

Youth Chorale
CENTRAL MINNESOTA

2007-08 HANDBOOK

Mission

The mission of the Youth Chorale of Central Minnesota is to enrich and develop choral music skills and interests of Central Minnesota youth, encouraging and equipping them for participation in their high school ensembles and for life long involvement as musicians and leaders in their communities.

Goals:

- To augment the musical experiences 14-18 year olds have received in current and past choral experiences by offering them a select ensemble in which to participate with other singers from Central Minnesota.
- To enrich the musical fabric of the Central Minnesota area by requiring members to be concurrently enrolled in their high school music programs and encouraging involvement in music of their communities.
- To enhance the cultural experiences of the Central Minnesota community through public concerts dedicated to quality music.
- To promote the spirit of unity by collaborating with other choirs and musicians in concert.

Membership

Auditions, held every spring, are open to any singer who will be in grades 9-12 in the subsequent year. Auditions are by appointment only, and all singers must audition each year. A sign-up list for audition times will be available to current members two weeks before appointments will be taken from new members.

Concurrent Enrollment Policy. As a part of its mission, the Youth Chorale seeks to augment and not to replace the music education experience singers are receiving in their local public or private schools. Therefore it is required that singers remain involved in their school choirs each year they participate in the Youth Chorale. Area directors will be contacted in early September to verify the each singer's enrollment. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis. Based on information received from the singer, parent/guardian, the school director, and the Board of Directors, the final decision will be made by the Music Director.

Duration. Membership in the Youth Chorale is on a year-by-year basis. Singers committing to be involved will be expected to commit for the school year from September to May.

Attendance

Rehearsals. Each member of the Youth Chorale is essential to the rehearsal process and to the overall success of the ensemble. Rehearsals for the Youth Chorale will be held from 6:30 – 8:30 PM on Sunday evenings in the Choir Room at St. John's University. Singers are expected to be at every scheduled rehearsal. Two excused absences between concerts with a maximum of five per year will be allowed. This is not to be viewed as an allotment to be filled, but a maximum amount of absences acceptable to maintain appropriate involvement. Any singers missing more than an acceptable amount of rehearsal is subject to dismissal from the choir at the director and/or board's discretion. Also, missing a rehearsal close to a concert may jeopardize the singer's ability to sing at that event.

Singers who are ill but not contagious and able to leave their home are expected to be at rehearsal. Singers can still learn their part without singing and mark their scores with important information given at the rehearsal.

While we want all singers to do well in school, homework is not a valid excuse for missing a rehearsal. Singers need to plan ahead and prioritize rehearsals so that the Youth Chorale will not interfere with schoolwork and vice versa.

Appropriate absences include pre-arranged or unavoidable family obligations, school performances, significant illness, or a family emergency. Singers who know of an upcoming absence from rehearsal should communicate the absence to the director by turning in a note at rehearsal or emailing director@youthchorale.org. In the event of an unexpected absence (emergency), communication should be made at the earliest appropriate time. Failure to communicate an appropriate absence in a timely matter will be considered an unexcused absence. Singers with an unexcused absence can expect to be in contact with the director or board regarding his/her enrollment in the choir.

Performances. Participation in all scheduled concerts is a condition of involvement with the Youth Chorale of Central Minnesota. The only appropriate absence from a performance is another performance with a high school curricular ensemble (i.e. choir or band). In the event that a Youth Chorale concert conflicts with another performing ensemble's performance, it is the singer's responsibility to make the conflict known at the earliest point possible. All other scheduling conflicts with the concert calendar should be addressed to the music director.

Rehearsal Decorum

The Youth Chorale will be performing many challenging pieces. Because of this, rehearsal decorum must be professional and efficient. Singers are expected to maintain focus and discipline during rehearsal. This means singers will:

1. always pay close attention to instructions, technique, tone, and a sense of ensemble.
2. not talk while other sections are singing or while instructions are given.
3. watch the conductor at all times.
4. not carry or consume any food or liquid (except water) in the rehearsal room.
5. turn off cell phones and not use text messaging during rehearsals.
6. treat each other with respect, kindness, dignity and honor.

Music

Music will be provided for singers. Great care should be taken with the music, as it is expensive and cumbersome to replace. Singers are expected to mark their music in pencil and not pen. They are also asked to not doodle, fold or in any other way misuse the music.

Facilities

St. John's University is the gracious host of the Youth Chorale. We want to show respect to our hosts by treating the Music Hall with respect. Please follow these guidelines:

- Be careful not to track in mud and snow.
- All jackets and belongings should be placed in the appropriate hallway near the choir room.
- Only sealable containers of water are allowed in the rehearsal area.
- All garbage should be placed in trash containers.
- Demonstrate respect for both the building and the building staff.
- If you moved it, put it back.
- If you broke it, tell someone.
- No hats, please.

Suggested Participant Pledge

It is the policy of the Youth Chorale not to exclude anyone from the program because of an inability to contribute financially towards the programs of the Youth Chorale of Central Minnesota. To this end, families will contribute to the Youth Chorale to help sustain the organization. Instead of a tuition, families will be asked to make a contribution based on what it costs for their son/daughter to be involved, and on what their means allow. A fair share contribution amount will be made known to the families of participants. If a family does not have the means to contribute that amount, arrangements can be made with the Youth Chorale. Likewise, if a family has the means to go above and beyond the set amount, they are asked to do so to maintain the average giving amount. This plan is an alternative to an invasive and

cumbersome scholarship or financial aid program; therefore extra giving is needed to cover for those who cannot meet the suggested contribution. Families will return a form pledging the amount that they have decided upon and turn it in before the season begins.

An initial deposit of \$75 is due during the summer before each season. Families may choose to contribute their entire pledge at that time, the remaining portion annually (September), or biannually (September and January). Families may make other arrangements with the Youth Chorale upon request.

Communication/Announcements

All pertinent announcements and forms handed out at rehearsals. It is the singer's responsibility to share information received at rehearsals with their families.

Most communications for the Youth Chorale will also take place electronically, via email and the web site. One email list will be set up for parents, and one for singers. If a family does not have email, they should contact the music director to arrange for receiving timely information.

For time-sensitive information or urgent information, CallingPost will be utilized. CallingPost is a "one-to-many" calling service that automatically calls members of the Youth Chorale in a matter of minutes. A test of the CallingPost list will be conducted sometime this summer. If a household does not receive a phone call, the Executive Director should be contacted.

Transportation

A directory of singers and their phone numbers will be provided in the fall should families decide to carpool to rehearsals. Families are asked to remain cognizant of the safety concerns when three or more young people are riding in a car. While YCCM bears no liability in transportation to and from rehearsals, safety should be every one's concern.

Parking/Safety

It is extremely important that singers and parents of singers observe the parking regulations at SJU. Parking places during rehearsals will be the Library lot (guest slots only), Mary Hall lot, or Science Hall lots 1 and 2. Life Safety Services at St. John's will issue warnings to you if you are parked in the Visitor or 30-minute spots for too long, or if you park in the same area each week. They have the ability to tow your car after a certain number of warnings.

While St. John's University has a tremendous record for safety, there is always a reason to be cautious when it comes to the well being of young people. Singers should always travel in pairs or more when walking to and from remote parking places. There are blue safety phones visible from virtually anywhere on campus, and security will provide an escort if needed (although a staff member or parent will be present until all singers are gone).

Inclement Weather Policy

Because of the wide area represented by Youth Chorale members, cancellation of rehearsals will be based on the St. Cloud/St. Joseph area only. Cancellations will be made by 4:30 PM for regular Sunday rehearsals. Announcements will be made via the two email lists, the website, and a phone call for those without email.

Those living outside of the Collegeville/St. Cloud area may need to exercise their judgment in the event of inclement weather. In considering severe weather on rehearsal nights, concern about the singer's safety should be primary. If a family living outside the St. Cloud/Collegeville area determines the weather is too severe to risk travel, the parents and/or singers should email director@youthchorale.org or call (320) 632-3774 to notify the music director as soon as possible.

Concert Attire

Uniforms. The Youth Chorale members wear tuxedos and gowns for performances. These are purchased by through the general fund, and singers pay a usage fee each year. Singers have the opportunity to purchase their tux or gown at the end of the year at a reduced cost. The uniform fee paid each year will count toward purchasing the uniform. In other words, a tenor's tux, costing around \$100, will be paid for after three years of uniform fees.

Singers will be measured for their tux/gown at a rehearsal in September, and fitted October. Singers are responsible for the maintenance of their uniform for the entire season, and are expected to keep it in excellent condition. Each uniform will need to be dry cleaned and returned at the last event for storage during the summer.

All singers are expected to provide their own shoes. Men should have black dress shoes (black soles and black uppers) and black socks. While they need not be leather shoes, they should not be sport/tennis shoes. Women should wear black low-heeled or flat closed-toe comfortable shoes. A pair of shoes should be selected before measurements and worn throughout the year for performances, since the height of the shoe will determine the floor hem. Shoes should be selected that are both comfortable and presentable.

Appearance. Our aim is for the audience to listen to us more than they watch us. While individuality is a positive characteristic, it should not be expressed in the choral performance. Therefore, some considerations should be made. Earrings should be modest in appearance, consisting of a metal stud only. Any facial piercing should be removed prior to performances. Tongue rings should be flesh tone only. Hair style and color should represent the moderate to conservative end of contemporary styles.

Contact Information

The official office of YCCM is:

Youth Chorale of Central Minnesota
Garrett Lathe, Music/Executive Director
212 Fourth Street SE
Little Falls, MN 56345-3116
(320) 266-3716
info@youthchorale.org

The Executive Board of the Youth Chorale of Central Minnesota are: Gary Barrett, Clear Lake; Diana Baxa, Sartell; Donna Harris, St. Cloud; Jane Oxtan, St. Cloud; Br. Paul Richards, OSB, Collegeville; Diane Roob, Sartell.

Conclusion

The most exhilarating aspect of choral music is that the product far exceeds what any one of us is capable of producing alone. Your dedication to the task of creating a strong community of singers is expected, appreciated, and necessary for success. Thank you in advance for making this coming year outstanding.

Youth Chorale of Central Minnesota Excused Absence Request

This form should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the requested absence

Today's Date: _____

Singer's Name: _____

I am requesting permission for my son/daughter to be excused from the rehearsal on the date listed below according to the policies outlined in the handbook regarding excused absences.

Requested Date: _____

Reason: _____

Singer's Signature

Parent's Signature

Office Use:

Received on: _____ Granted _____ Denied _____

Comments

Additional forms (if needed) can be downloaded from the member's section of www.youthchorale.org