

Good evening everyone and thank you so much for coming tonight. Let us begin with a prayer.

Tonight's meeting has one purpose. Sharing with you the direction we are taking to improve the overall financial health of the Choir School as we move through the next year and beyond. At the conclusion of the presentation you will have an opportunity to ask questions. You will also receive a one-page summary of the significant details. Both the slide show and one-page summary will be uploaded to our website for anyone who is not able to make it tonight.

Tonight is not about the details of an annual budget. That is for another time and another group of finance committee members. Rather, we focus on the overall financial standing of our school.

Let me say again what a special place this is. WE have great kids, outstanding teachers, wonderful parents, dedicated support staff; altogether a community of people who believe in the values and the mission of St. Michael's Choir School.

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We have, as you know, a rather cumbersome way of funding. The history of how we arrived at where we are is fairly well documented and does not need review this evening. Nevertheless, here we are. Funds are provided by three separate, yet interdependent entities. TCDSB funds the academic portion of the expenses while the Choir School and the Archdiocese have commitments for the delivery of the entire music program. As Director, I have no influence or control over TCDSB funds. I have some influence and level of persuasion at the Archdiocese but no control. So we are left to talk about the Choir School itself.

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Fundamentally, the school is funded through three distinct sources. Concerts and recordings, Donations, and Tuition. Since my arrival in August, I have spent considerable amount of time absorbing the financial picture of the school. Consider the first two numbered items: I can say with certainty, that we, {the administration} are not doing nearly as well as we can to maintain a solid financial footing. Part of my vision of a 21st century Choir School is a school that has programs and people in place that will ensure financial viability, stability and security.

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It is with great certainty that when we {all of us} work hard to make the events in numbers 1 and 2 resounding successes, it lessens the need for number 3 to be impacted. What do my team and I intend to do to make sure that this line is tilted in the proper direction?

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Choral music performance at the Choir school is a national treasure. Or at least it should be. Where else in Canada can you find so many boys, singing so well, so often, with such rich musical tradition. Without losing sight of our mission, we need to do a better job of marketing that music with the citizens of Toronto and across the country. When I say we, I mean every single person – staff, faculty, parents, even the boys have a role to play

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Massey Hall can and should be the MAJOR fundraiser of the year. Here are some of the things we are doing to OWN THE HALL. Next December the concerts will be held on Saturday night and Sunday afternoon, we have altered the pricing structure of the tickets to make it more attractive for the general public, and for the first time in many years, the Choir School will have a window of time to actually sell physical tickets to our concert without any processing fees.

Fees for weddings and concerts, have already been adjusted to more accurately reflect the service we provide to the communities who hire us.

OUR CD catalogue is a goldmine of untapped potential. Operation Christmas Ribbons, the act of selling CDs in parishes across the GTA was a huge success this past season, but it had limited scope. I understand that there was a period of four years where CD sales were not existent. This fall, with a renewed effort, we should be able to increase revenue substantially. Further, Ms. Tarantino and I are working on finding a distributor from the United States for our CDs. A very large and underdeveloped market.

To summarize, Concert receipts and Recording sales are potent, viable and accessible areas of revenue growth. It is critical that we work to realize this potential.

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This is another avenue for growth that, to date, has not been given the attention it deserves

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What is your role in OWN THE HALL - Well, in addition to ticket sells, the area with the greatest potential is in the sponsorship campaign. This year we raised \$23,000 in sponsorships with around 50% parent involvement. Imagine the possibilities.

But what is the school doing about donations? It gives me great pleasure to announce this evening a new member of our team. Mr. Matthew Warszawski, an alumnus of 1990, and coincidentally a former student of mine, will become our new Director of Development and Communication. Matthew comes to us with a wealth of fund raising experience, the last ten years being spent as Associate Director of Major Gifts with the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation. His work there has been described in glowing terms: his passion, drive and commitment. I am pleased to introduce, my former student, my new colleague and our new Director of Advancement, Mr. Matthew Warszawski

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At this point, we move into the area of primary concern to you as parents. You and I both know, being at the choir school involves a tremendous investment of time, energy and resources beyond what might be expected of parents whose kids attend the local neighbourhood school. I see parents dropping their sons off at 7 in the

morning for sports, parents attending piano recitals, parents making sacrifices on weekends so their boys can fulfill their Cathedral obligations. It takes a lot of effort on your part to ensure your son not only is able to attend the Choir School but for him to excel and take advantage of everything we have to offer. My job is to make sure that every program, every class, every lesson, every teacher is in place to help your son strive for excellence and become a gentleman of class, culture and creed.

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My job is also to ensure that your tuition dollars are spent on providing the finest music education program in the country. Those costs include what you see here on the screen

Before we move on, I would like to say that the next portion of the presentation contains a lot of numbers --- most of the important numbers are contained on the handout you will be receiving at the end of the night, so there is less of a need to write everything down.

Let's begin with a look at the past ten years

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Here you find an interesting perspective on tuition history. For parents of students in the high school, you absorbed significant increases during your first years at the school. For parents of elementary boys, your increases have been less dramatic. You can see a period of three years where the tuition increase was negligible. I know that my expenses did not level off over the past four years and I'm sure yours did not either. On February 2, 2007 the average price of gas in Toronto was 73 cents a litre.

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Over the past ten years, tuition has increased at an average of 4.5% --- an industry standard. Most independent schools that we have surveyed annually increase their tuition at around this rate. That does not mean that we have to follow suit.

But let's examine the data a little more carefully --- in the past six years --- tuition has increased at an average of 2.1% and in the past 4 years the increase has been at 1.5% --- I can assure you that expenses here did not follow that same trend. But we are not here tonight for a blame game -- we are here to look forward.

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It is helpful, as a means of comparison to look at what private lessons would cost in an a la carte sort of way.

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In attempting to bring our school in line with **best financial practices of all educational institutions**, we are making significant changes to the scheduling and type of instalment plans for tuition. But not all at once. It would simply not be fair to impose all of these changes right away. Rather, as you will see, these changes will be implemented slowly over a four year period, in the hopes that it will be easier for everyone to manage.

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For this coming year the payment plans will stay the same except the start date is moved to August 15th. Further, we are asking for a deposit on June 15th. We will return to this slide in a moment

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For the following year, the deposit will be due on April 15th, with payments beginning in June. Notice that the payment plans will also change. The five month plan is consecutive and the ten month plan has been changed to a 9 month plan, both beginning in June --

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Over five years, the plans look like this. Once again, I must tell you that this is in keeping with the best financial practices employed by educational institutions similar to ours across the country.

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When I first met with the finance committee to review the budget process, the tuition structure and the costs of running the choir school, I shared with them all the information I have shared with you. The reality of the past six years of tuition changes stares us squarely in the face. To be honest, I asked the committee to approve an increase of 7%, which merely would be maintenance, without adding or providing any changes to our program. They said no. And I am glad they did. Instead, we have adopted a increase for next year of \$21 per month.

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I am making a commitment with you tonight to work hard enough, to motivate my team to work hard, to encourage your involvement, so that in a year's time I can be announcing a significantly lower number.

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Let me be perfectly clear – I intend to do everything I can to minimize the impact of tuition on families of Choir School boys. The more we can work together to stimulate revenue streams, increase our fundraising efforts, assist Matthew in his development efforts, the more we can maintain a reasonable and affordable education for your boys and the next generation of singers.