

The Frederick Children's Chorus

www.fredcc.org
officemanager@fredcc.org

Raising Young Voices In Song For 25 Years!

Judy DuBose, Director
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Information for Parents

Organization

The Frederick Children's Chorus was formed in 1985. It has been incorporated as a non-profit organization since 1990. A staff of knowledgeable and skilled directors and accompanists receive a professional fee for their work with the chorus. Parents are required to volunteer their time and skills to assist with the operation of the chorus. This is a 10-20 hour commitment over the course of the year.

Communication

Chorus families receive a monthly newsletter, The Treble Voice, which is distributed at the attendance table the first Tuesday of each month. It includes information about events, a calendar for the full year, as well as items of interest to chorus families. The newsletter is posted on the website each month.

This information is also available on our website: www.fredcc.org

Email is checked weekly and the address is officemanager@fredcc.org.

Phone messages are checked weekly and the number is 301-845-2451.

Staff

The Frederick Children's Chorus is under the direction of Judith L. DuBose. Mrs. DuBose founded the chorus in 1985 and continues to lead the organization. She is well known throughout the region as a leader in choral music education, is a frequent guest clinician, and advisor. She actively participates in professional organizations often serving in leadership roles. She is joined by Assistant Director and Office Manager Lee DuBose Fuhr, Assistant Directors Ann DuBose and Kristen Ion, and Accompanist Sarah Goldsmith. Each staff member works with several aspects of the program. Mrs. Fuhr is joined in the office by an exceptional staff of parents and chorus alumni who keep things running smoothly.

Music

The music selected for the chorus offers the opportunity to sing in many languages and to learn styles of music from many cultures and periods in history. The level of difficulty is appropriate for the singers with age and maturity given careful consideration. The content of the text is also carefully considered. Through the art of song, students have an opportunity to fully appreciate poetry, philosophy, human emotions, and nationalism. Songs with religious texts offer singers the opportunity to learn about ideologies other than their own. At no time is religious music programmed to endorse a particular faith or ideology. All music is studied for music's sake.

Chorus Assignments

Our youngest program is called **Little Music Makers**. It is designed for 5-8 year olds and provides basic singing and musicianship skills in an energetic classroom setting. We play musical games and use movement and body percussion to explore musical concepts and patterns. No recommendation is required to join this group. Anyone can sign up their child. See the Little Music Makers brochure for more information, or visit the website at www.fredcc.org.

Our next level program is called **Training Chorus**. This is considered our first level in the Treble Chorus group. These children range in age from 8 - 11 and are in third through sixth grade in the fall of their first year in chorus. Regardless of whether a child graduated from the Little Music Makers program, or is joining our program for the first time with a

recommendation from their school teacher, all children spend at least one year in Training Chorus. Children in the Training Chorus are introduced to vocal technique, note reading, and singing unison and two-part music. They sing in foreign languages, learning styles of music from many cultures and periods in history. They rehearse from 6:00 - 7:00p.m. every Tuesday. These children are also required to attend one hour of musicianship class, either from 5:00-6:00p.m. or from 7:00-8:00p.m. See the section on Musicianship below for more details about this aspect of our program.

After completing their first year in the Children's Chorus, all singers participate in an evaluation to determine which chorus will best suit each individual by age and skill in the next year. Some singers remain in the Training Chorus to gain a better understanding of the basics, or to allow more time for growth if they joined us very young. Some move into the Intermediate Chorus, which serves as a stepping stone between Training Chorus and Concert Chorus. Some move directly into the Concert Chorus.

The **Intermediate Chorus** members are given additional tools to help them reach their goal of membership in Concert Chorus. All Intermediate Chorus members are placed in the same musicianship class, where they work to strengthen their individual weaknesses and build a stronger base for their musical knowledge. They receive additional instruction in part singing and performance skills and rehearse regularly with the Concert Chorus where they receive the challenge of keeping up with the more advanced singers. This group attends musicianship from 6:00-7:00 rehearses an hour and fifteen minutes every Tuesday (from 7:15 - 8:30).

The **Concert Chorus** members rehearse an hour and 45 minutes every Tuesday evening (from 7:15-9:00). These most advanced treble chorus members perform music which is challenging and requires highly developed skills in reading music, part singing, independence, responsibility for individual practice, and vocal maturity. They are often invited to perform for special occasions, and must commit to honor these invitations. This group is also required to attend musicianship class from 6:00-7:00p.m. These students work on more advanced musicianship skills, and complete their training towards membership in the Chamber Singers.

The **Chamber Singers** rehearse on Sunday afternoons from 4-6 and represent the high school aged students in our program. We occasionally move up boys whose voices change early, but the main ages for these singers is 14-18. These advanced singers perform 4 part S.A.T.B. music as well as participating in full chorus selections. A select group of these singers also help teach our Musicianship course on Tuesdays where they help younger students to improve upon their skills as singers. High School Seniors are given the opportunity to be conducting interns for the Training Chorus, where they learn the nuances of planning a rehearsal, time management, executing a lesson plan, and the skills of conducting. These students are typically those who intend to go into the field of music after high school.

Rehearsals - Location and Time

As described above, the Frederick Children's Chorus rehearses as several separate choral ensembles. Rehearsals are held every Tuesday from September through May, with year-end evaluations in the 4 weeks following the concert each spring. All Tuesday rehearsals, unless otherwise indicated, are held in the Evangelical and Reformed United Church of Christ, 15 West Church Street, in downtown Frederick (on the same block of Church street as The Tasting Room). Chorus members arrive for rehearsals at least five minutes before their rehearsal or musicianship class is scheduled to begin so they can check in and be ready to begin on time.

Musicianship Class

All singers are required to take our Musicianship class offered every Tuesday from 5-8pm. As noted above, the Training Chorus has the option of taking their musicianship class from 5:00-6:00 or from 7:00-8:00. This class is designed to work on the basic skills of musicianship, note and rhythm reading, musical symbols, and sight reading. Intermediate and Concert Chorus members attend musicianship from 6:00-7:00 while the Training Chorus is in rehearsal. All classes

match students of similar skill levels and they are placed in small groups with high student-to-teacher ratios. The teachers are a combination of professional chorus staff and our own high school singers, many of whom went through the program before they entered high school. All instructors are guided and coached by our professional staff to ensure high quality education. They are provided with a lesson plan each week, written by one of the adult staff members. In these classes, students have the opportunity to individually improve upon their own musicianship skills in order to become an overall better singer. The skills students gain are then put to good use in their rehearsal immediately following their musicianship class. All musicianship classes take place in the chapel across the street from the main church building.

Attendance

Children will be allowed to miss only two rehearsals from September to the December concert, and three rehearsals from January to the May concert. Children who miss more than the allowed number of rehearsals will be tested for music memorization. Those unable to demonstrate concert readiness will not be permitted to perform.

All concert-week rehearsals are mandatory. The only exception is for a graded school concert. Notice of this absence must be given at least two weeks in advance, in writing. We ask for a copy of the school flyer including the date of your child's concert to be included. If your child becomes sick the week of the concert and must miss a mandatory rehearsal, chances are they will be too sick to perform in the concert. Mrs. DuBose reserves the right to fairly assess individual situations.

Commitments to Scheduled Performances

Children who participate in the Concert Chorus become performing members of an organization which often receives invitations to perform at important events and with other musical organizations. All chorus members are expected to perform in all scheduled performances for their group. Exceptions to this policy must be requested on an individual case-by-case basis in advance. Children who do not honor this performance commitment will be asked to resign from the chorus. Excused absences from performances must be requested in writing at least one month before the event.

Home Practice

Perhaps the greatest commitment involves home practice. At our music pick-up night in late August, each singer is provided with a full packet of music and a rehearsal CD. Singers report the amount of time spent practicing by turning in a practice log each week. If a chorus member is absent one week they need to turn in 2 weeks of practice logs when they return. Practice logs are mandatory. Any singer missing more than 2 logs in the fall and 3 in the spring will be tested for music memorization before they will be permitted to perform in a concert.

Here is the home practice guideline:

Training - 30 min. 3 times a week - 90 minutes

Intermediate - 45 min 3 times a week - 135 minutes

Concert and Chamber Singers - One hour 3 - 4 times a week as needed - 180 - 240 minutes

Liability

It is the responsibility of the parent to arrange to transport their child to rehearsals and concerts and remain with their child until they are assured that they are at the right rehearsal location at the right time and a chorus director has arrived. Children must not be dropped off before a rehearsal is to begin unless a staff member has arrived and they may not wait outside after rehearsals for parents to pick them up. This is a liability as well as a safety concern which we all share and for which the parents must take responsibility. Parents are invited to stay for rehearsals and listen or take a seat in one of the separate rooms available to us to read or converse with others. Those who choose to sit in on the rehearsals are asked to refrain from talking and younger siblings must be supervised and remain quiet. There are adjacent rooms and hallways to our rehearsal space and younger siblings often play quiet games together or bring coloring books.

Concert-Week Rehearsals and Performance

All concert-week rehearsals are required rehearsals! The date and time of these rehearsals will be announced months in advance. Children who arrive for a performance but have missed a required rehearsal will be seated in the audience and will not be permitted on stage. It is distressing to the child and to the directors to have a child work all year and then miss a required rehearsal. Parents are urged to check their family, church, school, and work schedules to assure as well as possible that no conflicts will prevent a child from participating in a concert.

Costs and Non-Rehearsal Commitments:

1. Annual Fee

Children pay an annual tuition for which they receive all music used by their chorus, two rehearsal CD's (one in the fall and another in the spring), all rehearsal instruction, musicianship class enrollment, a chorus tee shirt, and the chorus-provided pieces of their concert attire (skirt and first blouse for girls, vest and tie for all). The fee for all new members is \$485.00, payable at the time of enrollment. This is a base tuition fee of \$350 and a musicianship enrollment fee of \$135. This total fee of \$485 covers all instruction and materials for the entire year. The average weekly cost breakdown is \$15, which compares very well to other extra curricular activities being offered in the area.

Payment installments and scholarships can be arranged by completing the appropriate form(s). Please speak to a staff member to receive a copy of these form. (Due to our program's many upfront costs, we prefer payments in full if at all possible.)

2. Summer Chorus Camp - Strongly Recommended - Included in your Annual Fee!

Summer Chorus Camp is recommended for each new and returning chorus member. A combined project between the Frederick Children's Chorus and Frederick County Parks and Recreation (FCPR), the summer chorus camp is offered to provide skill development and summer recreation with an emphasis on music. If you are a chorus member registering for camp through us, your camp registration fee is paid by the chorus. Select your date and mail your form to the chorus with your registration form. Your camp registration must be received through the chorus for your fee to be waived. **Do not sign up through the county, or FCPR will charge you the full camp fee to them, and then we will still require you to pay your regular annual tuition.** If you sign up through the county by mistake, we can usually remedy this, but it is extremely complicated because of how they handle their camp payments, and takes a lot of office time on our part. Space is limited so sign up early!

The deadline for camp registration through the chorus is June 1. Anyone wishing to attend but who misses the deadline must sign up through FCPR and pay the full fee through the county. Camp registrations need to be submitted in conjunction with chorus registration and with a minimum of \$120 of the full tuition fee, even if you are on a payment plan. (If at all possible, we prefer tuition to be paid in full at the time of registration.)

3. Black Binder and pencil pouch

Children must purchase a 1 inch matte black, three ringed binder, with inside pockets to keep the music organized, and should bring their music to every rehearsal. We also ask that you purchase a 3-ring pencil pouch to go inside the binder and fill it with 3 or 4 pencils and a highlighter. Children are asked to mark their music with a pencil at every rehearsal, so this is an essential tool to have with them at all times. Children returning for a second season should remove the music from last year and leave it in a file at home. Children who have been in the chorus several years should check to see if their black folder is in performance condition and replace it if needed. It is also a good idea to use a sharpie and write the singer's name inside the front cover of the binder.

4. Concert Attire

Proper attire is required for performances. Children who arrive for a concert dressed in any way that varies from this uniform will not be permitted to perform:

Girls Concert Attire:

1. A black skirt will be provided.
2. A white blouse. At our music pick up night, you will be given an order form to purchase a white blouse. No other blouse is acceptable. The cost, around \$15, is included in your New Member registration. However, replacements are ordered at the expense of the families. Often blouses, which have been outgrown by older chorus members, can be purchased for less than \$15. It is the responsibility of the parent to be sure a blouse has been ordered.
3. Black opaque stockings. It is recommended that these be purchased early and that girls have at least one extra pair. Stockings may not be tan, sheer (see-through), off black or white in color.
4. Black matte dress shoes (never white shoes, boots, or sneakers). These should be flat, closed toe shoes that fit comfortably and have no gold or ornamental additions. Girls may not wear shoes with elevated or raised heels for concerts. Sizing the shoes correctly is extremely important. Girls who are growing should check to see that the shoes they wore in the last concert still fit comfortably. The wardrobe chairperson will approve or disapprove each chorus member's shoes before issuing a skirt. (Keep your receipts.)
5. A tie will be provided at the concert.
6. A vest will be provided before the concert.

Boys Concert Attire:

1. Black dress slacks, neatly pressed (never denim or sport pants) - Parents are encouraged to pin or sew the pockets closed to deter children from putting their hands in their pockets during the concert.
2. A white oxford style dress shirt - long sleeved (never short sleeved)
3. A black belt if pants come with belt loops
4. Black dress socks
5. Black dress shoes (never white shoes, sneakers or boots). Sizing the shoes correctly is extremely important. Boys who are growing should check to see that the shoes they wore in the last concert still fit comfortably. The wardrobe chairperson will approve or disapprove each chorus member's shoes before issuing a vest. (Keep your receipts.)
6. A tie will be provided at the concert.
7. A vest will be provided before the concert.

5. Concert Tickets, CD/DVD, Flower and Merchandise Sales

Tickets to concerts are sold to family members, parents, and to the public. Tickets are \$12.00 for adults and \$6.00 for children and seniors. The concerts are professionally recorded and can be purchased, \$25 for DVD's and \$15 for CD's. Flowers are sold in the lobby before the concert and during intermission. We also have chorus t-shirts, sweatshirts, and chorus tote bags available for purchase during music pick-up night and during concert weeks. All items are sold at cost to honor our commitment to keep costs down.

6. Volunteer Service

Volunteers are recognized for their contribution of time and skill. All parents are expected to be available to volunteer their time towards the success of our program by serving on a volunteer committee. Committees are assigned at the beginning of the year and participation on that committee lasts for that year. New committees are assigned each year. Volunteer tasks include Ushers, Flower Sales, Wardrobe, Ticket Sales, Stage Crew, Chairing a Committee, and others. Parents are asked to indicate their top three choices and we do our best to accommodate these choices when assigning parents to committees.

7. Fundraising

The Frederick Children's Chorus is sustained through the efforts of the families. Some costs of operating the chorus must be passed on to the families. We supply all materials at cost, and we do our best to keep tuition low. In order to keep this promise to the chorus families, we engage in regular fundraising and sell advertising spaces in our concert programs. **Fundraising is a crucial function of parent involvement and we rely on our chorus families to help us secure donations and advertisements from the community.** Information regarding fundraising and volunteering will appear in our monthly newsletter, *The Treble Voice*.

1. Fundraisers occur throughout the year. Families are asked to participate as often as possible.
2. Program advertisers are sought throughout the year. Families are encouraged to place ads for their own businesses or to seek advertisements either from businesses they frequent or are employed with.
3. Donations from patrons are listed in the program. Individuals and families who donate receive tax credit for their donation to this non-profit organization.

The Frederick Children's Chorus is a
Non-profit 501(c)3 organization.