

Buffalo Choral Arts Society Board Position Candidate Form

Name : Thomas Naber

Date: 5/22/2023

Position: President

1. Why do you want to be on the BCAS board of directors?

BCAS is at a pivotal point in its history. Marcia is retiring after 36 illustrious years as our Music Director, and David Curtis is taking the helm. With this transition, we have the opportunity to envision how we see BCAS growing in through this to have a lasting impact on BCAS for years to come! I've had the opportunity to speak with David in meetings, and he has some truly exciting ideas for our future and I would love to be given the opportunity to continue working with him and leading BCAS into the next phase of our history!

2. What are your major concerns, and how would you like to address them?

The first major concern I have is that arts organizations, in general and ours specifically, are having more difficulty attracting audiences than in the past. I will take a look at our marketing campaigns to evaluate their effect relative to their cost and reestablish/refresh consistent communication between BCAS and our audience members and the community. Additionally, since ticket sales make up the greatest part of our revenue, I plan to revive and reimagine the patron drive to attract new and returning donors as well as seek corporate donors to help us continue to produce exciting concerts for the WNY community.

Another concern is attracting and retaining younger members and audience members in order to remain current and remain one of the premier arts organizations in Western New York. One way we can do this is to evaluate our repertoire and our brand image to make sure that, from an outside perspective, BCAS is attractive to people of *all ages*. Additionally, I would like to work with David and the board about collaborating regularly with HS choruses and other community ensembles in order to help increase the awareness of BCAS in the next generation of singers and musicians.

Lastly, as with any transition, there will be both excitement and there will be bumps along the way as we transition to a new Music Director. There will be ideas and concerns from our membership as we embark on our next season. My goal will be to make sure all of these are heard and considered, and the board addresses all needs of the chorus.

3. What is your vision for BCAS during the next two years?

The first thing I see is BCAS embracing our new Music Director and exploring new and exciting ways to bring the choral art to Western New York. The current season was very successful, especially as our first season since the start of the pandemic. I see BCAS continuing that success and reaching even new heights.

I want BCAS to continue our comeback from covid through creating a strategic 5 - year plan to address our goals as an organization. A core part of this will be soliciting feedback from our members and audiences. At the end of the next two years I would like to see BCAS in an even stronger financial position that allows us the ability to present unique and innovative performances and concerts.

Candidate Profile

1. How long have you been a member of BCAS?

1. How long have you been a member of BCAS?

I have been a member of BCAS for 9 years.

2. Describe your background and experiences relevant to BCAS?

I have been a member at large on the board for the past 7 years. During that time I have participated in the development of a new website and have been a member of the marketing and publicity committees. I have been the chair of the Ticket Committee. Through the ticket committee I have streamlined online sales for tickets and introduced a season ticket option for our regular supporters. This past year I revived our program ad campaign for our final concert of the season. This past year I was on the search committee for the next music director. In 2018 I was the recipient of the Michael A. Fabiniak award for Service to Buffalo Choral Arts Society.

3. Do you have previous Board experience from any organization? Please explain.

I am currently the president of the Western New York Chapter of the Computer Science Teachers Association, through which I plan regular chapter meetings and professional development, as well as advocate for the advancement of Computer Science Education in WNY.

Name: Beth Jasen
Date: May 21, 2023

Position: Secretary

1. Why do you want to be on the board of directors?

I have enjoyed my time as secretary on the board for the past 5 years. The best part about serving this organization is the people we get to work with. While we faced many challenges over the past 5 years, from losing John to navigating covid, I look forward to the bright future BCAS has with Dave Curtis and Bob Hull. I would like to continue serving the members of BCAS by strengthening our identity as a chorus. BCAS has been my home for almost 10 years and I am grateful to this organization. It would be an honor to serve you, the members of the chorus, for another two years.

2. What are your major concerns, and how would you like to address them.

We all know the upcoming season will be a year of change and excitement for BCAS. I see our organization having many opportunities in the future that we can embrace to strengthen our chorus for ourselves and our community.

Retaining members has always been a concern for BCAS, and in the next two years I hope to improve our retention from year to year. Social events are something I would like to get back to, and can explore ideas from the past as well as new ideas to help foster our choral community. Another opportunity I would like to see happen in the future is collaborations with other groups to diversify our choral literature and venues. There is a balance of keeping beloved classics and bringing in new pieces and venues to enjoy. There are many opportunities for collaboration within the Buffalo music community that we can explore.

While we hate to talk about money, ticket sales and revenue do impact our organization's ability to thrive. My hope is that by partnering with groups or performing in new and varied venues, we can take some of the individual pressure off of members. As a board we will think creatively to expand our monetary intake while keeping our systems in place and looking for more opportunities.

Finally, I feel every member has important ideas to bring to the organization. I would like to implement a portion of our board meetings where members can bring their ideas to the table or make suggestions for the board to consider. I also believe the board agendas and discussions should be made accessible to members, with the possibility to zoom or be present at more than our annual meeting.

3. What is your vision for BCAS during the next year?

I am so very excited for the next year and what BCAS has to offer. This was our first "full" season since covid hit in 2020, and there was so much we enjoyed. Next year we can keep the ball rolling, and try some new things as well. I look forward to our four concerts, but also how we

can think outside the box and bring new ideas. I hope to bring more social events for our members, and fully embrace our season with David and Bob.

Candidate Profile:

1. How long have you been a member of BCAS?

I joined BCAS the fall of 2013, so just roughly under 10 years!

2. Describe your background and experiences related to BCAS.

I have served as Secretary for the past 5 years. I also am a teacher at Clevehill Elementary and serve as technical director for our High School musicals for the past two years. Music has always been my passion and I've been singing in various choruses since high school.

3. Do you have any previous board experience from any organization? Please explain.

I served on executive boards in college for our chamber orchestra, honors music association, and honors teaching association. Presently, I serve on the strategic planning committee in our district with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. I have been privileged to be Secretary of BCAS for the past 5 years.

Buffalo Choral Arts Society

Board Position Candidate Form

Name : Sarah Fiegel

Date: 5/23/23

Position: Member at-large

1. Why do you want to be on the BCAS board of directors?

I have found my first year of board membership incredibly rewarding, and I would like to continue the work we have started. I mentioned in my candidate profile for the last election that the work we do in the next year or two is going to set this choir up for potentially decades – that’s not a responsibility to take lightly. I am proud of the work we did on the search committee, and I am proud of the work we’ve done as a board to set this transition up for success. I’m excited about the ideas we have been hearing in meetings, both in our own planning and from David. I would be honored to continue facilitating our transition as a group, and ensure member concerns or questions are addressed in a timely manner.

2. What are your major concerns, and how would you like to address them?

With Marcia’s retirement and David coming onboard, the board will be the primary group responsible for ensuring a smooth transition. I anticipate that we will see some membership change-over – some may choose to join Marcia in her retirement, and new singers will surely join under David’s direction. I have been brainstorming how we might put together a “welcome packet” for new members, as well as how we can continue to streamline communication between members & the board (in both directions!)

I am also interested in continuing to modernize our marketing and social media. Social media is a powerful (and free!) marketing vehicle to publicize our concerts and get our name out into the community. In meetings with the board, David has already shared some amazing ideas for how we can continue to utilize social media to our advantage, and I would love the opportunity to implement those ideas. Increasing our name recognition can help drive ever-important ticket sales at little-to-no cost.

A change of director is bound to bring some bumps in the road. Each member of this choir is likely going to be walking in come September with a range of different ideas, emotions, and concerns. One of my primary objectives as a board member is to ensure those voices are heard, & that the board is addressing concerns or ideas in a timely manner.

3. What is your vision for BCAS during the next year?

Aside from some pretty spectacular music, the next year is going to be transformative for our group. I have had the privilege to hear many of David’s ideas, and I couldn’t be more excited – it’s such a wonderful blend of maintaining our traditions alongside fresh ideas. One concept David mentioned was increasing our volunteer presence in the community: it gets our name out there, and it provides opportunities for members to spend time together outside of rehearsal. In the survey Tom & I sent out in the fall, so many members said they want to get back to having more social events – I would love to see

more opportunities for those events, within the group or in the community at large.

Candidate Profile

1. How long have you been a member of BCAS?

I have been a member of BCAS for seven years and a board member for one year.

2. Describe your background and experiences relevant to BCAS?

In the past year, my primary role on the board has been as our social media manager. I have been leveraging our existing Instagram & Facebook accounts, as well as creating and managing a new TikTok account. In the last 90 days alone, our Instagram following has grown by 18 followers. In the same window, we have increased the number of interactions on Instagram posts from non-followers by 90%. Since its inception, our TikTok has gained 90 followers, 2,138 likes, and over 17,000 views on videos. I have also worked alongside Tom on some elements of publicity in tandem with our social media accounts to help drive ticket sales.

In addition to my time with the board, I also had the privilege to serve on our director search committee. The committee met several times in the fall and winter. In the fall, I collaborated with other members of the committee to create a member interest survey and analyze its results – the information from which has been invaluable in both our search and for the board at large. We interviewed several candidates, and (as you all know) ultimately offered the position to David. Prior to my tenure as a board member, I volunteered numerous times for various choir events and fundraisers, including multiple Sabres 50-50 games.

While not directly related to music, my background as an educator has certainly had transferable skills this year. As a teacher, on any given day I have upwards of 100 stakeholders to whom I am accountable — students, parents, my teammates, administrators, etc. Very often, the interests of those stakeholders are in direct conflict with one another, as well as with my goals for what needs to be accomplished within a very tight timeframe. The time management, organization, compromise, and prioritization skills I use daily as a teacher have translated well to a board position.

3. Do you have previous Board experience from any organization? Please explain.

Most recently, I served as a club advisor for Mill Middle School's drama club. In that role, I collaborated with two other colleagues to choose a musical (Mill's first in 12 years!), prepare 84 students for the audition process, conduct those auditions, and begin the rehearsal process (until tragically interrupted by COVID one month into rehearsal). In college, I was a founding member and secretary of SUNY Geneseo's chapter of Dumbledore's Army, a charity-centered international organization. While with the group, we completed multiple literature-themed events to support local and international causes, both in conjunction with and independent of the international DA organization. I was also the secretary of my high school's drama club and student director of our audition-only SATB ensemble during the year our choir took their first trip to Disney. I was responsible for running sectionals to prepare for the Candlelight Processional and assisting in ensuring 65 minors got their travel paperwork, money, and permission slips organized in a timely manner.

Buffalo Choral Arts Society
Board Position Candidate Form

Name : Chris Jasen

Date: 5/19/2023

Position: Member at Large

1. Why do you want to be on the BCAS board of directors?

I have enjoyed my time on the board so far, and I am looking forward to next year's exciting season.

2. What are your major concerns, and how would you like to address them?

We've made some strides in growing the chorus, but continuing to grow the membership will be very important. Our incoming music director has already made several suggestions in this regard and I would love to work with him and the rest of the Board on these ideas.

3. What is your vision for BCAS during the next year?

In addition to growing the membership, we need to find a way to increase our audience as well. Fund raising is an important supplement to our budget, but the life blood will always be ticket sales. We especially need to draw in a younger crowd, and find a way to be ambassadors to high school choruses in the area, so students see there is an opportunity to continue with music once they are in adult hood.

Candidate Profile

1. How long have you been a member of BCAS?

I have been a member of BCAS since 2009 and I have been an at-large board member since 2019.

2. Describe your background and experiences relevant to BCAS?

This is the only group that I regularly sing with.

3. Do you have previous Board experience from any organization? Please explain.

Yes I was very involved in student government in college.

GAIL LEARY: APPLICATION FOR MEMBER AT-LARGE
2023-2024 SEASON

I. EXPERIENCE:

- 29 years in BCAS (Old-timer)
- 13 years as Vice President
- Trip coordinator for Washington, DC and New York City trips
- Assisted with the portfolio application process for being accepted to perform at the National Cathedral, St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Kennedy Center, and Walter Reed.
- Organizer of fall BCAS Welcome Back picnics
- Co-chaired fund raisers for replacement of our old risers
- Served on budget committee for 6 years
- Serves as Board liaison to the music librarian
- Campaign 100 creator which has raised over \$55,000 over the past several years
- Organized Pearl Street and other after concert get togethers
- Worked on establishing written policies and procedures for the Board
- I have chaired the preparation process for grants from Erie County and Arts Services Inc. which we received for at least two years.
- Union president of East Aurora Teachers Association (union) for 6 years
- Served as co-chair of music department for many years, in addition to District Curriculum council and Wellness Committee
- Middle school band director that traveled throughout the Northeast representing Western New York in New York City, Washington, DC, Baltimore, Indianapolis, etc,
- Received the NYSUT leadership award and my band was invited to the White House.

II. GOALS FOR THE 2023-24 SEASON:

- Continue as the Board liaison for the music library
- Continue to be the administrator of the C100 and our donor campaign which is now between 400-500 names
- Coordinate after concert social events
- I would like to be the Sunshine coordinator and help us support members in need of our kindness.
- Continue to put my two cents in for the good of the chorus
- Support our new director as he begins his BCAS journey

III. PERSONAL COMMENTS:

- It has been a wonderful journey working for the good of this chorus. So many people have given so much of their hearts and souls and time to bring this chorus to where it is today. It has been my pleasure to give back as much as I can during this time of my life. The Board of Directors is such a dedicated group of individuals, each bringing their own skills and strengths to every task at hand. It is an honor to serve this chorus and its members as we continue to be the choral ambassadors of Western New York.
- If you decide to vote for me, I will be honest and upfront with you. I will need to do a great deal of my work for the chorus in my time at home. Much of it takes hours. I may not always attend rehearsal because of weather, etc. I will sing when I feel that I have had the time to practice and prepare so that I won't ruin the vocal quality of the chorus!

Buffalo Choral Arts Society

Board Position Candidate Form

Name : Alec Michalski

Date: 05/23/2023

Position: Member at Large

1. Why do you want to be on the BCAS board of directors?
I think I have a lot to offer to the group as far as ideas go and I am willing to put in the work necessary to make our group better as a whole.

2. What are your major concerns, and how would you like to address them?
I don't have any major concerns with the group. We are at a wonderful standpoint to welcome our new director for his first season!

3. What is your vision for BCAS during the next year?
I want to see a lot more volunteerism and sense of community when it comes to rehearsing, doing fund drives, or even just hosting events when we can all get to know each other better and really become a better family.

Candidate Profile

1. How long have you been a member of BCAS?
This upcoming season will be my 6th with the group (I don't know if that counts due to the COVID hiatus)

2. Describe your background and experiences relevant to BCAS?
 - Participated in ECMEA All County
 - Plays guitar, bass, and ukulele
 - That's it
 - Oh, I also sang in a church choir for like 5 years

3. Do you have previous Board experience from any organization? Please explain.
I've been a Member at Large and head of Operations for about 3 years now for BCAS

Buffalo Choral Arts Society
Board Position Candidate Form

Name : Kevin Phalen

Date: May 24, 2023

Position: At-Large

1. Why do you want to be on the BCAS board of directors? While stepping down from the President's position after 12 years, I'd like to maintain a presence to assist the new board with my 20+ years of experience and as officer and 40 years as a member.
2. What are your major concerns, and how would you like to address them? To continue helping reshape BCAS for the future following societal changes from the Covid Crisis.
3. What is your vision for BCAS during the next year? Regrowing our audience numbers and revenue streams.

Candidate Profile

1. How long have you been a member of BCAS? 40 years
2. Describe your background and experiences relevant to BCAS?
Member since 1983
At-Large Board Member – 2 years in the mid 1980s
Treasurer – 9 years
President – 12 years
3. Do you have previous Board experience from any organization? Please explain.
President of my local Parish Council and chairman of Liturgy Commission

Buffalo Choral Arts Society
Board Position Candidate Form

Name : Ali (Louis) Searer

Date: 5/25/23

Position: Member At Large

1. ***Why do you want to be on the BCAS board of directors?***

Because y'all have been asking (...or peer pressuring...) me to run for at least the last decade, so FINE, here I am! Okay, but seriously, I have debated running each year for a long time. I like volunteering to help BCAS in whatever ways I can, and I think it would be great to do so in an official capacity while being able to help shape the future of the group.

2. ***What are your major concerns, and how would you like to address them?***

I am concerned about audience sizes decreasing, and the difficulty I've been having selling tickets as I know all of you have experienced (the Riv doesn't count - that one's easy). My ideas for tackling that are mostly in the brainstorming phase, but I first heard of BCAS when I was singing with my high school choir and the one concert I attended for extra credit stuck with me. It was an easy decision to audition for the group when I decided to transfer to UB, so one of my ideas is that teaming up with local high school choral conductors to create a member pipeline for the kids staying local after graduation would be a great start at growing our audiences by giving us that supply of fresh faces as well as their family and friends who would hopefully support them by purchasing tickets and telling others about our concerts. I know I have had several students in my musicals the last few years who I would LOVE to be able to pull into the group.

I envision more fundraising efforts and more publicity efforts taking place, so that we can try new things and work toward getting over the hump from people simply recognizing our name to being eager to buy tickets to our concerts without needing to hard sell all our friends and family members. I also envision more community collaboration - things like singing concerts with high school choirs, bringing composers in to work with us like we did prior to this whole pandemic, perhaps doing a staged reading of a musical with local actors, or the return of our cabaret fundraisers.

3. ***What is your vision for BCAS during the next year?***

I think next year is going to be an exciting, but odd one for all of us. I remember the first rehearsal of the 2019-2020 season, feeling the dichotomy - the sense of "Ahh, it's good to be back," and the "This feels strange without John here." I assume that those of us who have been

with the chorus for many years will be feeling a little bit like strangers in our own homes while we make our next transition without Marcia at the helm of things. I'd like to see the board and the membership alike focus on making said transition a smooth one for everyone involved. I know we'll make David feel wholly welcome as (I hope, at least!) we did for Bob. I picture the group doing more social activities together to reinvigorate our sense of camaraderie and to bring the newer members into the fold of feeling like a true part of the BCAS family. It'll be about reintroducing ourselves to the Buffalo community AND to each other, and about having FUN while making beautiful, melodic art. Most importantly I think next season will be one where we focus together on defining where we'd like this next chapter of BCAS to take us.

Candidate Profile

1. **How long have you been a member of BCAS?** Since 2008....woah, WHERE did fifteen years go?!
2. **Describe your background and experiences relevant to BCAS?** In terms of behind-the-scenes creative endeavors, I've had the pleasure of co-directing several musicals at Potters Road Elementary, being a general creative team assistant at West Seneca West Middle, being the stage crew manager at Lancaster Middle School, and being the vocal director for Cheektowaga High School's production of Footloose this year. I've been on the audition panels for each of those shows, and I've been in more theatrical productions than I can keep track of at this point. Once I discovered Keith Ersing's choral department at West Seneca West Senior High, I joined every single choir he was able to put me in.

After nearly working nearly a decade as a manager in retail, I went full time with my own photography business, which has given me plenty of transferable skills (like leadership, communication, creativity, problem solving, marketing, you get the idea...) from wearing ALL. THE. HATS.

Since auditioning for BCAS in '08, I have worked with the social media committee, publicity committee, the library crew, setup crew, fundraising committee, and I'm sure I'm forgetting something. I have been lining the group up for our processions for probably 6 years now. I enjoy bouncing around and helping out wherever I can.

3. **Do you have previous Board experience from any organization? Please explain.** I was on my high school class board, and I've been assisting BCAS board members with their projects and committees without being an official member for quite some time.

Buffalo Choral Arts Society
Board Position Candidate Form

Name : Jeffrey Shevlin

Position: Member at Large

1. Why do you want to be on the BCAS board of directors? I have been in the choir for 12 years now and think I have a lot of insight with our history as well as being in the Buffalo Philharmonic Choir. Also as an attorney I have a lot to contribute with that regard.

2. What are your major concerns, and how would you like to address them? Declining ticket sales and transitioning to new leadership. One of the things I have been asking about is looking into a live stream of the performance as there are many members etc that have relocated, and families of singers that I think could be a new market if we can work out the costs and permissions. In the transitions it would be great support and sounding board for the choir to the new director.

3. What is your vision for BCAS during the next year?
To expand our repertoire and continue to develop and grow as a choir. We have a new leader but the choirs traditions and opportunities will continue to carry forward.

Candidate Profile

1. How long have you been a member of BCAS?
12 years

2. Describe your background and experiences relevant to BCAS?
I am an attorney so I have a lot of skills and training that could be useful particularly in trying to implement virtual streaming. I also have been singing since grade school and sing with the Buffalo Philharmonic Choir so I have seen many different styles and organizations.

3. Do you have previous Board experience from any organization? Please explain.
No