

PORT TOWNSEND/EAST JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMUNITY CHORUS MEMBER'S HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

Begun in 1975, The Community Chorus of Port Townsend and East Jefferson County, Washington, is a non-profit, educational, artistic and recreational organization established exclusively to benefit the general public, for which it provides music and from which its membership is composed. We are committed to rehearsing and performing choral repertory at the highest level of choral artistry achievable by the members.

The Chorus season includes Winter or Holiday concerts in early December and Spring concerts generally in April or May. We are often accompanied by other talented local musicians.

MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION

Your decision to become a member of the Chorus reflects your sincere desire to participate in the creation of high quality choral music. This decision also implies a commitment to meeting rehearsal requirements and for singing at all scheduled concerts.

The Chorus is a volunteer group open to all singers. Maintaining membership is contingent upon regular attendance at rehearsals and concerts, continued effort to increase vocal and musical proficiency, and being up-to-date on fees. Auditions are not required for membership and high school students age 16 and older may be accepted at the discretion of the director at a reduced rate.

Members may register during the first two rehearsals of each concert season. A registration fee is charged to help offset expenses for each season, and must be paid in order to receive music. In the case of financial hardship, a reduced fee or payment plan is available. Please let the registrar or a board member know if you would like more information.

MUSIC

A significant expense for the Chorus is sheet music, most of which is copyright protected. The Chorus has an extensive music library. All music remains property of the Chorus. Members are responsible for their music, both for maintaining its condition and replacement if lost. When marking, please use a soft lead (#2 or under) pencil. A black folder will be provided for concert use, or you may purchase one on your own. At the last concert of each season, please return all music and borrowed folders to the Chorus. Collection boxes will be provided. There will be a charge for unreturned music.

GOVERNANCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Chorus is governed by a seven member Board of Directors, whose members are elected at the Chorus Annual Meeting (the last regular rehearsal before the Spring Concert dress rehearsal). Board members are elected for two year terms, and there is no limit to the number of terms served. At the Annual Meeting, Chorus members elect Board members according to the By-laws. The Board consists of five officers and two at-large positions. Officers are President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. These officers will be elected by Board members each year.

The Board is a working group in which all members assume responsibilities. The Chorus Board meets monthly throughout the year, and is responsible for the smooth running of the Chorus. The Board sets policies that are published in the Handbook for members. For more detailed information, see the job descriptions at the end of this document, and the Chorus By-laws.

ARTISTIC STAFF

The Board contracts with the artistic staff to provide services for the Chorus. The Director is responsible for the repertory, the musical preparation and performance of the Chorus. The Accompanist plays for the Chorus rehearsals and concerts. Other staff may include teachers and other musicians.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The success of the Chorus depends on volunteer efforts at all levels. The following are some of the opportunities available to members.

SECTION LEADERS

Section Leaders (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are appointed by the Board. Duties of the Section Leaders include:

- Check attendance rosters weekly and follow up on absences, particularly those of students participating in Chorus for scholastic credit, and members who have missed two or more rehearsals.
- Act as a liaison for section members to Director and Board.
- Be sensitive and responsive to needs and weaknesses of section, helping members to be successful; consulting with Director and Board as required.

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FUND RAISING

Chorus members are expected to participate in the fund raising activities of the Chorus. In addition to registration fees, the Chorus depends on a patron drive, advance ticket sales and grant writing to maintain financial stability. The Patron Drive is conducted in the Fall, and grant writing generally happens in the Spring. Other fundraising events may be organized if needed to support the Chorus.

Patron Drive: Members are asked to contact businesses that they know and feel comfortable soliciting. Materials are provided for this purpose. Members are also encouraged to contact relatives and friends for the Patron Drive. Patrons receive complimentary tickets to concerts, and are listed in concert programs. Chorus members are encouraged to become Patrons!

Advance Ticket Sales: Members are asked to sell advance concert tickets at \$10.00 each, a \$2.00 savings on the door price of \$12.00.

REHEARSAL, CONCERT AND RECEPTION SETUP AND CLEANUP

Chorus members help set up rehearsal and concert space, and assist at any post-concert receptions.

OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

These include publicity (putting up concert posters and publicizing concert information in church and community newsletters), pre-sale tickets, history, registration, Scholarship Committee, preparing MIDI files, maintaining the website, etc.

SCHOLARSHIP

The Chorus offers the Gerry Hyatt Bergstrom Scholarship Fund to assist local students studying vocal music at the post high school level. The Scholarship Committee reviews applications and selects recipients.

REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES

The Chorus offers several ways to help members contribute to the best possible choral experience and performances. First and foremost are the regular weekly rehearsals. The Chorus also provides, when possible, digital MIDI files; classes; a weekly newsletter; a website; and special sectional rehearsals to provide extra musical support.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsal Attendance: The musical quality of our performances, the development of ensemble artistry, and the morale of the organization depend upon regular and prompt attendance at all rehearsals and concerts. Therefore:

- You are expected to attend all rehearsals. If you miss more than three rehearsals in a season, your continued participation will be at the discretion of the Director.
- If you need to miss a rehearsal, please notify your section leader or a Board member in advance, if possible.
- Each member is responsible for marking the attendance record at every rehearsal.
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Change of Roster Information: Please give any change of name, address, email address or phone number to the Secretary.

Rehearsal Routine: There are approximately eleven regular rehearsals and one or two dress rehearsals each concert season. Rehearsals are regularly held Sunday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Other rehearsals may be scheduled as needed.

- Please do not wear cologne, perfume or after shave at any rehearsal or concert.
- When you arrive at rehearsal, register your attendance by checking the sign-in sheet.
- Please be seated and ready to sing at the rehearsal start time.
- Most rehearsal time is spent working on overall ensemble and musicality; therefore, you are encouraged to practice outside of rehearsal time.
- If you miss a rehearsal, please get all rehearsal markings and other information from your section leader or another Chorus member before the next rehearsal.
- There is a short break during rehearsal for announcements, beverages and light refreshments.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

MUSIC SKILLS CLASSES

Whenever possible, the Chorus offers music skills classes to members at no cost. They are usually held during the hour before the regular rehearsal. Times and dates will be announced and published in the weekly Chorus News newsletter.

SECTIONAL REHEARSALS

At some point during the rehearsal season, sectional rehearsals (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) may be offered. These can be scheduled before the regular rehearsal, or at a different time and location during the week. Times and dates will be announced and published in the weekly Chorus News newsletter.

MIDI DIGITAL FILES

Digital MIDI files are prepared by volunteer Chorus members and made available as a useful way to learn music at home between rehearsals. The Chorus News will publish the web address of the MIDI files for all Chorus members.

THE CHORUS NEWS AND WEBSITE

The Chorus publishes a weekly newsletter (distributed by email, and posted on the Chorus website [www.ptchorus.org]) to keep members and staff informed of policies, schedules and news. Paper copies are available to members without email. Members are strongly encouraged to read it each week for important updates regarding registration, schedule changes and other interesting information!

CONCERTS

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

A rehearsal and performance schedule is published at the beginning of each season. Please reserve these dates on your calendar. You are an invaluable part of our Chorus and we need to know that every member will sing at all performances. If you absolutely cannot attend a performance you must notify the director and your section leader or a Board member at least three weeks in advance.

CONCERT ROUTINE

Dress Rehearsals and Performances: Please arrive at the concert location in time to put your belongings away and be on stage in your assigned place, with your music, ready to warm up on time. At performances there will be a secure place to store purses, etc. The director will spend time arranging the Chorus on the stage. This can be a confusing time, so pay attention to the director. No food or beverage is allowed on stage.

Concert Behavior:

- Bring only your music folder on stage. Water bottles may be permitted.
- Line up according to the Director's wishes.
- While on stage, please do not cross legs, talk, wave, or chew gum; keep movement to a minimum.
- Good posture is expected while sitting as well as standing.
- Open your music at the Director's signal.
- Avoid following the soloists. Keep your eyes on the Director.
- Prior to an intermission and at the end of a concert, close music and return it to your side when the Director turns to acknowledge the audience.
- Be judicious in your applause for soloists, accompanist, Director, etc. and remember to stop your applause whenever the Chorus is being acknowledged.
- Leave the stage in reverse order.

Concert Dress: In order to blend visually, as we blend our voices, Chorus members dress in black from head to toe.

- *Men:* Black long-sleeved mock turtleneck, dressy black slacks (no black jeans), black belt, black shoes and socks.
- *Women:* Black long-sleeved jewel-necked blouse, ankle-length black slacks or skirt, black shoes and stockings. The only jewelry allowed is a pair of plain gold, silver, or pearl earrings.
- Please do not wear cologne, perfume, or after shave at any rehearsal or concert.
- Please be sure that cell phones are turned off, or better yet, do not bring them onstage!

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHORUS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT:

- Prepares and signs contracts
- Creates agendas and conducts meetings
- Sets up committees
- Appoints members to fill interim board vacancies
- Schedules rehearsal and performance dates
- Makes announcements
- Delegates tasks as needed
- Drafts newsletter
- Drafts planning calendar

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT:

- Conducts meetings when president is absent
- Coordinates annual patron drive

- Maintains records of patron funds
- Applies for grants
- Reviews program to ensure all donors are included
- Mails tickets to patrons

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT:

- Arranges for venues
- Responsible for rehearsal setup
- Responsible for concert setup
- Assures tuning of piano

SECRETARY:

- Attendance sheets
- Assures names are correct for concert programs
- Publishes newsletter
- Records minutes of board meetings and annual meetings
- Maintains all records of chorus business

TREASURER:

- Receives all monies and keeps accurate financial records
- Pays Chorus bills
- Prepares statements
- Keeps records of paid members
- Draws up Chorus budget
- Files IRS forms
- Maintains Non-profit status

AT LARGE POSITIONS (2):

Publicity:

- Writes and submits newspaper articles and press releases
- Coordinates publicity posters
- Liaison between Chorus and media
- Gives concert dates to Chamber of Commerce for reader board
- Liaison to Scholarship Committee

Registrar/Librarian:

- Maintains music library
- Prints program
- Prints concert tickets
- Maintains website
- Oversees section leaders
- Orders new music
- Maintains historical records
- Oversees registration

VOCAL SKILLS

The Community Chorus prides itself on being a non-auditioned chorus. We welcome novices and those who have not sung in a chorus for decades. Our by-laws state that each of us is committed to rehearsing and performing choral repertory at the highest level of choral artistry achievable by the members. As members, we make a continued effort to increase vocal and musical proficiency. As a Chorus, we offer practice resources such as computer music files, sectional rehearsals, and free classes. Often, the learning curve is steep and at-home practice is essential for every member. The Board has adopted a policy to address the very occasional member who does not meet the average skill level of the group.

“Although auditions are not required, if, after a four-week trial period the director identifies a chorus member who does not meet the average skill level of the group, that member will

be encouraged to better his or her vocal proficiency by taking private voice instruction. If continued effort by the member does not result in raising his or her skills, the director may choose to postpone the member's participation with the choir until such time as his or her capability has improved"

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to talk to a Board member.