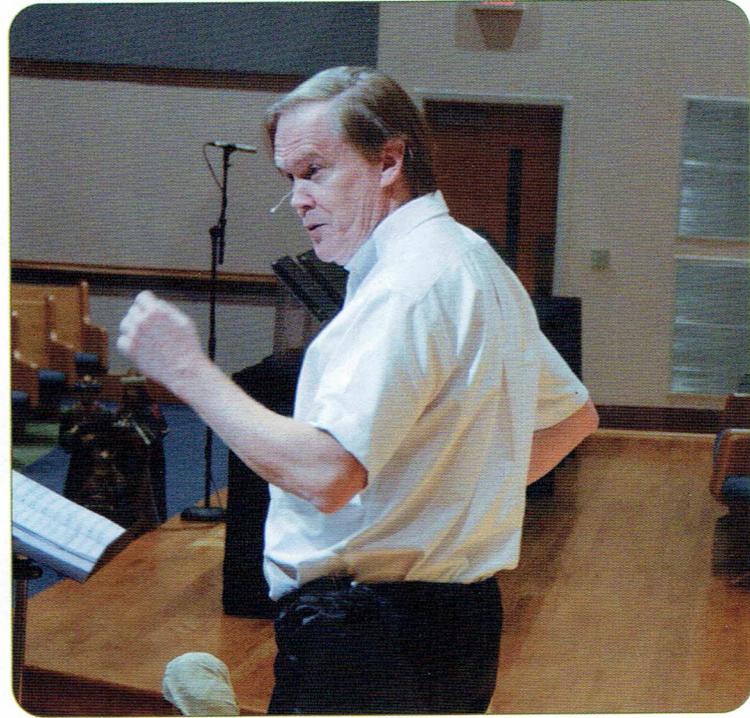


performance. Under Choplin's guidance, an extra rehearsal was introduced, allowing singers to acclimate to his unique style, expectations, and personality. Demonstrating a strong belief in the importance of the group's community aspect, he introduced a cookie reception at last year's initial meeting with the goal of fostering socialization and rapport-building. (He had observed that many singers left rehearsal after minimal interactions, despite joining with the intention of connecting with others.) Canterbury deemed it a great success, and an excellent opportunity to meet many other choir members outside of those they stand beside while performing.

Auditions are not required to join the choir, and each year brings its own diverse group, from experienced vocalists (church choirs, high school, etc.) to those simply wishing to perform without a long-term commitment. While the group has historically appealed to an older demographic, there has been a recent increase in younger participants over the past several years. Canterbury believes this influx is due in part to singers dedicated to preserving the tradition, who actively encourage their friends to participate.

"What I really never want is for the performance to be a 'sing-along,' where members bring their scores and sing through the piece," said Choplin. "Messiah" is a technically complex work that requires demanding vocals and careful consideration by its performers. In contrast, Choplin is emphatic that he does not want "Messiah" to be a "museum piece." Clearly, his focus is on a high-quality performance, not casual participation. "From the beginning, I wanted it to be a brand new work — something that was totally alive for today, with a lot of energy," he said.

The entire composition of the original, structured in three parts, typically runs for about three hours. However, the Cary Community Choir will present a condensed version — focusing on the Christmas section, the "Hallelujah" chorus, and the finale — for a moving performance lasting one and a half hours, which is still practically inconceivable considering the short period of rehearsal time.



Choplin grew up among many who tended to find classical music a bit boring. The highly respected conductor assures audiences, however, that his rendition of "Messiah" is anything but. When asked if he has a predetermined notion of exactly how he wants the piece to sound going into auditions, Choplin explains that he approaches the process with a flexible mindset, always reacting and adjusting to the sound he hears, with his focus continually remaining on enhancing and infusing the piece with more vitality and energy. He's a perfectionist with a keen ear according to Ms. Canterbury. Emphasis is placed on musicality, with the director stressing proper diction, enunciation and cut-offs — preventing fading out or stopping inconsistently, thereby communicating an artistic unity and professionalism to the audience. Yet, Canterbury eagerly notes, Choplin possesses an incredible sense of humor, attributing it as a key factor in his ability to highly motivate and elicit the very best from the group.

The Cary Community Choir is dedicated to providing an inclusive environment while fostering community spirit. Join them in celebrating the holiday season with this highly anticipated grand tradition, showcasing their talent, dedication and commitment, in their 55th annual performance of Handel's timeless classic.

*Vocalists interested in singing with the choir must pre-register online at the group's website, [carycommunitychoir.org](http://carycommunitychoir.org). Tickets to attend the performance at the Westwood Baptist Church on Sunday, December 7, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. are required, but free of charge. They are also available on the website. [SL](#)*

