



**Masterworks Chorus
of the Shenandoah Valley**

Member HANDBOOK

2011-2012

Website: www.masterworkschorus.com

Chorus blog: <http://masterworkschorusblog.blogspot.com>

Membership

Masterworks Chorus welcomes all singers age 15 and older who:

- Have had chorus or choir experience
- Can match pitch, and
- Will commit to the rehearsal and performance schedule

Every member must successfully complete an audition with the Conductor.

Dates and times for auditions are shown on the MWC website. Auditions for new singers are held in early September and early January of each year.

Auditions for current and returning members, if requested by the Conductor, are held in July.

The audition consists of:

- Determination of singer's vocal range utilizing a variety of vocalises
- Sight-singing a four measure melody
- Part singing of a hymn, and
- Reading several phrases in Latin

Upon acceptance into MWC, the singer is expected to participate in all concerts unless the Conductor has expressly asked him or her to participate in fewer concerts or to sing only in specific concerts. Singers may request to sing in less than the full season if personal commitments preclude their full participation. An arrangement such as this is made with the Conductor.

Annual Dues

Individual: \$75.00 for the entire season, due at or before the first rehearsal in September. If a singer is participating in fewer than the three concert series, dues are \$25.00 per series.

Family: If there are two or more singers in one family, dues will be \$75.00 for the first singer and \$50.00 for each additional singer.

Dues are paid to the Treasurer (not the Conductor). If a singer requires a payment plan for paying their dues, these arrangements must be made with the Treasurer.

Music Costs

Members pay for their music and each member must purchase their own set of the music for each concert series. New music is ordered for each concert

series and the cost for a set of the music is typically within the range of \$25.00 to \$30.00. Announcements regarding the cost of the music will be made prior to the first rehearsals for a particular concert series. Each singer must have a black concert portfolio to hold their music. A portfolio may be purchased through the MWC Music Librarian or a standard-size, black, three-ring notebook binder may be used.

Concert Attire

Because uniformity of appearance enhances the experience of the performance, all singers wear formal attire. Singers who are active duty or retired military may wear dress uniform for concerts.

Men wear a black tuxedo, white shirt, black cummerbund, black bow-tie, black shoes, and black socks. Black dress pants may be substituted for tuxedo pants. Men obtain their own attire and a MWC member assists men by ordering items any individual may need.

Women wear a black, three-piece dress ordered through MWC at cost. Black pantyhose and black closed-toe shoes are to be worn with the dress. Earrings and necklaces of modest design may, also, be worn as accessories to the outfit.

Women's dresses are ordered eight to twelve weeks prior to the first concert and cost approximately \$160.00. Payment is due before or upon receipt of the dress unless previous arrangements have been made with the Treasurer. Some parts of the outfit may be available for rental from MWC. The skirt hem should fall roughly three inches from the floor. Please consult the Costume Mistress with questions.

Attendance

All MWC members are expected to honor their commitment to the weekly rehearsal and performance schedule and to arrive promptly at rehearsal and performance locations. If a singer must miss or be late to a rehearsal, he or she must **notify the Secretary by phone or e-mail before the rehearsal**. Any singer with a communicable illness (fever, coughing, sneezing, dripping) should not attend rehearsal.

A make-up rehearsal is held for each concert series. Singers who missed any rehearsals for that concert series are expected to attend the make-up rehearsal. Singers who have not missed rehearsals are welcome at these rehearsals, as well. If a singer cannot attend the make-up rehearsal, a private rehearsal with the Conductor is strongly encouraged.

If a singer finds they must miss three rehearsals for a concert series and

cannot attend the private or group make-up rehearsals, the Conductor respectfully asks that he or she not sing in that concert series.

Attendance at dress rehearsal is mandatory. Dress rehearsals are held at concert locations, but the formal concert attire is not required.

If a MWC member discovers that he or she has a **conflict with a performance date, the Conductor must be informed as early as possible.** The Conductor and MWC member will decide on appropriate action.

Cancellations

Decisions concerning cancellation of rehearsals or performances for any reason are made by the Conductor and the MWC President. Members should check e-mail, the Chorus blog, and local radio and television stations for announcements of a cancellation. The chorus may still hold rehearsal even if Shenandoah County schools are closed.

Rehearsal Etiquette

Rehearsals begin and end on time. Singers should arrive promptly and in enough time to prepare the music and get settled. The Conductor values MWC singers' time and does not wish to abuse it by adding extra rehearsals or by extending regular rehearsal time to make up for late beginnings. Likewise, singers should respect the Conductor's need for focus and consult her with business issues at a time other than before or during a rehearsal.

The President will prepare chorus business remarks before the rehearsal, so any desired announcement must be submitted to her by e-mail or phone prior to a rehearsal.

MWC singers are in close physical proximity to one another at rehearsal and performances, so they are expected to observe high standards of courtesy and personal hygiene. Please do not wear any scented product. Please refrain from eating aromatic foods and from drinking alcoholic beverages. The President and/or Conductor will deal with infractions of this policy.

Ticket Sales and Prices

Ticket sales provide nearly 50% of MWC income and are essential to the MWC future. Singers are expected to sell tickets to the performances. The Ticket Sales Coordinator will announce ticket sales procedures for each concert series well before the concerts take place. The ticket prices for the 2011-2012 season are:

Adults - \$15 Youth ages 12-18 - \$7.50 Youth under 12 – free

Donations, Ticket Sales, and Fundraising

Masterworks Chorus is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It is an arts business that has financial obligations including: conductor and accompanist salaries, venue rental fees, ASCAP fees, publicity and marketing costs, printing costs, professional artist fees, etc.

Every member is encouraged to participate in MWC fundraising efforts by:

- Selling tickets to performances
- Making an annual donation
- Soliciting individual donors and businesses for sponsorships
- Donating items and/or work at the biennial yard sale, and
- Attending and volunteering to work at event fundraisers

Board of Directors

Meetings of the MWC Board of Directors are held on the second Tuesday of each month at a time and place designated by the Board and announced on the Chorus blog. Chorus members are invited to attend any Board meeting.

Annual Meeting of the MWC Corporation

The annual meeting of members of Masterworks Chorus is held in June at a date, time, and place designated by the Board and announced on the Chorus blog. A review of the upcoming year's budget is presented and official business is presented before the membership for discussion and for the casting of votes.

Rehearsal and Performance Procedures

Section Leader Duties

1. Assist once a month in setting up and breaking down the rehearsal space.
2. Meet once a month with the Conductor to discuss any musical or organizational concerns within their section.
3. Call and lead sectional rehearsals as needed and as agreed upon within the section. Accompanist help may be available for these additional rehearsals.
4. Assist Ticket Sales Coordinator with ticket sales in their section.
5. Assist Conductor with the singers in their section to achieve "concert readiness" at all concert locations.
6. Assist Concert Manager with the breakdown and cleaning up of concert locations.

For the regular membership:

Between rehearsals

1. Check the Chorus blog for notes about the previous week's rehearsal and last minute notices for the upcoming rehearsal.
2. Listen to and sing through the audio examples of the repertoire several times.
3. Vocalize and physically exercise two to three times a week.
4. If a rehearsal has been missed, check in with the section leader for musical and organizational information.
5. Gather the music for the next rehearsal and make sure a pencil is included for making notes in the music.

Arriving at rehearsal

1. Check in with the Secretary.
2. Pick up music or handouts near the door.
3. Find assigned seat and prepare to begin on time.
4. Arrange music in the rehearsal order posted at the front of the room or in another order that allows for quick retrieval.

At dress rehearsals and performances

1. **Arrive early. Tardy performers add to the general stress level. Call times for concerts are normally 1 ½ hours before the start of the concert.**
2. Check in with the Secretary when you arrive. Call the Secretary's cell phone if you have an emergency on the way to the performance.
3. Be aware that each performer has his or her pre-concert personal needs, method of warming up, focusing, etc. Be courteous and sensitive to others in their preparation to perform.
4. Do as the Concert Manager requests quickly and without objection.
5. Line up in on-stage formation ten minutes prior to the concert
6. The Concert Manager, with assistance from the Section Leaders, will coordinate room set-up and breakdown for each venue. Specific vocal sections may be asked to assist with the process of setting up and breaking down at a particular venue, so follow any instructions of that nature shared with you by your Section Leader.

PERFORMANCE DATES, 2011-2012 Season

Christmas Concerts: December 9, 10, 11, 2011

He Sang, She Sang: March 2, 3, 4, 2012

Haydn and Handel: April 27, 28, 29, 2012

The typical MWC performance week is:

Monday night rehearsal at performance location No. 1 – 6:30 pm

Thursday night dress rehearsal at performance location No. 2 – 6:30 pm

Friday night concert – 7:30 pm – call time 6:00 pm

Saturday night concert – 7:30 pm – call time 6:00 pm

Sunday afternoon Concert – 3 pm – call time 1:30 pm

Reminder: Singers are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances in a concert week.

PERSONNEL

Artistic Director and Conductor	Dr. Betty Karol Wilson
Accompanist	Elizabeth McBride
President	Rev. Sharon Waters
Vice President	Dr. Ellie Haun
President-Elect	Steven Van Stee
Treasurer	Martha Heisel
Secretary	Clare Ellis
Board Members-at-Large	Phil Market, Jane Moll, Doug Walker
Costume Mistress	Gina Cypher
Music Librarian	Else Carter
Chaplains	Rob & Gina Cypher
Webmistress	Sally Veach
Ticket Sales Coordinator	
Graphic Design	Diane Hanson
Sunshine Chairperson	
Rehearsal Set-up	
Concert Manager	
Section Leaders	To be Determined

