

## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO A BESERE VELT, 2024-25

A *Besere Velt* (ABV) is the Yiddish community chorus of Boston Workers Circle (BWC), a secular, progressive, Jewish organization of more than 700 members ([circleboston.org](http://circleboston.org)). ABV is a volunteer-run, non-audition chorus with a professional music director, Derek (Leybl) David. We endeavor to make beautiful music in pursuit of peace, justice, and a better world which, in Yiddish, is a *besere velt*.

We're delighted that you are interested in singing with us and we welcome you to our inclusive, intergenerational choral community. We hope you will also become a member of BWC and find other ways of connecting to our vibrant community.

This short document is designed for ABV newcomers and returning members to provide brief basics about ABV. The [ABV Policies document](#) will have more detail.

Rehearsals. Rehearsals take place approximately three times a month. Extra rehearsals will be scheduled as needed for a specific performance. Our regular rehearsal time and place are Sunday, 3-5:30pm, at Temple Beth Zion, Brookline - shmoozing at 3pm and rehearsal starting promptly at 3:15.

Website. ABV's internal website is [abvchorus.org](http://abvchorus.org). Here's what you'll find there:

- o **Overview page with the year's rehearsal calendar and other info, including links to ABV docs.**
- o A page with current season's music (in pdfs), sectional mp3s, translations, etc.
- o A page with all ABV music from the recent past
- o A page with random collection of ABV-related media

Section Leaders. Each section has one or more section leaders who will provide musical assistance and other guidance. Current leaders (2024-25) are:

- **Sopranos**: Judith Schwartz, [jschwartz.licsw@gmail.com](mailto:jschwartz.licsw@gmail.com), 978-808-5217; Lisa Kipen-Hershenson, [cantorkh@gmail.com](mailto:cantorkh@gmail.com), 857-212-6138
- **Altos**: Dana Schaul-Yoder, [dana.schaulyoder@gmail.com](mailto:dana.schaulyoder@gmail.com), 617-968-3069; Kim Myers, [kmeyers1@gmail.com](mailto:kmeyers1@gmail.com), 617-645-3645
- **Tenors**: Linda Gritz, [katzgritz@gmail.com](mailto:katzgritz@gmail.com), 617-776-0448
- **Basses**: Bob Follansbee, [bobmoshe@gmail.com](mailto:bobmoshe@gmail.com), 617-272-5962

Volunteer organization structure: A volunteer **Steering Committee** (SC) that provides oversight to chorus operation and direction. Current steering committee members (and sections) are:

Derek "Leybl" David, (Music Director), Judith Schwartz (S), Lily Weitzman (S), Laura Derman (A), Dana Schaul-Yoder (A), Norm Berman (T), Linda Gritz (T), Dianne Perlmutter (T), Peter Rhodes (T), Davey Shlasko (T), and Bob Follansbee (B)

ABV has an informal volunteer **Infrastructure Team** that assists with various chorus logistics: Treasurer - Sarah Axelrod (A), [abvchorus.org](http://abvchorus.org) Website and email address maintenance - Margery Meadow (A), ABV Librarian - Marcia Goldensher (A), Membership Lists - Andy Strauss (B), New Members – Peter Rhodes (T), Attire Maven - Judith Schwartz (S)

Other volunteer tasks, such as concert logistics and social events, arise throughout the year and all members are welcome to step forward for these activities.

Chorus communications. ABV uses two email groups that are mandatory for chorus matters, and one that is optional for informal communication:

- o abeserevelt@googlegroups.com – **for whole chorus matters only.** Messages to this list will typically come only from the Music Director or the Steering or Infrastructure Committees.
- o Sectional lists, e.g., abv-altos@googlegroups.com, where messages are typically initiated by section leader **about sectional matters only.**
- o abv-shmooze@googlegroups.com – **Optional** list for informal matters to be shared with ABV compatriots (e.g., misplaced music, calls for political action, your uncle's cat video on YouTube, sale of autographed Karl [or Groucho] Marx manuscript, etc.). Anyone can initiate a shmooze message.

Dues. Chorus dues are essential for ABV's operation, but we do not want dues to be an impediment to joining. More information on this year's dues amounts and collection will be available in the coming weeks. Please see the [Policies document](#) for more information on the Dues policy.

Access to music. Scores will be sent out in advance or are available at [abvchorus.org](http://abvchorus.org). Chorus members are responsible for printing their own music. If you have a one-time situation where you cannot print, email [abvlibrarian@gmail.com](mailto:abvlibrarian@gmail.com) as early in the week as possible. **Late Friday or Saturday requests may not be seen.**

Concert schedule. ABV usually has one major concert each year, typically in the Spring, and often has other performance opportunities during the year. As they become known, they are posted on the calendar at [abvchorus.org](http://abvchorus.org).

Chamber ensemble. ABV has a small, audition ensemble, the "mini-ensemble," for more proficient singers who want additional challenges and performance opportunities.

New member supports. Newcomer supports include: name tags, section buddies to help get you settled and oriented to the music, mp3s for old and new repertoire, music binders, and social gatherings.

Health and safety. We follow Boston Workers Circle community health guidelines ([circleboston.org/covid-information/](http://circleboston.org/covid-information/)). Because singing in a group poses additional risks with respiratory illnesses, rehearsal and concert safety decisions will be adjusted by the SC in light of on-going Boston Public Health, MA-HHS, and CDC disease prevalence data and recommendations.

WE HEAR YOU! All comments, commendations, commiserations, and complaints about ABV operations, rehearsals, etc., should be sent to our Ombudsmen, Brent Whelan (bass) [jgbwhelan@gmail.com](mailto:jgbwhelan@gmail.com) who will pass them on to the Steering Committee. Please specify if you wish to remain anonymous.

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