

MAKING THE SWITCH

A Customer Success Story with Robbin Rose and the Missoula Community Chorus





ABOUT ROBBIN ROSE

Singing is infectious and Robbin was infected early! The first choir she sang with (in 5th grade) was the Missoula all-City Choraliers. She attended University of Montana, majoring in voice, and then sang operatic and musical theater roles in regional companies for several seasons. She holds an advanced degree in Music Thanatology (prescriptive music for those nearing the end of life). Group music making has always been her favorite sport.

She and her husband, Jon, sing with the 80-voice Missoula Community Chorus, which they founded in 2001. In recent years, she has also sung with Missoula Symphony Chorale, Cantanti Missoula, and Choro Nuevo. Last year, she toured South Korea with Dolce Canto and the Monroe Crossing Bluegrass Band.

Robbin and Jon also founded and continue to operate MyMusicFolders.com - manufacturing and supplying music folders to schools, churches, and groups.



ABOUT MISSOULA COMMUNITY CHORUS



The Missoula Community Chorus was organized over the summer of 2001 and began rehearsals September 13th that year. Their first public appearance was one week later at Caras Park in midtown Missoula at the Memorial Service for 9/11. Those circumstances only increased their commitment to creating community through music-making.

As a non-auditioned 80+ member community chorus, their members range from those with graduate-level music degrees and professional music experience to singers who do not read music but are willing to learn! American compos-

er David Dickau composed "A Hope Carol" in honor of their 10th anniversary, which speaks to the joy of making music for us all. Under the direction of Dr. Ron Wilcott, they have toured rural western Montana extensively, bringing the "big choir" sound to those in smaller communities, and often collaborate with other musical groups for spectacular performances of classical and contemporary music.



SUMMARY



The Missoula Community Chorus is no stranger to choir management solutions. They've tried everything from Excel, to Google Drive, to Microsoft Office, to all-in-one choir management solutions, until finally finding a home with [Chorus Connection](#).

After implementing Chorus Connection in 2017, they saw:

- A 25% increase in user utilization of the choir management platform
- Enhanced musicianship from the chorus
- Reduced time spent on administrative tasks and a decreased need for support
- Streamlined communications and an added level of professionalism from the chorus leadership

THE NEED FOR AN ALL-IN-ONE CHOIR MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

Over the years, the chorus had used a variety of organizational tools from Excel, to Google Drive, to Microsoft Office. But even with these organizational tools in place, the chorus still struggled to manage chorus communications. They also lacked a good solution for tracking attendance, most of which was tracked with pen and paper. They wanted a tool that could help them streamline chorus announcements by consolidating them into one place and also a tool that featured a built-in solution for managing attendance. The need for a tool that managed everything in one place led them to investigate possible solutions.



After attending a variety of choral conferences, Robbin started to learn more about choir management software. She gathered information at conferences and brought ideas back to the board. The board then looked at a variety of choir management solutions that were available at the time and initially decided to invest in one of the platforms.



CHALLENGES

1

LOW USER
UTILIZATION

2

COMPLEXITY
OF USE

3

SERVER
DOWNTIME

4

NOT
MOBILE-FRIENDLY

After implementing the first “all-in-one” choir management platform, they started running into some unexpected challenges. From the administrative side, the two chorus managers at Missoula Community Chorus and Robbin all felt that this particular software was too complex to use. It had too many sub-menus, the music upload feature was not intuitive, and every time they tried to do something in the platform, they found themselves having to look up instructions on how to do it. The company would also push through unintuitive updates to the platform causing the chorus leadership frustrations in having to relearn the features and also resulting in severe downtimes with the platform. Needless to say, a lot of time was spent contacting support.

The platform was also challenging for users. “We found that we had to do everything on a desktop computer because it was too complicated to do on smaller devices,” Robbin said. This made the platform difficult to use “on-the-go” which ultimately meant that less people were using the platform on a regular basis. The chorus managers also found themselves having to set up weekly trainings with the chorus members on how to use the platform. This took up volunteer time as well as rehearsal time.

Yet still, even after all of the trainings, the chorus leadership was having a hard time getting members to actually use the platform. “Initially, I thought it would be great solution. But this particular platform is only for users who are really into technology or who really like to figure out new things,” Robbin confessed. “But if you are a chorus that just needs something to work, is easy for everyone to access, or you have users who lack technological skills, then it might not be the right fit for you.”



“While this new platform was a big improvement over our previous ‘system,’ we consistently had difficulty getting our singers to access it,” Robbin continued. “So, I began to look for alternatives.”



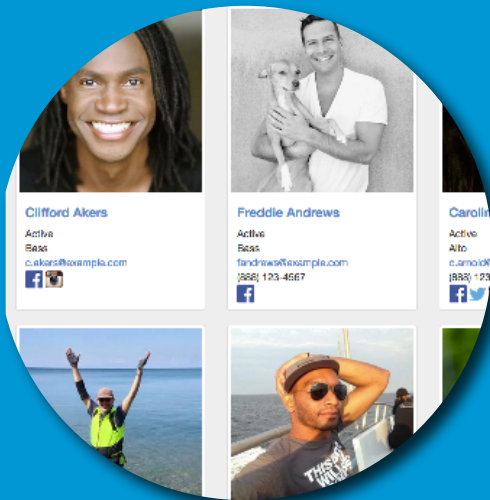
MEETING CHORUS CONNECTION

Robbin eventually found her way to Chorus Connection at another choral conference where she visited their exhibit booth. When considering the change to Chorus Connection, the chorus leadership had in-depth phone consultations with Jacob, the Founder and CEO of Chorus Connection, to review the platform together before recommending it to the board.

"Both of our chorus managers immediately knew that they preferred Chorus Connection before we even purchased it. With its simple interface, it didn't seem complicated to find things - unlike the complexity of the other choir management system," Robbin said. After only watching Chorus Connection's [YouTube instructional videos](#), the chorus managers felt comfortable using the platform right away without the need for additional training or support.



A SIMPLE INTERFACE MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE



Robbin said that the main benefit of Chorus Connection is its ease of use. "While we can require paid staff to use choir management software, getting the singers to consistently use it was the challenge that we had to overcome. Chorus Connection's clean, intuitive interface has made all the difference!"

The chorus leadership spent only about five minutes telling the chorus members about the platform and, since then, they haven't had to do any additional trainings. Robbin

said, "We have been very pleased with how easily the singers accepted and accessed Chorus Connection from the start. There have been very few complaints or problems!"

Since its implementation, Robbin said, "The increase in singers using Chorus Connection versus those who used the other platform is significant. Our singers (and staff) have embraced it, and we are happily expanding our use of this tool. Everyone with a smartphone or tablet (many no longer have a desktop computers) can easily find their way around the site, access their rehearsal tracks, and link to their calendars. We are very happy!"



THE BENEFITS OF CHORUS CONNECTION

When choosing a new all-in-one choir management solution, Robbin's main priority was to get more singers to use the software. Chorus Connection not only helped her achieve this goal, but it also helped her achieve other goals somewhat unexpectedly. These were the five main benefits she found using Chorus Connection.

1

25% INCREASE IN USER
UTILIZATION

2

5-STAR EXCELLENT SUPPORT

3

SAVED TIME AND INCREASED
PRODUCTIVITY

4

VALUE OUTWEIGHED COST

5

ENHANCED
MUSICAL RESULTS



25% INCREASE IN USER UTILIZATION

When asked to gauge the success of Chorus Connection, Robbin said that the user utilization was a clear indicator for its success. With Chorus Connection, user utilization of the choir management software increased by 25%.

There's only one person in the chorus who does not use Chorus Connection. Robbin said, "You have to understand that there will always be that one person who doesn't use it. But I was so pleased with the usage - it was clear that we chose more wisely the second time around with Chorus Connection."



5-STAR EXCELLENT SUPPORT

While their previous platform required constant need for support, Robbin stated that Chorus Connection's support was great during implementation and since then, they haven't needed to use it. "I would give excellent ratings to Chorus Connection's support in that way - we don't need to use it at all! We've also never had something shift in the platform so dramatically that we've needed to call support. We've always felt able to maneuver through things on our own," she said.



SAVED TIME AND INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

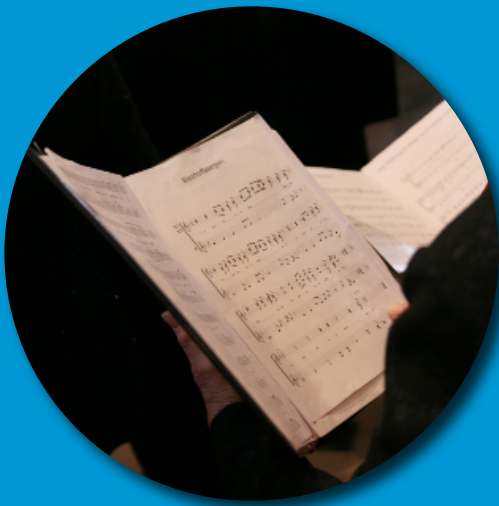
"Chorus Connection has definitely helped us with better attendance (and personal attendance reporting responsibility), ease of access to rehearsal recordings, announcements, and multi-group calendar and messaging - all of this saves time for staff/volunteers," Robbin said. The calendar module is Robbin's favorite feature because it helps her stay organized so she never misses an important event.





VALUE OUTWEIGHED COST

While Chorus Connection was more expensive than the other platform, Robbin's husband and Treasurer of Missoula Community Chorus, Jon, says that the benefits that they have seen in added communication and professional capabilities is worth it. "We feel more secure and confident that people are getting the messages they are supposed to get, that we are keeping track of everything that happens in rehearsals, and it generally improves the quality of the chorus," Jon explained.



ENHANCED MUSICAL RESULTS

Because singers are using the platform, the chorus has also achieved better musical results. The singers are better prepared, absences are logged consistently, and important notices are sent in a way that singers can easily access the information they need.

"It's easier for the singers to access the tools we provide to become better musicians," Robbin said. "We probably had over twenty people who never logged into our previous system when we had it, and so they likely never utilized our rehearsal tracks. Now, with Chorus Connection, they really do use them." She continued, "Plus, our rehearsals

are more productive as well because so much 'housekeeping' is taken care of outside of rehearsal time!"

IN CLOSING

"Chorus Connection makes it easy to receive information, easy to respond, and easy to access the tools we need. Our group is more cohesive and the performance level is coming up!" Robbin said. "I'd recommend that any chorus that is considering a choir management tool, go to [Chorus Connection](#) and [sign up for a free trial](#). Add a few people to your free trial and imagine the possibilities of how you could organize your group so much quicker and more effectively than you ever have before!"

ARE YOU READY TO MAKE THE SWITCH?



**SIGN UP FOR A FREE TRIAL
OF CHORUS CONNECTION! ➔**