

American
FESTIVAL
CHORUS
AND ORCHESTRA™

CHOIR MEMBER
HANDBOOK

September 2013

Message from the Music Director

Choir Members,

Welcome to the American Festival Chorus (AFC) and thank you for your membership and commitment to this organization. I look forward to your participation. AFC is composed of volunteer singers, and seeks the highest level of professional and artistic standards through a commitment to quality rehearsals and performances of the great choral masterpieces as well as popular and contemporary music. As a member of the Chorus, you have the privilege and obligation to be an ambassador for AFC.

The American Festival Chorus was founded in the summer of 2008. The American Festival Chorus brings together talented singers, including students from the USU Music Department. Together with our professional orchestra, we form the American Festival Chorus and Orchestra, a premier music performance organization.

The musical success of this organization is dependent on your diligence. Choir membership requires a desire to participate in making wonderful music with the conductor and your fellow singers, and a commitment to the entire season.

I am happy to have you join with us!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Craig Jessop". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent initial "C".

Craig Jessop
Music Director

This handbook includes information that will help you understand what is expected of you as a member of this organization. Please read it carefully, as the policies it outlines are intended to make our work together more productive and conducive to the mission of the Chorus.

Vision Statement

The American Festival Chorus and Orchestra is the premier professional musical organization in this region. We create unique performing opportunities and synergistic partnerships, and celebrate the human experience through music.

Mission Statement

To provide a culture of musical excellence that edifies and educates performers and audiences.

Artistic and Administrative Staff

The Music Director is responsible for the selection, preparation, and performance of the entire season.

The Associate Music Director works with the Music Director in all matters relating to the preparation and performance of the chorus and orchestra, including conducting rehearsals when necessary.

The Managing Director is responsible for all non-musical aspects of AFCO including, but not limited to: attendance, library, recruitment, concert attire, rehearsal set-up, parking, budget development, production details, historical archives, and overseeing of general membership policies.

Rehearsals and Performances

Rehearsals

1. Rehearsals are normally held on Wednesday evenings from 7-9:30pm in the auditorium of the Edith Bowen Laboratory School on the Utah State University campus. The downbeat is at 7pm sharp. Be in your assigned seat before 6:55pm.
2. Retreat: Each semester (fall and spring) an all-day retreat is held at the Edith Bowen School. The purpose is to rehearse in depth for upcoming concerts. Attendance is required. If you must be absent, contact the Managing Director in advance. Your absence will be counted as two missed rehearsals of your 80% attendance.
3. Each singer will be assigned a part number, and part division (*divisi* assignments). Color-coded seating charts will be distributed.

4. Attendance is recorded for all rehearsals and performances. If you must be late or absent, or if you must leave early, contact the Managing Director in advance.
5. Dress rehearsals and sound checks are all mandatory.
6. Some rehearsals will be held on stage at the Kent Concert Hall (KCH) on the Utah State University campus; other venues will be announced. Rehearsals are open, except when otherwise designated.
7. Decorum:
 - a. Turn cell phones, beepers, pagers, and other electronic devices off before rehearsal begins. No texting. All personal business must be set aside during rehearsal. Bring a pencil. Bring a water bottle if desired.
 - b. Do not talk during rehearsal especially when the conductor stops to make comments or corrections.
 - c. **Do not ask questions** during the rehearsal or raise your hand to make a comment. Questions or concerns should be addressed to the Managing Director following the rehearsal.
 - d. Always be aware of good posture and vocal support.
8. If you have items of interest to be announced to the Chorus, address them to the Managing Director.

Performances

1. The performance and rehearsal schedule is announced well in advance of the beginning of the season. Please reserve these dates on your calendar.
2. Call time is usually 45-60 minutes before the concert. It is for detailing last-minute changes and adjustments from the Music Director. Please allow sufficient time for traffic difficulties, parking, and changing clothes.

Attendance Policy

1. At least 80% attendance is required for regularly scheduled rehearsals and the all-day retreat. The all-day retreat counts as two rehearsals. Attendance at dress rehearsals and sound checks are mandatory.
2. You must purchase music scores for each concert. If you lose your score, you must pay for a replacement copy.
3. Attendance will be taken at each rehearsal.
4. At some rehearsals, repertoire for more than one concert will be rehearsed. Members must participate in the entire rehearsal.
5. An AFC member who wishes to take a leave of absence may do so by notifying the Managing Director. In order to retain membership in the

organization (be considered a member in good standing) he/she must pay semester dues during the period of inactivity. This will allow AFC members to take leave, as needed, but still maintain a position in the chorus.

6. Commitment for the full semester is requested which means participation in all choir performances.

Concert Etiquette

1. Professional demeanor is expected at all events in which we participate as a chorus. Members causing embarrassment to the Chorus are subject to dismissal.
2. Chorus members must not go into the lobby before a concert in concert attire.
3. The performance begins the moment you enter the stage area. Talking or gesturing (i.e. waving to family or friends in the audience) on stage is strictly prohibited. Refrain from drawing attention to yourself.
4. Hold music in your left hand and down at your side when entering and exiting the stage. Black folders are required. The tux jacket must be buttoned while on stage.
5. At the end of each work or movement within a work, there is a FREEZE. Do not move your music, turn a page, scratch your ear, or fuss with glasses until released by the conductor. The music director will signal when to raise and lower your music.
6. We are all in tight quarters during concerts and rehearsals. Please be considerate of others in use of onion, garlic, alcohol, and tobacco. No scent of any kind (perfume, cologne, after-shave, scented lotions and hygiene products, or scented hairspray) is allowed. Deodorant is OK! Many chorus members suffer allergic reactions to these scented products. Do not douse yourself in the morning thinking that the scent will have faded by evening—it doesn't fade.

Intent to Return Form

In the spring or summer of each year, an Intent to Return form for the next season will be distributed to members of the Choir. After reviewing the policies and new schedule, please indicate your intentions and return the form promptly to the Managing Director.

Parking

Parking on campus after 5pm on week day evenings and on weekends is not restricted except for Student Housing Parking. If you receive a parking ticket, you will be responsible to take care of it. On the night of performances, park away from the venue so that patrons may have access to parking for the concert.

Attire

Singers must purchase and maintain approved concert attire.

- *Men*
Black tuxedo with white wing collar tuxedo shirt. No cummerbund. Black dress shoes and black socks. Black tuxedo shirt buttons are to be worn.
- *Women*
Women must wear the approved concert attire. Black shoes and black stockings. No casual or open-toe shoes or sandals. Jewelry is limited to a small pair of simple stud earrings. No pendants or necklaces.
- Uniforms must be maintained (cleaned and pressed) and replaced when necessary to assure proper fit and look.

Auditions

Auditions will be held on an as-needed basis.

Communication

- During the concert season Chorus members will receive a regular newsletter via email from the Managing Director.

Semester Costs for Chorus Members

- Chorus members are responsible for the costs of semiannual dues, attire, and music.

Tickets

In order to fill the hall and to generate necessary revenue, each Chorus member is expected to sell at least 4 tickets to each of the local events.

Volunteer Opportunities

This is a volunteer nonprofit organization and as such we rely heavily on member involvement. If you have a skill or interest that might be of value to AFC, please contact the Managing Director.

September 2013

American
FESTIVAL
CHORUS
AND ORCHESTRA™

Board Members

Board Chair: Douglas Lemon

Vice Chair: Bryce Fifield

Music Director: Craig Jessop

Managing Director/Board & Choir Secretary: Elaine Olson

Assistant to the Music Director: John Ribera

Treasurer: Grant Baer

Costumes: Gayla Johnson

Marketing/Publicity: Eric Warren

Grants: Adam Rounds

Past Board Chair: Larry Cannon

Board Member: Mike Bankhead

Board Member: Claire Cardon

Board Member: Herm Olsen

Board Member: Bonnie Slade

Board Member: Kent Stratford

Board Member: Paul Woodland

www.americanfestivalchorus.org