

MEMPHIS SYMPHONY CHORUS

Member Handbook

info@memphissymphonychorus.org

www.memphissymphonychorus.org

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Congratulations and Welcome!

Congratulations on having been selected as a new member of the Memphis Symphony Chorus! **Welcome!** You are one of several very talented members of the Mid-South joining forces with this dedicated group of musicians. We are confident that this collaboration will be a rewarding experience for you.

We are excited that you have become part of this dedicated group of volunteer musicians, and we know that you will enjoy the musical camaraderie that we all share. We have created this handbook for our new members to help you learn about the Chorus and the many things that we do throughout the year.

There are many people who can answer questions that you might have as you begin your musical journey with us. You have been assigned a buddy who is a seasoned member of the Chorus who can show you the ropes. Your buddy can help you check out your music, find your seat in our rehearsal space, help you mark your scores, etc. Please take full advantage of the help that your buddy can offer you – especially early on when things are so new and different.

Please “bookmark” the Memphis Symphony Chorus Website because it has lots of important information (<http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org>). Also, please allow emails from info@memphissymphonychorus.org as this is the primary way that we will be communicating with you.

The Memphis Symphony Chorus also has a 15-member Board of Directors whose primary function is to handle the general operations of the Chorus. Any of our dedicated board members can help answer questions you may have. If you have a question that is more artistic in nature, we welcome you to talk with Larry Edwards, our Artistic Director. Larry’s focus is on preparing us musically for our performances, so he can answer questions about the section in which you have been assigned or any vocal issues you might be having.

Again, congratulations and welcome! Please do not hesitate to ask for help if you need it. See you at rehearsal!

Lisa Lucks Mendel, Chorus President

Lawrence Edwards, Artistic Director



Our History

The Memphis Symphony Chorus is an integral part of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra family. In 1965, Maestro Vincent De Frank decided to present the orchestra's first Pops Concert and needed a Chorus. He enlisted local musician Sara Beth Causey to send out notice and thirty singers responded. Today the Chorus is 130 members strong, performing under the direction of Maestro Robert Moody and Dr. Lawrence Edwards.

In a perfect collaboration of orchestral and vocal musicians, the Chorus has performed major works across the entire spectrum of classical choral music, opera Choruses, and concert pops repertoire. The Memphis Symphony Orchestra's Masterworks concerts have included the Chorus recently in performances of Handel's *The Creation*, the Berlioz *Requiem*, *Elijah*, J.S. Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, *Missa Solemnis*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Handel's *Messiah*, Mahler's *Second and Eighth Symphonies*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and the *Requiems* of Mozart, Verdi, and Brahms. The Chorus also performs each year with the orchestra in the *Holiday Pops* concert and other *swingin' and rockin' Pops Concerts*, including the music of John Williams, Disney tunes, and other popular composers. The Chorus often participates in the annual *Martin Luther King* tribute concert, which allows us the opportunity to sing together with choral groups from local high schools and universities. Outreach through occasional regional performances in conjunction with the orchestra rounds out our annual schedule.

Most of our performances with the orchestra occur in the Cannon Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Memphis. This hall has been created with acoustical excellence and features the Choral sound to perfection. Other performances can occur at the Germantown Performing Arts Center (GPAC) or other venues as well.

Chorus membership grows through a twice-yearly audition process supervised by Dr. Edwards. Being a professional vocalist is not a prerequisite for acceptance; however, one must have in equal proportion vocal skill, a love for great choral music, and the time and energy to devote to a weekly rehearsal schedule. Each new season for the Chorus begins in the late summer and lasts through our final performance, usually in May.



Rehearsals

Chorus rehearsals begin promptly at 7:00 pm at Balmoral Presbyterian Church. You will be notified in advance of a change of location for rehearsals. Please allow at least 10 to 15 minutes before rehearsal starts to ***sign in on the attendance sheet***, take care of any Chorus business, socialize a little, and be in your seat ready to sing at the scheduled time.

A schedule for rehearsals is distributed prior to the beginning of every season, although changes may occur throughout the year. Current copies of rehearsal/performance schedules are available on our website (www.memphissymphonyChorus.org).

Mark your Scores!

The Artistic Director will often make artistic changes in the music, so be ready with your pencil to mark your scores accordingly. Breath marks, dynamic markings, changes in text may be added or deleted, and you are expected to have this information marked even if you miss a rehearsal. If you need assistance in marking your score, ask your buddy or the person next to you to help you.

Shhhh!

Please refrain from talking during rehearsals as this can be distracting to your fellow singers and the Director. Also – *please* – no texting! There is ample time to talk before and after rehearsal, so please stay as focused as you can during rehearsals so that we can learn the music efficiently and effectively.

Use of Fragrance and Personal Hygiene

Chorus members are not to wear fragrance in the form of perfumes, strong hair spray, shaving cologne, etc. at any rehearsal or performance.

Rehearsal Breaks

When rehearsals run longer than 90 minutes, a break will be called by the Director. Please do not use break time as a convenient vehicle for leaving rehearsal early. At the conclusion of the break, Chorus members are to move quickly to their seats, cease conversation, and get back to the business of making beautiful music.

Inclement Weather

You will be notified by email if rehearsals are canceled due to bad weather. You may also call 678-3767 for a recording that should indicate the status of rehearsals and performances due to inclement weather.

Attendance



All chorus members are expected to attend all rehearsals and perform in all concert performances for the regular concert season. The number of absences permitted per concert preparation period is determined by the Artistic Director at the beginning of rehearsals for each concert. An announcement will be made regarding absences allowed at the beginning of the season. Make-up rehearsals are usually scheduled to assist individuals with attendance problems. Individuals with more than the allowable number of absences will be dropped from the sign-in sheet and will be ineligible to sing that concert.

Your attendance will be monitored via the weekly sign-in sheets. If two absences are allowed for a particular preparation period, your attendance number can be no greater than 2.66 (two absences and two tardies) to sing the concert. If your attendance is 3.66, you can still sing the concert as long as you attend the make-up rehearsal which will subtract one absence from your record.

Attendance is Critical

Attendance at all orchestra rehearsals and concert performances is **mandatory**. Permission to be absent from any orchestra rehearsal or performance must come solely from the Director with consultation from the Executive Committee. If you need to be excused from a required rehearsal, you must complete a **Request for Exception** form and give it to a member of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will meet and let you know if you can be excused from the requested rehearsal. Permission to miss an orchestra rehearsal or performance is not easily obtained. Being present for last minute changes and artistic interpretations with the conductor and orchestra is a vital requirement for a cohesive performance.

Tardiness

Please be on time to rehearsal. Three tardies will result in the equivalent of one absence.

Attendance Database

We keep detailed information about all Chorus members in a database so that you can receive electronic and snail mail communications efficiently. Please be sure to let us know if any of your information changes (e.g., address, phone numbers, email, etc.) so that we can be sure to keep in touch with you. You can mail info@memphisymphonychorus.org with any changes in your information.

Music and Its Care



Our librarian issues music to all Chorus members at rehearsals. Each piece of music will have a number that the Chorus member should document. Each Chorus member is responsible for the replacement cost of any music issued to him/her that should become lost or irreparably damaged. All markings must be in pencil, unless you purchase and use your own score. The music is being provided to Chorus members by the Memphis Orchestral Society.

- ♪ ***PLEASE DO NOT USE PENS OR OTHER MARKERS TO MARK YOUR SCORES!***
- ♪ ***ALWAYS BE SURE YOU BRING A PENCIL TO EACH REHEARSAL.***
- ♪ ***ALL ISSUED MUSIC MUST BE RETURNED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE FINAL PERFORMANCE.***



What Should I Wear?

Attire for Concerts

The concert attire for women is a tunic and pants ensemble. The full cost of the ensemble is to be paid before the Chorus member may receive the attire. Information about ordering attire and arranging for payments is available from the board member in charge of attire.

Men's attire is a black tuxedo. Jacket lapels can be shawl, peak, or notched lapels. This 100% wool tux can be ordered through the Chorus and can be purchased through a payment plan. Men must also wear a white shirt with the wing collar and black bow tie. Information about ordering a tux and arranging for payments is available from the board member in charge of attire.

Concert Dress Accessories

Women may wear non-dangling, white pearl earrings and white pearl necklaces, without rhinestones, diamonds, or other reflective material. Hair combs or other hair accessories should be discrete and non-reflective. Shoes may be of any height (no more than 2" heels are suggested for comfort) and should be black.

Men's cufflinks and shirt studs should be non-reflective, and no four square (handkerchief) should be worn in the tux jacket pocket unless clearly specified. Men's shoes and socks should be dark in color.

Use of Fragrance and Personal Hygiene

Chorus members are not to wear fragrance in the form of perfumes, strong hair spray, shaving cologne, etc. at any rehearsal or performance.

Many people are allergic to fragrant products; this allergy can prove damaging to the serious singer's vocal cords, not to mention the miserable symptoms. Also, it is critically important that Chorus members practice appropriate hygiene by bathing regularly and using deodorants. We are often all in very close proximity, and it is very important that Chorus members take the time to be thoughtful and considerate regarding personal hygiene and the use of fragrances.

Board Membership

The Memphis Symphony Chorus has a 15-member Board of Directors that is selected each year from among the members of the Chorus. The Board of Directors is in charge of the general operation of the Chorus and assists with the annual fruit sale fundraiser, social activities and special events, venue setup, and membership assistance including music and attire.

Memphis Symphony Chorus Website



Our primary form of communication is electronic either via email or through our website www.memphissymphonychorus.org. All current information about the Chorus is available on our website 24/7.

- 🎵 Did you forget if we have rehearsal this week? Check the website under Rehearsal Calendar <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/rehearsal-calendar/>.
- 🎵 Can't remember which music we'll be rehearsing at Monday's rehearsal? Check the website under <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/rehearsal-materials/>.
- 🎵 Want to read the current Chorus Newsletter – *Choruspondence*? Check it out on the web <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/chorus-news/>.
- 🎵 How about listening to your part before rehearsal? Check out the rehearsal tracks on the website <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/rehearsal-tracks/>.

Remember... if any of your information changes, please let us know so that we can stay in touch with you! Email us at info@memphissymphonychorus.org.

Chorus Website - Important Links

- ♪ Concert Schedule: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/concert-schedule/>
- ♪ Rehearsal Calendar: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/rehearsal-calendar/>
- ♪ Rehearsal Materials: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/rehearsal-materials/>
- ♪ Rehearsal Tracks: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/rehearsal-tracks/>
- ♪ Concert Attire: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/concert-attire/>
- ♪ Board of Directors : <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/board/>
- ♪ Policies and Procedures: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/policies-procedures/>
- ♪ By-Laws: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/by-laws/>
- ♪ Annual Fruit Sale: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/fruit-sale/>
- ♪ Chorus News: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/chorus-news/>
- ♪ Forms: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/forms/>
 - Attendance Exception Request
 - Check Reimbursement Request
 - Deposit Form
 - Tax Exempt Form
- ♪ Email Attachments: <http://www.memphissymphonychorus.org/email-attachments/>

Performance Week



Okay!! You've made it through all the rehearsals, you have your concert attire hemmed and ironed, you found your concert shoes, and you are ready for the performance. During performance week, we will likely have required rehearsals almost every night that week, including the Monday night Conductor rehearsal. We often have a different Conductor for the performance, so the rehearsals during the week of the performance are critically important in case specific artistic changes are made.

Remember! All rehearsals and performances during the week of the performance are required!

Monday Night Conductor Rehearsal

This rehearsal is typically at our regular rehearsal space (Balmoral Presbyterian Church) where the Conductor for the performance will often meet with us for the first time in our rehearsal preparations. This rehearsal is often two hours in length, so be well rested and have your pencils ready!

Orchestra Rehearsals

The remaining rehearsals during performance week are typically with the orchestra in the rehearsal space. This is the first time we often get to hear the music with the orchestra, so be prepared for things to sound a lot different. Again, be well rested and have your pencils ready! These are typically not “dress” rehearsals – so you don't need to wear your concert attire during an orchestra rehearsal.

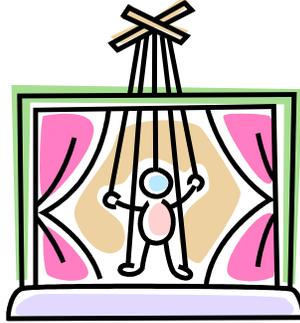
Orchestra rehearsals typically run from 7:00 to 10:00 pm. Our Choir call is at 7:00 pm for warm-ups and last minute changes. Then we rehearse with the orchestra on stage from 7:30 to 10:00 with a 15-minute intermission.

Cannon Center

We will validate parking when you park in the Convention Center (adjacent to the Cannon Center) for orchestra rehearsals and performances. Our warm-up space is back stage at the Cannon Center. From the parking lot, enter the South Hall, take the escalator up one floor, and walk down the hall that parallels Main Street. Enter backstage via the door marked “Staff Only 131A.”



Stage Etiquette



Remember – when we are on stage – we are part of the performance even when we are not singing. So, here are a few reminders about stage etiquette:

- ♪ Turn off cell phones and beeping watches
 - ♪ Don't follow along with the soloists
 - ♪ Keep your books open in your lap
 - ♪ Turn the pages quietly
 - ♪ Always have your music in a black folder
 - ♪ Stay still until the Conductor is finished
 - ♪ Only approved Memphis Symphony Chorus water bottles are allowed on stage during a performance
 - ♪ Be sure to unwrap all mints and suckers **before** the performance
 - ♪ Stand when the Concert Master stands; Sit when the Concert Master sits
- ♪ ***Watch the Conductor***
- ♪ ***Enjoy yourself and have fun!!***

Concert Run outs

Dyersburg



From time to time, the Chorus will perform with the orchestra in a venue outside of Memphis. Traditionally, we sing a Friday night performance of our Holiday Pops concert at Dyersburg State Community College in Dyersburg, TN. Bus transportation is provided to the venue (though you may drive yourself if you wish). For Dyersburg, we typically provide a box dinner on the bus and after concert snacks as well. The location where the buses meet can vary, but typically for Dyersburg, we meet at the Central library parking lot at 3030 Poplar Avenue. Watch your schedule for the departure time.

Directions to Dyersburg State Community College

Take Route 51 North from Memphis towards Dyersburg

Turn right onto Route 78 once in Dyersburg

Turn left onto Parkview Street, following the signs to the gymnasium

Turn left into the third driveway and follow it to the gymnasium

Specific information about other concert run outs will be provided as the details are determined.

Memphis Symphony Ticket Policy

For Members of the Memphis Symphony Chorus

- ✓ **Chorus members are eligible for a 50% discount for season subscriptions and/or single ticket orders for the Masterworks and Pops concerts.**
 - A maximum of 6 tickets can be purchased at the discounted price.
 - Chorus members must identify themselves as a Chorus member prior to the purchase in order to receive the discount. Retroactive discounts cannot be offered.
 - All prices are subject to change, and tickets at specific price ranges are subject to availability.
 - This offer may not be applicable for all concert series.

- ✓ **This offer is valid up to two weeks before the concert.**

- ✓ **If the Chorus is performing in the concert, every effort will be made to offer comp tickets when possible. However, because the decision regarding comp tickets cannot be made until two weeks before the concert, chorus members are encouraged to take advantage of the 50% offer to guarantee tickets for the concert.**

- ✓ **If comp tickets are offered, refunds cannot be made to those who have already purchased tickets in exchange for comp tickets.**

- ✓ **Any Chorus member who has questions or comments concerning these policies should contact the Chorus President for clarification.**

**MSO Box Office
610 Goodman Street
(901) 537-2525 Box Office
(901) 537-2500 Administration
(901) 537-2550 Fax
tickets@memphissymphony.org**