



FRESNO COMMUNITY CHORUS

MEMBERS' HANDBOOK

OUR MISSION

FRESNO COMMUNITY CHORUS (FCC) is a group of musicians as diverse as the community it represents, joined together to more completely understand and perform great choral literature (from masterworks of previous centuries to more contemporary works). Our goal is to provide the best possible musical experience for FCC members and to share performances of the highest quality with our audiences.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Fresno Community Chorus! Whether you are a returning member or you are joining us for your very first season, we are delighted that you are here and have chosen to share your time and talent with us. We want you to experience the art of exquisite music-making in an atmosphere that is positive, professional, and fun! This handbook is designed as a reference guide for the policies and procedures pertaining to the regular weekly rehearsals as well as for the dress rehearsals and concerts. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Section Leader or the Chorus Manager.

EXPECTATIONS

This is a volunteer group. One of the specific things that you have volunteered for is the pursuit of excellence. To that end, **Tuesday evening rehearsals are for in-depth study of musical aspects of the repertoire. Sectional rehearsals occur during the regular rehearsal for the purpose of learning and fine-tuning difficult sections. Although some of this time is devoted to “woodshedding” notes, singers are expected to practice on their own and come to rehearsal prepared.** Rehearsal tapes may be made available at the beginning of each semester for that semester’s concert. In addition, many of the major works we perform can be found on the online practice site cyberbass.com. It is also extremely helpful to obtain professional recordings. The Artistic Director will have recommendations.

Being an ACTIVE member of FCC means you have committed to participating in all season concerts

AUDITIONS/ OPPORTUNITIES

MASTER CHORALE: Auditions are required for initial placement in the primary FCC ensemble, the Master Chorale. In addition, each member is re-auditioned every two years. The four-year audition cycle is conducted alphabetically (alto, bass, soprano, tenor).

CORO PICCOLO: Individuals interested in singing in the small ensemble, Coro Piccolo, are auditioned and chosen on the basis of reading skills, intonation, and overall balance of the group for the particular occasion. Auditions are conducted in the second or third week of rehearsal.

SOLOS: Soloists are chosen by the Artistic Director, who considers many factors (range, timbre, musical insights, projection, balance with ensemble, etc.). Individuals who are interested in singing solos should prepare a piece to audition for the Artistic Director. If appropriate, we prefer to choose soloists from the group. Some occasions and literature may allow us the opportunity to include some voices not regularly available to us.

SECTION LEADERS

The Section Leader is appointed by the Artistic Director and is responsible for his/her section including seating the group, monitoring attendance, ensuring its musical integrity, assisting with organizational details, and contributing to each member's personal satisfaction with the organization. In addition to handling issues coming from the Artistic Director and Board, the Section Leader is the conduit through which suggestions and concerns flow to the Artistic Director and Board. Details therefore include such things as:

- 1. Taking roll at each rehearsal and performance, ensuring that attendance conforms to organizational policy.** Requests for variance from policy need to be referred to the Artistic Director by way of your Section Leader.
- 2. Seating the ensemble for musical and organizational purposes.** Usually the choir sits in "block" formation (e.g., S2 members sitting together). The Section Leader must watch for chorister sightlines and pay attention to the section "sound" that is achieved, adjusting for optimal quality. In particular, the Section Leader must make sure rehearsals and performances are comfortable for all section members.
- 3. Managing sectional rehearsals to ensure that the section learns all music and is prepared at peak levels for performance.** Passages to be rehearsed are outlined in weekly lesson plans. The Section Leader must alert the Artistic Director if a rehearsal accompanist is needed. In general, the Section Leader is authorized to handle any and all musical issues that can be managed within the section while, of course, bringing necessary concerns to the attention of the Artistic Director. Section Leaders are asked to communicate any pertinent musical and/or organizational information to any absent members.

4. Assisting the Choir Manager and other organization leaders in such details as proofreading program names, selling concert tickets, distributing/collecting music, etc.

5. Attending meetings of the Board. Typically the board meets monthly during the season (at 5:30 pm before Tuesday rehearsals), although the President or Artistic Director may call other meetings. Section leaders are voting members of the Board.

FEES

In addition to membership dues, FCC members may be required to purchase music. Prior to the beginning of each semester, members are notified by e-mail or mail of all anticipated fees for dues and music. Please contact the Artistic Director or Choir Manager to confidentially discuss whether membership dues or the purchase of music is a financial hardship.

REHEARSAL TIME and LOCATION

Regular rehearsals are Tuesdays, 7:30 pm to 9:40 pm, in the Vocal Performance Hall at Fresno State University. Final dress rehearsal is usually held at the concert venue, which is announced prior to dress rehearsal week.

PARKING

Parking passes for Lot C are distributed on the first night of rehearsal. Parking is strictly enforced. **Parking passes MUST be displayed in your windshield at every rehearsal or you will get a parking ticket!**

PERFORMANCES AND PERFORMANCE DRESS

Please wear comfortable clothes and comfortable shoes to all dress rehearsals, as you may be standing for extended periods of time. Black performance attire is required for concerts, but not during dress rehearsals.

When dressing for a concert performance, remember that the music and the ensemble are what the audience has come to hear and see. The chorus must appear as a single entity, and ornaments or accessories that call particular attention to individuals is inappropriate. Your Section Leader may ask you to adjust your attire if it is deemed distracting to the overall appearance of the choir. Performance attire is as follows:

Women

Floor length black dress, skirt, or evening slacks or suit, with long or $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeves

Black shoes, black stockings; no flip-flops

No excessive or shiny jewelry, hair ornaments, or other accessories

Generally, women's attire should match the men's tuxedos in taste and subtlety

Men

Black tuxedo (not tails), black bow tie

White tuxedo shirt

Black shoes, black socks

ABSOLUTELY NO perfume, cologne, scented hairspray or other scented products are permitted during rehearsals or concerts!

Music Folders: Black folders are required for performances. If you do not have one, or would like a new one, you may purchase The Black Folder at a cost of approximately \$20. Announcements are made during one of the rehearsals regarding folder purchase.

Performance Etiquette Reminders:

1. When entering or exiting the stage, music is carried in the hand *away from* the audience. Keep your folder at your side until the conductor gives the cue to raise it.
2. Hold you music up so you can see the conductor and the audience can see your face.
3. Don't follow the soloists in your music.
4. Don't wave at your friends and family.
5. Do smile and enjoy the music you have worked so hard to learn!

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You may miss no more than two rehearsals for any given performance to be eligible to participate in that performance. Exceptions may only be cleared with the Artistic Director through your Section Leader. Please call or e-mail your Section Leader if you have to miss a rehearsal. You are responsible for obtaining information and music notes that may have been given during your absence.

GENERAL NOTES ABOUT REHEARSAL

Bring music and a pencil for rehearsal notes to every rehearsal.

Water is permitted in the Vocal Performance Hall. No other food or drink is allowed.

Please do not talk during rehearsals. We have a lot to accomplish during the time set aside for rehearsal. We encourage you to find times to get to know your fellow singers during the break and outside scheduled rehearsal times and space.

Occasionally there are added solo or small ensemble rehearsals immediately before or after a regularly scheduled rehearsal. Please respect these rehearsals and take your conversations outside of the Vocal Performance Hall.

MUSIC

We use a combination of library resources, including music we buy, music borrowed from other choral groups, and music from the Fresno State Music Department library.

The library policies are simple, yet critical: At the beginning of each semester you are given a packet of music for that semester's performance.

You are responsible for returning borrowed music. Music you have purchased is yours to keep, or you may donate it to the CSU Fresno library.

Use only pencil to mark in borrowed music. Please erase your markings prior to returning music at the end of the semester.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

If you have a concern or complaint, we ask that you first contact your Section Leader or the Chorus Manager by phone or e-mail. Names and contact information are given out at the beginning of each season. Our board members are also available for questions or concerns. The Artistic Director may be contacted by e-mail.

VOLUNTEERING

Fresno Community Chorus is a non-profit organization whose success is powered by the musical and non-musical contributions of its members. As an active singer, one of your most important contributions is **being there**: showing up to rehearsals and offering your best effort.

Presenting a professional concert is a huge undertaking, both financially and administratively. We rely heavily on the volunteer efforts of our members throughout the season to help make our concert a success. Arriving early for set-up before performances or other special events, staying after to help clean up, making a financial contribution, selling concert tickets, helping design and distribute promotional materials, or draft grant proposals: these and other possibilities are all ways in which you can support your chorus. If you have friends, family, or colleagues with special talents in these or other areas, we would welcome their contributions.

When you register for chorus, you have the opportunity to indicate the ways in which you would like to help or any special talents you may wish to contribute. Announcements are made during rehearsals regarding opportunities to volunteer.

We count on your volunteering efforts (in a myriad of capacities - watch for announcements) to help make these efforts successful in underwriting our budget for the coming season, to develop audience interest and participation, and to help meet our Mission Statement.