



The Frederick Children's Chorus

Judith L. DuBose, Founder & Artistic Director

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Frequently Asked Questions 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*, is distributed via e-mail the first week 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 as well.

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

Email is checked daily 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 Director Ann DuBose and Accompanists Sarah Goldsmith and Edgar Bower. Our Little Music Makers and musicianship programs are supported by additional staff; Carla Wardell, Alisa Jackson and members of the Frederick Chamber Singers. Each staff member works with several aspects of the program. Mrs. Fuhr is joined in the office by an exceptional staff of parents who keep things running smoothly. She is always looking for more parent volunteers who have an interest in helping out in the office. There is always plenty to do!

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 and enrollment is accepted through the first rehearsal, or until we reach capacity, whichever comes first. See the Little Music Makers section on our website for more information; www.fredcc.org.

Training Chorus (Level I) is the entry 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. 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 music teacher, all children spend at least one year in Training Chorus. Children in the Training Chorus are introduced to vocal technique, note reading, singing in unison and in parts. They sing in foreign languages, learning styles of music from many cultures and periods in history. They rehearse from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays during the school year. These children are also required to attend one hour of musicianship class, either from 4:45-5:45 p.m. or from 7:15-8:15 p.m. See the section on Musicianship below for more details about this aspect of our program.

Training Chorus (Level II) members are given additional tools to help them reach their goal of membership in Concert Chorus. Level II 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. Levels I and II rehearse together from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and have musicianship at either 4:45-5:45 or 7:15-8:15. The difference between the levels is in their Musicianship class placement.

The **Concert Chorus** members rehearse an hour and 45 minutes every Tuesday evening (from 7:15-9:00). Concert 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. This group is also required to attend musicianship class from 6:00-7:00 p.m. These students work on more advanced musicianship skills, and complete their training towards membership in the Chamber Singers.

The **Chamber Singers** are made up of high school aged students in our program. This group rehearses on Sunday afternoons from 4-6pm in the fall, and they rehearse with the Concert Chorus on Tuesdays in the spring, 7:15-9:00pm. We occasionally move up boys whose voices change early, but for the most part these are high school aged children. 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 assist with Little Music Makers and teach our Musicianship courses 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 or education after high school.

The **Touring Ensemble** is a select group of singers from the Concert Chorus and Chamber Singers. Only the most capable students are invited to join this group to represent the chorus. Several factors have been considered, including but not limited to rehearsal etiquette, home practice time, musicianship class level, and maturity. They are often invited to perform for special occasions, and must commit to honor these invitations. Only those singers in the Touring Ensemble are invited to travel. Families who are invited to join the Touring Ensemble must commit at the beginning of the year to the travel that we have chosen for that year. Invitations are good for one year, and then the staff sends out new invitations in the following year with the results of the Year End Evaluations (see the section on Evaluations below). It is assumed that for the most part, once a singer has demonstrated the maturity and skill level to be invited to join the Touring Ensemble, they will be invited back each year. The commitment that is signed by the

singer and their parents are good for one year, and a new commitment must be signed each year.

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). Little Music Makers and Musicianship classes are held in the Chapel building on the south side of the street. Rehearsals for the Training and Concert Choruses are in the Social Room of the main church building, located through the street level entrance to the right of the main building. Chorus members arrive for rehearsals at least ten minutes before their rehearsal or musicianship class is scheduled to begin so they can check in and be ready to begin on time. The fall semester of the Chamber Singers rehearses on Sunday in the chapel building on the south side of the street.

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 4:45-5:45 or from 7:15-8:15. This class is designed to work on the basic skills of musicianship, note and rhythm reading, musical symbols, and sight reading. 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. 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 building on the south side of Church Street.

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. This policy is not designed to scare people into thinking that they can't perform the concert if they have to miss more than the allowed number of rehearsals. However, our singers only get to meet 12-13 times before the week of the concert, and when they miss a rehearsal, they miss instruction that is important to their performance. Those children who must miss more than the allowed number of rehearsals need to be able to demonstrate that they can accurately sing the music with the markings we have added in rehearsals so they don't subtract from the hard work of the rest of the group.

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.

Home Practice

Perhaps the greatest commitment involves home practice. At our music pick-up night in late August and the first rehearsal in the spring semester, 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. This guideline is the same as the attendance policy.

Here is the home practice guideline:

Training Chorus Level I - 30 min. 3 times a week - 90 minutes

Training Chorus Level II - 45 min 3 times a week - 135 minutes

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

Year End Evaluations

After the spring concert each year 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 Training Chorus (Level I) to gain a better understanding of the basics, or to allow more time for growth if they joined us very young. Some singers will move up to Training Chorus (Level II) and will continue to improve their musicianship skills in a more advanced class. A few singers move directly into the Concert Chorus.

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 mandatory 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. Tuition

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 \$500.00, payable at the time of enrollment. This total fee of \$500 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 are available on the enrollment forms. 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 \$130 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. The cover of the binder should always be clean and without markings or stickers, etc.

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 \$14.00 for adults and \$7.00 for children and seniors. The concerts are professionally recorded and can be purchased, \$30 for DVD's and \$20 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

All parents are required 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 Grant Writing, Rehearsal Set-up and Breakdown, Stage Crew, and Fundraising Leadership. 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. Only 53% of the true cost of membership is covered by your annual tuition. The rest is made up of volunteer service, program advertising, fundraising, donations, and grants. 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 your monthly newsletter, *The Treble Voice*.

1. Fundraisers occur throughout the year. Families are asked to participate as often as possible. For those who prefer not to participate, you may submit donations in lieu of fundraising. All donations are tax deductible and donation receipt letters are mailed verifying the donation to be used on your taxes.
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. We also accept paid messages in the concert programs from parents to their singers. See the Program Advertising Form on the Form Downloads page of our website for more details.
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. All donations are tax deductible and donation receipt letters are mailed verifying the donation to be used on your taxes.