area.

The number of performing arts organizations operating in a relatively small footprint can lead to some unique challenges, such as scheduling rehearsal and performance times, hiring orchestra members who play for the Larimer Chorale as well as for Fort Collins Symphony, the Cheyenne Symphony, and Greeley Philharmonic, and finding appropriate performance venues. Within this performance-rich environment, however, the Larimer Chorale has remained strong. We consistently sell out smaller (500 seat) venues, the quality of chorus is improving steadily, and our budget has kept up with new programming. Thanks to dedicated section leaders, chorale members are learning faster and we are recruiting younger members. The Larimer Chorale's budget has increased significantly to meet that challenge, thanks to increased giving by Chorale members, increased support from members of the community, continued success in winning grants, careful stewardship of the budget, and successful fundraising events.

Vision Statement

The Larimer Chorale is a large and very accomplished avocational choral ensemble in the Colorado Rocky Mountain Region. It is an auditioned, adult choir that regularly performs choral masterworks with full orchestras and continually stages professional level concerts with a wide variety of audience appeal. It is a leader among performing arts organizations along the Front Range -- convening, connecting, and catalyzing so that all organizations are stronger.

Through concerts, events, and outreach activities, the Larimer Chorale demonstrates that singing is a life-long endeavor that brings fulfillment and enrichment to singers and audiences alike.

Mission statement

The mission of the Larimer Chorale is to perform choral music at a high artistic standard, with an emphasis on masterworks, and to enrich and educate singers and audiences throughout northern Colorado

Organizational Strengths

People – Staff, members, volunteers, board, community

Programs – Rehearsals, concerts, education, outreach, commissioned 2 works

Resources – Diversified income, strong ticket sales, \$\$ invested in CFNC Reserve Fund

Strategy – Process in place through annual retreats, regular board meetings

Organizational goals

Strategic Goal #1 – Maintain Excellence in Musical Programming and Concert Experience

- Maintain section leader program
- Increase chorale size to 130-140 members
- Commission a new work every five years
- Continue trend of recruiting younger members
- Produce feasibility framework for adding “outreach” or rapid response ensembles
- Assure that all concerts are accessible (audio descriptions for blind; hearing assistance)
- Implement Artistic Director’s five-year concert plan

Strategic Goal #2 – Increase Outreach to Maintain Current Audience and Reach New Generations

- Demonstrate cultural relevance of choral singing through concerts and outreach activities
- Preserve great choral masterworks
- Introduce masterworks to new audiences
- Perform free concert every three years
- Look for ways to increase diversity and community representation
- Revamp marketing/Improve segmented marketing

Strategic Goal #3 -- Play Leadership Role Among Choral Groups in Northern Colorado/Front Range

- Create annual summit of chorus leaders
- Look for common ground and joint opportunities

Strategic Goal #4 -- Improve Chorale Infrastructure and Management Capability

- Sustain high-level performance
- Create comprehensive fundraising plan
- Create endowment
- Review staff job descriptions, compensation, and capacity building. Develop succession plans
- Develop database of venues

Strategic Goal #5 – Sustain and Improve Singing for Seniors Program

- Strengthen the infrastructure of Singing for Seniors by:
 - Rebranding the program;
 - Developing a website that will include collections of suitable songs, links to current research and articles, and an events page; and
 - Expanding our music library.
- Validate our observable findings by creating a research study to collect empirical data on the positive effects Singing for Seniors has on the health of our participants.
- Survey the landscape of senior choirs across the country and explore the possibility of creating a national umbrella organization for senior choirs.