

2017-2018 OSU Youth Choirs Handbook

CHOIR DESCRIPTIONS

Choir descriptions are subject to change:

Concert Choir: This choir is designed to provide upper elementary through junior high singers with quality choral music instruction. Group focus includes 2- and 3-part treble singing (SA and SSA) along with the development of vocal technique, music reading and performing skills.

Belle Voci: This choir is designed for high-school-aged singers. Group focus is dedicated to the study of advanced choral literature for mixed voices (SAB and SATB) along with continuing development of musicianship and performing skills.

PLACEMENT HEARINGS

Placement hearings are required in order to place each singer in the appropriate choir based on vocal maturity and experience. The hearing lasts approximately ten minutes, and no preparation is necessary. The conductor will do a brief evaluation of the student's vocal range, quality and tonal memory skills to ascertain his/her vocal independence. Placement hearings will be held at the beginning of each semester for new members.

PARENT INFORMATION

There is one required Parent Meeting at the beginning of the choir year. Each singer must be represented by at least one parent or guardian in order to participate in OSUYC this season. This is your opportunity to learn more about the year's activities and to volunteer to help. The chorus welcomes parental involvement, and we depend on your support.

Parent volunteers are needed for the following duties/activities:

1. to monitor the hallways before, during, and after rehearsals;
2. to prepare and/or serve refreshments for special events;
3. to assist with various projects and activities such as: concert receptions, fundraising, uniform assistance, travel planning, record keeping

Rehearsal Times and Location:

All rehearsals are held in the Seretean Center at Oklahoma State University unless otherwise specified. Rehearsals are held from 5-6 p.m. on Tuesday evenings. **Singers should arrive for rehearsals at least 10 minutes before each rehearsal begins.** Singers may enter the building through the north, east, or south doors. They should go straight to their choir rooms when they arrive. Parents should clearly inform singers where they will be picked up after rehearsals. **For safety reasons, we prefer that singers are picked up on the north side of the building so that the staff can monitor them.**

Note: Food, sodas and gum are NOT allowed in rehearsals or concerts. Bottled water IS permitted.

MUSICIANSHIP TRAINING

Musicianship training will be incorporated into every rehearsal to help singers build the necessary skills used in a choral setting. Students will explore and master rhythmic and tonal patterns so they can progress in reading and singing more challenging music.

SINGER EXPECTATIONS

An outstanding choir is made up of singers who:

- Attend all rehearsals and performances
- Arrive on time
- Bring a positive attitude
- Are committed to excellence
- Are supportive of each other
- Are dedicated to growing musically
- Listen attentively during rehearsals
- Always put forth their best effort

Note: If a singer continually forgets the rules or distracts others during rehearsals, he or she will receive a verbal warning and parents will be notified. Repeated offenses may result in dismissal from the choir without a refund of tuition.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Membership in OSUYC requires a commitment to attend ALL rehearsals and all performances. Any singers or parents who are unable to fulfill these expectations should reconsider their decision to join the program. Choral music is a group endeavor, and the absence of even one voice changes the dynamic for the entire ensemble. In addition, programs are planned for the entire year based on September enrollment. Though tuition is payable in two installments, we ask our singers to commit to the program for the full 9-month academic year.

Regular Rehearsals: Please consider that there are only about 15 rehearsals in each semester. This is very limited time considering the quantity, variety, and complexity of repertoire performed at each concert. Every minute counts. **Please see that your singer is present and on time for each rehearsal.** The flow of the rehearsal is disrupted when a singer walks in late.

Perfect attendance is the expectation for this organization. If an absence is unavoidable, we expect you to **call or email the choir secretary and leave a message before the rehearsal.**

- **OSUYC Phone:** (405) 385-9373
- **Email:** osuyouthchoirs@gmail.com

Any singer who misses 2 rehearsals in one semester may jeopardize his/her continued membership in the choir program. The OSUYC staff keeps attendance records in order to reward singers for perfect attendance. Singers with perfect attendance will receive SPECIAL RECOGNITION at each concert.

Note: Rehearsals and activities are open, and parents are welcomed to attend. If you wish to observe a rehearsal, please enter the choir room before the rehearsal begins and find a chair in the back.

Parking: Be careful where you park your car if you choose to attend a rehearsal. Parking in a staff lot anywhere on campus is prohibited until after 5 p.m.; violators will be ticketed. After 5 p.m., however, you may park on campus.

Friday Rehearsals: Once per semester, members of the choir are required to meet for a special Friday rehearsal. These events provide opportunities for the singers to polish their repertoire for the semester and to get to know each other better. These rehearsals usually include musical enrichment experiences in addition to singing. **These count as regular rehearsals; attendance is required.**

Performances: OSUYC Concert Choir and Belle Voci members usually have 1 to 3 concert appearances each semester. Attendance at these performances is REQUIRED. The "dress" rehearsal at the performance site prior to each concert is also mandatory. Singers who do not attend the "dress" rehearsal may not be allowed to sing in the concert. Singers who miss a required concert for reasons other than illness, family emergency, or a school-related performance will forfeit their future membership in the OSUYC. Concerts generally occur on weeknights but occasionally may occur on a Sunday afternoon.

Late Policy: All singers must be picked up within 10 minutes of the conclusion of the last scheduled activity. Beginning and ending times for all events will be announced in advance. The choir staff members have other obligations, and it is unfair to expect them to supervise children who are not picked up on time. Singers who are consistently picked up will be dismissed from the program. It is our sincere hope that dismissals will not be necessary.

ENROLLMENT, TUITION AND UNIFORM FEES

The OSUYC program is designed to provide quality choral music experiences. Tuition and enrollment fees help to cover the cost of music and supplies, hire a professional staff, and provide each singer with a choir T-shirt. Please remember: Membership in OSUYC is considered to be a 9-month commitment, but tuition is payable by the semester. Families with multiple singers will receive a 10% discount per singer on tuition.

Tuition Fees: \$100/semester due prior to the first rehearsal. Students that join the program after the first rehearsal will be considered for a prorated tuition based on start date.

Uniform Cost: Some pieces of the concert uniform are provided by the program. The rest of the uniform is the responsibility of the singer's family. The cost of the choir uniform is usually under \$50, depending upon the size. Details on how to purchase the concert uniform will be provided in a handout at the beginning of the choir year. **Some**

uniform items must be purchased through the company selected by the Choir Staff. Please do not purchase those items from any other source.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid may be available for those members who need assistance with tuition. You may contact the OSUYC Executive Secretary to apply by the deadlines listed here.

Partial scholarships are available for **tuition only** and will be awarded based on need and money available. Our goal is that no child will be denied membership because of an inability to pay. **Families who receive scholarships are expected to volunteer their time in support of choir activities in exchange for financial aid.**

Scholarship Application Deadlines: Fall 2017 - first rehearsal (September 5th, 2017); Spring 2018 - First rehearsal in January.

UNIFORMS

Casual Uniforms – The casual attire for all singers is an Oklahoma State University Youth Choir polo shirt with nice slacks or skirts. All new members will receive a complimentary Oklahoma State University Youth Choir shirt after payment of registration and tuition. Choir shirts may be worn to school, to rehearsals, to “dress” rehearsals, and for casual concert appearances. Parents are welcomed to purchase choir shirts for themselves to help support and promote the organization.

Dress Uniforms – Just as the ensemble’s sound is important, so is the ensemble’s concert appearance. A well-groomed, neatly uniformed ensemble is essential for a truly professional and artistic experience.

Concert Choir and Belle Voci Boys: Bow ties for the boys are provided by the organization. White, tuxedo wing collar shirt, black slacks, black socks, and black shoes complete the ensemble. Shirts are to be tucked in. Hair should be neatly groomed with natural color. Boys should wear no jewelry.

Concert Choir and Belle Voci Girls: Bow ties and cummerbunds for the girls are provided by the organization. Black skirts, white tuxedo blouses, black tights or hose, and black shoes complete the ensemble. Blouses are to be tucked in. Hair should be naturally colored and groomed away from the face. Girls may use natural (matching hair color) barrettes; but no bows, ribbons, or colored barrettes, please. Girls should wear no jewelry other than small stud earrings.

Note: The choir occasionally sponsors a “uniform exchange” night. Retired members sometimes donate their uniforms to the organization, and this allows current members to “trade up” to a larger uniform size. Singers wishing to “trade up” should contact the OSUYC Executive Secretary.

MUSIC FOLDERS

Music and folders are purchased for the singers to use in OSUYC rehearsals. Folders may be checked out after a rehearsal for practicing at home and returned at the beginning of the next rehearsal. In the case of damage or loss, however, replacement will be the financial obligation of the singer.

COMMUNICATION

Notes with vital information concerning OSUYC activities are regularly sent home with singers after rehearsals. Please ask your child for notes, then read them and post them as a reminder about concerts, event schedule changes, etc. Notes will also be sent out by email. Please do not call the Music Office at OSU concerning OSUYC activities. Oklahoma State University is our gracious host but is not responsible for the maintenance of this organization.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If the Stillwater Public Schools are closed due to the weather on rehearsal day, rehearsals will also be cancelled. If in doubt, please call the Executive Secretary.

SPECIAL PERFORMANCES

Special performances (such as invitations to sing at music education conferences or community events) may require extra rehearsals. A notice will be sent out at least two weeks prior to any extra rehearsal.

RECOGNITION FOR YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP

At the end of a choir member's first year in our program, he/she receives a certificate and a choir pin. Each additional year a singer participates in the program, he/she receives a gold bar that attaches to the pin. Choir members are encouraged to wear their pins as part of their formal attire at each concert.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The winter and spring concerts are times when the Oklahoma State University Youth Choir is presented formally to the community. These performances are the culmination of much work, and the singers will be able to do their best with a quiet, attentive audience.

Alternative arrangements should be made for babies and small children if possible. Families with babies and small children in attendance should sit near the back of the auditorium, where a quick and quiet exit can be made if necessary.

RECRUITMENT

Recruiting new singers keeps our program vibrant with new talent. Rehearsals and concerts provide opportunities to encourage involvement of new singers. Members of OSUYC are welcomed to bring a friend to rehearsal during the months of September and January, and to invite their friends to attend any of our concerts.

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

All policies presented in this handbook are designed to help OSUYC members achieve their fullest musical potential. Singers and parents who choose to join the organization are asked to demonstrate their understanding and support of OSUYC policies by signing a "Letter of Commitment" (attached). Please sign this letter and return it to the choir secretary at the mandatory Parent Meeting in September.

Oklahoma State University Youth Choir DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

Thank you for choosing to be involved in the Oklahoma State University Youth Choir program for the 2017 – 2018 season. The policies presented in our handbook are designed to help Oklahoma State University Youth Choir members achieve their fullest potential as musicians and as members of society. Singers and parents who choose to join the organization are asked to demonstrate their understanding and support of OSUYC policies by signing this "Declaration of Commitment."

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Oklahoma State University Youth Choir was founded on the principle of providing excellence in choral music instruction. When a singer is invited to join OSUYC, the staff members make a pledge to that singer. Our pledge is to provide all singers with quality musical instruction *in every rehearsal* in order to help them become the best musicians they can be.

YOUR COMMITMENT TO US

In return for our commitment to you, OSUYC asks each singer and parent to make their own personal pledge of excellence to our program. Achieving our potential requires teamwork. After you have read the OSUYC Handbook and discussed it with your singer(s), we ask that you sign this letter and return it to the choir secretary.

We have read the OSUYC Handbook and are ready to make a commitment for the 2017-2018 choir year (September-May). We understand that the success of the organization is dependent upon a high level of dedication from each singer and parent involved in the program. We agree to uphold OSUYC policies to the best of our ability.

Signature of OSUYC member

Signature of parent

Today's Date: _____