



The Vail Chorale

LIVE FOR SINGING. SING FOR LIFE



The Vail Chorale History 2011-2026

The early years

Many Voices. One Heart.

Fred (Fritz) Reinagel founded The Vail Chorale in **2011** as non-auditioned, intergenerational, mixed community chorus as a community outreach project of the Arizona Senior Academy (ASA). Fred also served as our first choir director.



The early years



And so it began...

- The ASA sponsored the Chorale
 - Served as the nonprofit umbrella under which the Chorale could receive donations
 - Enabled music purchases and payment for an accompanist.
 - Original accompanist – Marilee Leishman.
- Financials managed by the ASA administrator.



The early years

Our First Years

Fred solicited support from Calvin Baker to obtain rehearsal space at Cienega High School at no charge to The Vail Chorale

- The late Calvin Baker, Superintendent of the Vail School District & Member of the ASA Board and brother to current Vail Chorale member, Linda Buus



Chorale concerts have been performed at the ASA since the first season

- The ASA has paid an honorarium to the Chorale as a performance ensemble.

Additionally, some early concerts were held at Cienega and Empire High Schools.



Onward and Upward

Growing & Building

Early on, Fred recruited Melissa Hale as assistant director, where she continued to develop her directing skill we all benefit from today.

After several seasons, in **2017**, Fred departed the choir to move to North Carolina.

Brianna Smith (Petty) became the Chorale's second director, now a paid position.

The Accompanist became a paid position as well and Shantell Petty-Funckes took over the position of accompanist.



Onward and Upward

Developing Tradition

Brianna served as director for 7 years while Melissa continued to serve as the Assistant Director. Brianna brought her considerable talents and education to the group, having worked with High School choirs in the area as well as a love for musical theater which was inspiring.

Around **2020**, The Vail Chorale joined the Arizona Choral Arts Association (ACAA), receiving nonprofit umbrella support from ACAA, similar to their support from the ASA.

During Covid, singing together was not an option. Brianna conducted a Musical Theater Workshop for those of us who needed a musical outlet during this most trying of times.





Who We Are Today

After ten years as assistant director, Melissa Hale took the reins as Chorale Director in **2022**, joined by Michael Melton as accompanist.

- Mike has served as Co-Director for some seasons, including our yearly holiday performances and alternating accompanist roles with Melissa.



Onward and Upward

The Vail Chorale Today ... Spring 2026 Concert



Onward and Upward



Building in Harmony

Melissa has brought the choir back together in the years after Covid. We have grown in numbers and community success. And through our generous patrons, we have made several donations to local high school choirs in an effort to give back to our local community.

Additionally, and with the support of Michael Melton, Melissa has pushed to continuously educate the Vail Choral members.



Holiday Fun



Community Concerts

For the last several years, The Vail Chorale has participated in the 'Tis the Season holiday event and more recently, Holiday's at Houghton Town Center.



A New Chapter

Transitioning into Our Own

In **2022**, The Vail Chorale leadership, led by Julie Dawson, formed its own nonprofit status as an official 501c3 undertaking the name **Vail Performing Arts Society**, with The Vail Chorale as its flagship performing ensemble.

In **2025**, our nonprofit name was changed to **The Vail Chorale**.



Celebrating Leadership Over the Years

Choral Directors

Fred Reinagel 2011-2016

Brianna Smith 2017-2021

Melissa Hale 2022-Current

Presidents

Leslie Nitzberg 2012-2015

Mindi Bennet 2015-2016

Julie Dawson 2016-2017

Butch Bryant 2017-2018

Glenda Cleveland 2018-2019

Julie Dawson 2019-2023

Janet Canez 2023-2026

Julie Dawson 2026-current



2026-2027 Leadership Team & Board Members

Julie Dawson	President
Lee Cuervas	Vice President, Member
Dale Thoreen	Treasurer
Holly Gonzalez	Secretary
Erika Brand	Librarian, Member
Janet Cañez	Outgoing President, Member
Leslie Nitzberg	Public Relations, Member
Martie Maierhauser	Public Relations, Member
Mindi Bennett	Member
Shelia McGinnis	Member



15 Years of Building Tradition

Some Familiar & Favorite Concerts

These Are a Few of Our Favorite Things

Good Things Come in Threes

Salute to American Composers

Madrigals and Jazz

On Broadway

Music From the 1940s

Hope

Hero's & Villains

Special Musical Workshop at Christ Lutheran Vail

We sing for You

The 13 Days of Christmas

Here Comes the Sun

The Magic of Music

Shades of Blue

Romancing the Song

Just for the Fun of It!

How can I Keep From Singing



Serving the Community

While our community has given us so much, we strive to give back to growing voices in the Vail Community



Many Voices. One Heart.
A Stronger Community
Through Song.

