



**LET US HELP YOU FIND YOUR VOICE!**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Island A Cappella is a four-part a cappella (without instrumental accompaniment) women's chorus on Prince Edward Island that sings in the barbershop harmony style. We love to perform for different types of audiences and we compete yearly at our regional competition.

If you love to sing in harmony and always wanted to improve your vocal skills and have fun at the same time, Island A Cappella may be the perfect organization for you!

## **WHO WE ARE**

We chartered with Harmony, Inc., our parent international organization, in 1982 as The Abegweit Chimes. In 2014 we changed our name to Island A Cappella to refresh and rebrand the organization and to more accurately reflect our style of singing.

Harmony Inc. and Island A Cappella are committed to providing an equitable and diverse environment. Our membership is open to all women, regardless of age, race, citizen, faith, ancestry, physical ability, gender identity and sexual orientation. All women can belong who value singing as an important part of their lives, who are committed to developing their vocal skills, who recognize the value of active participation in our organization, and who want to have fun. Ages range from students to retirees and represent many different backgrounds and stages of life.

## **WHY JOIN US?**

Because singing is our passion, learning our music and singing well makes our Thursday evenings a lot of fun. Humour is an important part of learning, so we always make sure we have a laugh or two. You will meet new people and make friendships that can last a lifetime! Our members tell us they joined for various reasons including: looking for their own hobby, wanting to meet new people, having a passion for singing and improving their singing skills and performing for an audience.

There are Harmony, Inc. chapters throughout Canada and the USA. If you relocate to a major city, there is a good chance there is a chapter waiting to welcome you. Instant friends and connections!

The sound produced by our chorus comes from the commitment every member brings to rehearsal each week. Each person's contribution is critical to the final product – beautiful, harmonious singing.

Being able to sight-read and having formal music education are assets but **not** membership requirements.

## **HOW TO JOIN US**

Contact us by email or through our website or Facebook page to let us know you're interested and we'll make sure you are invited to an upcoming rehearsal!

A new hobby can be overwhelming, so everyone considering membership participates in a four to six week orientation program that includes:

- Group coaching in vocal sound production, vowel matching, breathing, and presentation.
- Voice placement. Our Director and Section Leaders will work with you to determine your vocal range and which voice part best suits your voice.
- Learning a short song, or part of a song, and when you are ready, singing in a quartet. You will learn the song during the rehearsal, you will be provided a recording with your vocal part dominant, and you will have lots of support from the other members and your Section Leader. This is done privately, and you will be advised of your results in a timely fashion.
- Introduction to our chapter and how we operate.
- Introduction to the parent organization, Harmony, Inc.

After you have completed the orientation, your Buddy or our Membership Chair will provide you with our Membership Application form.

Once you are a member of Island A Cappella, we hope you will continue for decades to come!

## **LIVING WITH COVID 19!**

Island A Cappella follows the COVID 19 guidelines and requirements of both the PEI Public Health Office (PHO) and Charlottetown Rural High School (CRHS). Our operational plan has been submitted to the PHO and CRHS. Currently (and subject to changes made by the PHO and CRHS), we are required to wear a mask into and out of the building. Once inside and seated, we can remove it. We can sing unmasked if we maintain 6' distance between singers. Sanitizer is provided and attendance information is taken for tracking. Shorter rehearsals and an additional break during our time together allow for air change and social distancing.

Our regional and international conventions have been held virtually in 2020 and 2021. We hope that the information provided below on these events will soon be a reality once again.

# Island A Cappella – Membership Information

September 2021

## OUR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Island A Cappella is a chapter of Harmony, Inc. (HI). HI is a vibrant international singing organization of women who are dedicated to the performance and promotion of four-part a cappella harmony in the barbershop style, the celebration of friendship, personal growth and development through education, and the practice of democratic principles.

Harmony, Inc., is divided into six geographic areas throughout Canada and the USA. Island A Cappella is in Area 1, which includes the Atlantic Provinces.

*Singing brings us together, warms our hearts  
and keeps us smiling!*

## THE FACTS

**Dues:** Chapter \$200 per year, \$20 per month (10 months), that can be paid as one lump sum OR in three instalments: September to December (\$80), January to March (\$60) and April to June (\$60). Youth rates (ages 23 and under) are available. Harmony, Inc., annual dues are approximately \$60 US (Youth is half) per year and paid in February. There is also an annual \$20 costume rental fee, which is due at the beginning of the chorus year. All payments can be made by cheque or e-transfer.

**Travel:** We attend our annual Area 1 Contest and Convention (AC&C) and occasionally our International Contest and Convention (IC&C). Member expenses may include travel, registration, food and accommodation.

**Costumes:** Costumes are purchased and owned by the chorus. Each member pays a small annual costume rental fee (see Dues above). Costumes purchased by the chorus are returned when a member retires.

**Music:** Music is the property of Island A Cappella and is returned when a member retires. Only legal music is purchased. Guests are provided with a package of current repertoire. See the # 9 on Page 3 for details.

**Time Commitment:** Attending our weekly rehearsal is key to your contribution to the chorus and to your enjoyment of the hobby. Learning new music and the choreography will take additional time outside rehearsal. The amount of time varies with each person. Members who will be absent for extended periods of time (for example, Snowbirds) discuss their plans with the Director and plan ways to learn their music and stay current on music and performance changes and updates.

**Important Events:** We are performing and competing chorus. Area 1 Contest and Convention takes place each

year on the weekend of the first Saturday in June. Members are encouraged to be available to attend from the Thursday to Sunday. The venue is usually Mt. Allison University in Sackville, NB.

## PERFORMANCES

Most years we present a stage show or concert as a means of skill development, fundraising, community building and recruitment. It is hoped all members will be able to participate in the preparation, promotion and presentation of this event. We also perform in a variety of settings throughout the year. Before a commitment is made to organizers, members are surveyed to indicate their availability, so we can ensure an appropriate balance of voices.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**1) When can I join Island A Cappella?** New members are welcome any time, but joining in September, at the beginning of the singing year, provides a more comprehensive introduction.

**2) How long does it take to become a member?** The orientation program takes four to six weeks. Some individuals are ready to join after a few weeks and others may take longer. We are flexible to individual needs.

**3) When and where do you meet?** We meet each Thursday from September to June in the Lecture Theatre at the Charlottetown Rural High School in Charlottetown, PEI. We start promptly at 7 p.m. and usually finish by 9:30 p.m. (earlier during COVID). We break for the summer, but we often hold informal summer get-togethers.

**4) What is a rehearsal like?** Our rehearsals are very full and include:

- A few minutes of general physical warm-ups (to prepare the body for singing).
- Vocal education that uses a variety of exercises to improve our sound production, breath support, vowels, volume dynamics and pitch.
- Rehearsal of current repertoire.
- If we are preparing for a performance, we review our performance package.
- New music (we always have new songs on the go).
- Announcements/business.

**5) Will I learn the terminology?** Yes! As with any hobby or activity, barbershop has its own language. We encourage you to ask questions and we try to explain the lingo and new terms as we go. Your barbershop buddy will help too.

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**6) I don't read music, so how will I learn?** Learning tracks are available on our website, so you can listen and learn your part at your own pace. We spend time during rehearsal going over each part. We have section practices to review specific songs during rehearsals. Sometimes they take place at a member's home.

**7) I don't know anyone in the chorus, how will I get to know people?** We have all experienced "first night jitters" and since we want you to feel at home, we will make sure you have a buddy. Our rehearsals can be very busy and your buddy will introduce you to other members and make sure your questions are answered. A couple of times a year we have a social event that will give you more opportunity to get to know the other members. Our website and Facebook page are also great resources for information and places to learn about your fellow chorus members. If you know someone within the chorus, please feel free to request this person as your buddy.

**8) Do I need prior musical experience?** Previous experience is always an asset but not required. We rely on our ears to tune and we do not use musical accompaniment when we perform, so it is important to be able to sing with different sounds around us. This can be an odd experience at first, but once you hear and feel the harmonies, it is awesome and you will be hooked.

**9) How do I get music and access to learning tracks?** The first night you arrive you will be given a package of music containing copies of our current repertoire and the password to our guest website. At the end of the evening you can either give your music package back to your buddy/membership chair or pay \$20 to take the music home. If you decide to join, the \$20 will be applied to your first month's dues. If you decide not to join and return the music, the \$20 will be returned to you. As long as you have access to the internet, you will be able to access the learning tracks and the music.

**10) Is there an age restriction?** There is no age restriction. Our youth and student members are eligible for student rates. Depending on the age, the youth's family may need to provide adult support and sign a consent form. Harmony, Inc., has a wonderful youth chorus comprised of the young women who belong to various chapters. They learn a song and then perform it together at our regional and international conventions. They have a blast working and performing together and always get a standing ovation.

**11) Do I have to get involved in fundraising activities?** Our operational budget is based on the dues we collect from our members; however, occasionally we may have

an unexpected expense that requires additional funds. Members are given the option to participate in the designated fundraising activity (for example a bake or yard sale) or make a cash contribution. Participating in personal fundraising activities to offset the cost of attending singing events is optional. Whenever we can, we prefer to raise funds with our singing through paying performances.

**12) I've been a member of a Harmony, Inc., chorus before; do I still have to participate in the orientation program?** Yes. Each organization is different, so we want to be sure you understand how Island A Cappella works and that your questions are answered. Since voices can change over time, participating in the voice placement to find out your current range is important.

**13) How will I know what to prepare for each week's rehearsal?** At the beginning of each week you'll receive our "Peek" by email, which will include the rehearsal plan from our music team and any updates from our administrative leaders.

## CONTACTS

Please feel free to contact our general email: [info@islandacappella.ca](mailto:info@islandacappella.ca), or any person listed below. These are some of our administrative and musical leaders and they will be happy to answer your questions.

- **President:** Colleen Murphy  
[president@islandacappella.ca](mailto:president@islandacappella.ca)
- **Vice President:** Jennifer Carson  
[vp@islandacappella.ca](mailto:vp@islandacappella.ca)
- **Membership Chair:** Colleen Edwards  
[membership@islandacappella.ca](mailto:membership@islandacappella.ca)
- **Assistant Director:** Kelley Abrams  
[assistantdirector@islandacappella.ca](mailto:assistantdirector@islandacappella.ca)
- **Music Chair:** Heather Williams  
[music@islandacappella.ca](mailto:music@islandacappella.ca)
- **Tenor Section Leader** – Mim Wood  
[tenorleader@islandacappella.ca](mailto:tenorleader@islandacappella.ca)
- **Co-Lead Section Leaders** – Kelly Abrams & Heather Williams  
[leadleader@islandacappella.ca](mailto:leadleader@islandacappella.ca)
- **Baritone Section Leader** – Marylynn Côté  
[baritoneleader@islandacappella.ca](mailto:baritoneleader@islandacappella.ca)
- **Co-Bass Section Leaders** – Beth Peters and Colleen Edwards  
[bassleader@islandacappella.ca](mailto:bassleader@islandacappella.ca)