

FESTIVAL OPERA CHORUS

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What gets me into the Festival Opera Chorus?

Answer: Singers with sizable voices who can contribute to a full chorus sound. Singers are sought who can learn their music at a brisk pace and who have the discipline and motivation to learn and memorize the music outside of group rehearsals.

Question: Are there vocal limitations that might keep me out?

Answer: Singers with quiet voices lacking carrying power, or voices with a limited range are not likely to be selected.

Question: Do I need to be a good sight-reader to get in?

Answer: While the ability to sight-read is vital, it is important that the rehearsal work (rhythm, diction, phrasing and pitches) is retained, and that music-learning deadlines are met through independent work.

Question: Do I need to speak Italian or another foreign language to be accepted?

Answer: No. Foreign language fluency is not expected from chorus members. The expectation is that chorus participants will be able to pronounce the words clearly and precisely as coached in rehearsal.

Question: What are the physical expectations for the chorus?

Answer: All body types are welcome. It is critical, however, that choristers are able to carry out basic physical tasks, such as climbing steps, moving quickly and quietly

and sitting or kneeling for extended periods and then being able to get up and move easily.

Question: What physical limitations might keep me out of the chorus?

Answer: The inability to carry out basic physical tasks, such as climbing stairs, lifting and carrying objects, moving easily and quietly onstage while singing and similar limitations, would likely preclude participation.

Question: If I have sung with the Festival Opera Chorus before, do I still need to audition?

Answer: Yes. While a history with the Festival Opera Chorus is considered in a positive light, an audition is required to assess the ability to meet the changing needs, criteria and requirements of the current season's productions.

Question: How many rehearsals will the chorus have?

Answer: The number of rehearsals will be based on the ability of the chorus to prepare music as assigned prior to each rehearsal, as well as the demonstrated ability to retain diction, rhythmic and note work from one rehearsal to the next.

Question: When will rehearsals begin? When do I have to have my music memorized?

Answer: Initial rehearsals begin in the early part of the year. Deadlines for memorization will be in the spring. The music must be learned by the time the full chorus meets to rehearse. Music must be memorized prior to staging rehearsals.

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Question: Where will rehearsals be held?

Answer: Locations for rehearsals will be announced as they are scheduled. Rehearsal venues will vary, but all will be in the East Bay. Information will be emailed to the members of the Chorus as it's available.

Question: If I get into the chorus, what is expected of me at rehearsals?

Answer: It is expected that singers will be on time for each rehearsal, with the assigned music ready to go. A positive attitude and focused concentration will be required to make this a successful musical endeavor.

Question: Is there any reason I may be asked to leave the chorus once I am selected?

Answer: Individuals may be dismissed for reasons such as ongoing schedule conflicts, unexcused absences, inattentiveness or rude behavior during rehearsals, failure to meet learning deadlines, etc.

Question: Do I get paid to be in the chorus?

Answer: The Festival Opera Chorus is a volunteer chorus. However, there may be a limited number of “ringer” positions available. Ringers will be expected to assist their sections with accurate pitch, rhythm and diction, as well as have knowledge of the voice parts other than their own.

Question: Will the chorus sing at other events besides the performances?

Answer: Yes. There may be several promotional concerts or activities in which the chorus would participate prior to the opening of the season.

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Question : How do I get my music for the Opera?

Answer: A full score of the opera can be purchased at any music store, or from one of the many online sheet music sources.

Question: When will I know if I got in?

Answer: Notifications will be sent by email prior to the onset of Chorus music rehearsals.

Question: When are the auditions for the children who will sing in the Chorus?

Answer: Auditions for the children will be made by appointment. If chorus members know someone who is interested, or if there are additional questions, please contact Chorus Master, James Toland.