



Member Guide

General Information

The Skagit Valley Chorale is a non-auditioned community choir of up to 125 singers representing Skagit and surrounding counties. The Chorale presents two concerts of two performances each per year at McIntyre Hall in Mount Vernon. Our spring concert, Celebrating in Song, is presented in late April or early May, and our winter concert, Heraldng Christmas, is presented in early December.

The Chorale has an Artistic Director/Conductor and Accompanist and is governed by a member Board of Directors and organizational by-laws.

Operational funding for the Chorale comes from three primary sources: member dues, concert ticket sales, and tax-exempt donations.

In addition to paying dues, members are asked to assist in the promotion of concert ticket sales and the solicitation of donations. Members are also encouraged to volunteer a little of their time and their particular skills to support the activities of the Chorale in efforts like administration, production, Board governance, fund-raising, musical leadership, and others.

The Chorale is a registered non-profit organization and 501(c)(3) charity. Federal Tax ID 98-1648165.

Membership

Skill Level – The ability to sing in tune is a basic requirement of all Chorale members. It is desirable that each Chorale member be able to read music, be rhythmically accurate, and blend with the whole group. The Chorale performs music in a range of difficulty levels, chosen carefully by the Conductor with the varying skill levels of the membership taken into consideration. Members are expected to work on their music as needed to perform it successfully, using the skills and tools available, which include their own reading and musicianship skills, technique developed by the Conductor in rehearsal, sectionals, recorded practice guides, practice with a friend, and any other tools they find useful.

How to Join – In-person registration at the start of a new semester is held between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m. during the first three rehearsals. Registration for the following

semester is held during the last three rehearsals of the current semester. When the Chorale membership is at or near capacity, new applications for membership require the approval of the Conductor. We encourage singers interested in joining the Chorale to visit the Membership Application page on the website. If the Chorale or Section is at capacity, the person will be added to a waiting list and contacted when a spot becomes available. The Conductor or Section Leader would then set up a time to hear the individual's voice for placement purposes.

Dues – The current dues are \$60 a semester. All dues must be paid by the third rehearsal.

Section Placement – New singers will be given a simple voice range evaluation to confirm that they are able to match pitch and carry a tune, and to ensure placement in the proper choir section.

Section Leaders and Section Hosts – Each section has a musical leader, the Section Leader, and a “social” leader, the Section Host. Section Leaders pass section members’ questions and requests about the music to the Director and may lead sectionals. Section Hosts work with section members regarding attendance and administrative needs. Both collaborate to settle seating and standing arrangements for rehearsal and performance.

Communication - The Chorale uses email to distribute messages to the members. These include commentary from the Conductor after most rehearsals, alerts from Board members, and occasional administrative information. Members are asked to provide an active email address and encouraged to check their email regularly. Please keep in mind, email is the most effective way for us to communicate important information outside of rehearsal, and we rely on members to keep themselves informed. Members who do not have access to email are asked to find a buddy in the choir who can share the content of emails sent to the group. In addition to email, pertinent member information is in the password protected Member Login section of the Chorale website.

Accessibility - The Chorale strives to make reasonable accommodations to members wishing to sing who have a concern regarding access, impairment or disability. We encourage members that may have special access requirements to bring these to the attention of their Section Leader so that reasonable accommodations can be made.

Photo Release - Photos and videos may be taken of members at rehearsals and performances, and used in Chorale marketing, publicity and advertising. Members consent to such use without compensation, unless they opt out of being included in these photos and videos by notifying their Section Leader.

Policy for Maintaining Membership in the Chorale – It is an expectation that individuals joining the Skagit Valley Chorale will have continuous membership, which includes both semesters of each year. If members of the Chorale have a family emergency, health problems or other personal reasons for taking a leave from the Chorale, they must do the following to retain their spot in the Chorale:

1. A written request for a leave of absence stating the reason for the request as well as anticipated return date. This notice is to be given to the President of the Chorale. All notices will be kept in strict confidence within the Board of Directors.
2. If the leave of absence will extend for more than one semester, the member will need to submit a written notice for each semester they will be absent from the Chorale.

There is no guarantee that there will be a spot available when the member wants to return. In this case, the member will be placed on the waiting list for the section and notified to that effect. This action may be necessary when membership or a place in the singer's section is at capacity.

Concert Music

Music Selection – The Chorale's Conductor makes the selection of the concert music.

Sheet Music – Sheet music is provided to all registered Chorale members whose dues are current at the first rehearsal of a concert semester. The music is the property of the Chorale and must be returned at the last concert performance. The cost to replace unreturned music will be the responsibility of the member.

Listening and Practice Recordings – Listening and practice mp3 recordings are provided as an aid to members. These recordings are available for download from the Member Login/Rehearsal Material section of the Chorale website (www.skagitvalleychorale.org).

Singing in Foreign Languages - Choral music is an international art form, and vast quantities of beautiful repertoire are available in languages other than English. Occasionally the Chorale may perform pieces in the English translation, but in most cases, we will perform a work in the language in which it was originally composed. The Conductor will teach all texts thoroughly, coaching the choir on elements of correct diction and style, and may provide audio pronunciation guides for member practice.

Texts - Members are encouraged to explore the texts of the pieces we are singing, including looking up the original context and poet, and writing translations into your sheet music. Occasionally members will be invited to read texts in performances.

Solos - From time-to-time solos will be available to members of the Chorale. The Conductor may select singers in advance or may hold auditions. Auditions will be announced generally mid-semester. The Conductor may also choose to hire professional singers for solos.

Other Musical Skills - From time-to-time members may be invited to use their skills on

musical instruments in rehearsals and performances. Members with these additional skills are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the Conductor.

Rehearsals

Location – Rehearsals are held at the Salem Lutheran Church, 2529 N. Laventure Rd., Mount Vernon, except for the dress rehearsals, which are held at McIntyre Hall, 2501 E. College Way, Mount Vernon.

Dates and Times – Rehearsals generally begin on the first Tuesday after Labor Day for the Christmas concert and the first Tuesday after New Year's Day for the spring concert. Tuesday rehearsals start at 6:30 p.m. and end at 9:00 p.m. There are also rehearsals on one Saturday of each month during the concert semester from 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. The current rehearsal schedule can be accessed from the Member Login / Other Resources page of the Chorale website

Attendance – Regular attendance at rehearsals in person is important in the preparations for performances. Attendance will be recorded at every rehearsal. It is expected the Chorale members will stay for the entire rehearsal. If there is a need to miss a rehearsal, arrive substantially late, or leave early, the Chorale member is expected to contact their Section Host in advance. Members who miss multiple rehearsals in a semester may be disqualified from participating in the concert performances, at the discretion of the Section Leader, Section Host and Artistic Director. Zoom attendance is available for limited absences.

Conduct – To encourage a courteous and respectful atmosphere, members are expected to limit conversation during rehearsal, paying attention when the Conductor is speaking, keeping music-related rehearsal conversation concise and low-volume, and limiting social conversations to before or after the rehearsal and during breaks. Members may be dismissed temporarily or permanently from the Chorale for disruptive behavior.

Music Marking – During rehearsals, members are expected to make notations in their music, in pencil, at the direction of the Conductor. This is intended to minimize the need to revisit performance notes in subsequent rehearsals. ***Do not make any permanent marking in the music, especially music that has been borrowed from other choral groups.*** Members wishing to highlight their parts may do so using only Highlighter Tape, which can be removed after use. ***Also, do not punch holes in borrowed music.***

Concerts

Location – Generally concert performances are held at McIntyre Hall, 2501 E. College Way, Mount Vernon. Other venues may be used occasionally.

Dates and Times – Concert dates and times are set by McIntyre Hall with consideration given to the dates and times requested by the Chorale’s liaison to McIntyre Hall. Generally, the dates and times given are a Friday or Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and the following Sunday at 2:00 p.m. The dates are set well in advance of the concert season.

Call Times – The call time for a performance is 1½ hours prior to curtain time. All Chorale members are expected to be on time for warm-up and any last-minute concert preparation.

Concert Attire – Chorale members are expected to furnish their own concert attire. The attire generally consists of A. a two-piece black tank top and either a black full-length skirt or palazzo pants, which must be purchased from Stage Accents. (See Concert Attire on the members only page for ordering details.) , OR B. a black tuxedo with white tux shirt, black bowtie, black cummerbund, black socks or hose, and black shoes. These may be purchased or rented at the member’s discretion. C. Accents will be provided by the Chorale and must be returned at the end of the concert season. All accents are the property of the Chorale. Other changes in concert attire, if any, will be discussed and announced well in advance of the concert.

Concert Folders – Chorale members must have a black music folder for the concert performances. Members may purchase a music folder from the Music Folders chairperson or a standard folder from a local retailer.