

# **CHOIR MEMBER HANDBOOK**

## **September 2019 Edition**

**Diane Retallack, Artistic & Executive Director**

### **WELCOME**

Welcome to the Eugene Concert Choir organization! We are truly pleased to add your voice to ours as a community of singers who enjoy learning the choral masterworks and performing them for a growing and appreciative audience in the Eugene-Springfield region.

This handbook is designed to provide you with background information on the operation of the Eugene Concert Choir and Eugene Vocal Arts ensemble, and with guidelines for your role in the choir. We hope you'll find that it answers most of your questions about expectations for choir members, and that it conveys our aspirations for professional quality and fellowship in all that we do as a choir.

The Eugene Concert Choir organization is a resident company of the Hult Center for the Performing Arts and is composed of three performing ensembles: the Eugene Concert Choir, a masterworks chorus; Eugene Vocal Arts ensemble, a chamber choir; and Eugene Concert Orchestra, a professional orchestra. This *Choir Member Handbook* addresses the policies and guidelines for the choirs. The policies for Eugene Concert Orchestra are addressed in the Master Agreement with the local Musicians Union.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Eugene Concert Choir's mission is to be the premiere choral organization in the region..*

### **POLICY STATEMENTS**

#### **Media Policy**

Your participation in the choirs is your permission for ECC to use your image in photos and video in perpetuity. A visual presence is important for the promotion of the choirs in all media publicity, our website, grant proposals and reports, and archival records. We strive to choose the best images of the choirs in rehearsal and performance representative of our professional standard.

#### **Political Endorsements**

Because of its status as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, the Eugene Concert Choir may not endorse any political candidate or issue, nor can it participate in any political campaigns. As individuals, choir members have every right to express their opinions. However, political announcements and/or endorsements will not be expressed in rehearsals or printed in the newsletter.

#### **Non-discrimination Policy**

The Eugene Concert Choir does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. Members are selected on the basis of their musical audition.

## REHEARSALS

**Eugene Vocal Arts** ensemble rehearses from 7:00 to 9:45 pm every Monday during the concert season. Rehearsals are held at Grace Lutheran Church, 710 E. 17<sup>th</sup>, at the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Hilyard St. in Eugene.

**Eugene Concert Choir** rehearses from 7:15 to 9:45 pm every Tuesday during the concert season. Rehearsals are held at Emmaus Lutheran Church, 1250 W. 18<sup>th</sup>, at the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Polk St. in Eugene.

Extra rehearsals are held during performance weeks and may be scheduled at other times as the repertoire requires. Sectional rehearsals are incorporated into regular rehearsals, or scheduled by each section as needed.

## REHEARSAL GUIDELINES

**Please come early** and help set up chairs or move items to prepare the rehearsal room, pick up and read the newsletter and other information sheets and organize your rehearsal materials in advance of the start of rehearsal. Be seated and ready to warm up at the scheduled starting time. At the conclusion of rehearsal, **please stay a few minutes** to put your chair away and return the room to the condition in which we found it.

**Name tags** will be provided for all members. Please keep yours with your music and wear it at rehearsals.

**Bring sharpened pencils** to all rehearsals. The Artistic Director will make critical corrections or modifications at each rehearsal, and choir members are expected to mark all instructions for all parts in their scores. Please check with a fellow section member or your section representative about markings you may have missed when you were absent.

**Break time** is included in each rehearsal for a few minutes of socializing. Periodically throughout the season, choir sections may be asked to bring treats for special “social breaks.” Rehearsal resumes following the break; break time does **not** signify the end of the rehearsal.

**The Note Pad** is the Artistic Director’s source of direct communication from choir members. In order to minimize the need for interruptions in rehearsal, please write any questions or comments in the Note Pad in the front of the rehearsal room. You are encouraged to walk up to the Note Pad **at any time** during the rehearsal to write your comments or questions. Answers to your comments may be addressed in future newsletters or through specific rehearsal procedures.

## CHOIR STRUCTURE

The Eugene Concert Choir organization is governed by a Board of Directors. Staff includes:

Diane Retallack, Artistic and Executive Director  
Angela Egremont, General Manager  
Lizz Wells, Marketing and Public Relations Director  
Jill Switzer, Music Education Director  
Brad Schultz, ECC Accompanist  
Nathalie Fortin, EVA Accompanist  
Colleen White, Orchestra Personnel Manager  
Chris Vold, Payroll and Reconciliation Administrator

We could not exist at the high level in which we function without the help of numerous volunteers. Longtime bookkeeper Carey Garber and music librarian Teresa Lin have filled in as volunteer staff members and have been essential to our organization for many years.

The following volunteer personnel will help you navigate rehearsals and choir membership:

**ECC Section Leaders** take attendance and handle music distribution for their vocal sections.

**The ECC Choir Operations Chair** assembles all attendance reports to provide the Artistic Director with a spreadsheet of attendance for all members of the Concert Choir and assists choir auditions.

**The EVA Representative** takes attendance for the Eugene Vocal Arts and reports to the Artistic Director.

**The Choir Librarian** organizes, distributes and collects music for both choirs. In general, choir members purchase major choral works through the choir and check out choral octavos through the choir library.

**Concert Dress and Renaissance Costume Coordinators** will outfit members in the concert dress or costumes that are purchased or checked out through the choir.

## ATTENDANCE POLICIES

### Attendance Policy – Performances and Dress Rehearsals

The Artistic Director, Diane Retallack, must be given advance written notice if a member will be absent from a **performance** or **dress rehearsal**. Preferably, notice is given by email both to: [diane@eugeneconcertchoir.org](mailto:diane@eugeneconcertchoir.org) and to your section leader. If you are unable to send a notice by email, please contact our General Manager, Angela Egremont, by phone at the Concert Choir office (541) 687-6865. (In cases of emergency, the Artistic Director must be notified as soon as possible.) Membership may be discontinued by the Artistic Director after a single unexcused absence from a performance or dress rehearsal. Examples of excused absences from a performance or dress rehearsal are a debilitating illness, a personal or family crisis, or an important event which the choir member does not schedule (i.e., professional conference, wedding, funeral, or graduation ceremony). It is expected that work and vacations will be scheduled around performances and dress rehearsals; such absences will not be considered excused.

**Dress Rehearsals** are defined as the last rehearsal or set of rehearsals in the concert venue prior to the performance, and do not necessarily indicate “concert dress” apparel. Dress rehearsals are often the only opportunity to rehearse with all musical forces in the performance venue. Failure to attend a dress rehearsal may jeopardize your participation in a performance.

### Attendance Policy – Regular Rehearsals

Members are expected to attend every rehearsal. Membership may be discontinued by the Artistic Director after three (3) unexcused absences from rehearsals. Examples of **excused** absences from rehearsals are illness, work conflict, family commitment, vacation conflict, or performance commitment. An **unexcused** absence is defined as any absence without explanation or reasonable cause.

It is the choir member's responsibility to inform his or her section leader of any absence or tardy arrival, *in advance whenever possible*. Please keep the phone number or e-mail address of your section leader handy.

Eugene Concert Choir members contact your section leader regarding regular rehearsal absences.

Eugene Vocal Arts members contact both your EVA representative and also Diane through her office email [diane@eugeneconcertchoir.org](mailto:diane@eugeneconcertchoir.org) regarding regular absences. In a chamber choir, the absence of even a few members may influence the Artistic Director's rehearsal plan.

## PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

### Concert Dress

The usual concert dress is described below, but there are occasions when choir members are outfitted or asked to outfit themselves to enhance the theme of a concert or production.

### EUGENE CONCERT CHOIR

Female: Three choices of concert dress are ordered through the choir and must be purchased by members: Black and white full-length dress or separates which consist of a black top with white insert and long black skirt or palazzo pants. Black dress shoes. Minimal jewelry that does not cross the line of the dress or top is optional.

Male: Members are responsible for providing their own black tuxedo of any style, white wing-collar shirt, black bow tie and black dress shoes; black cummerbunds are optional.

Non-binary: Members may choose to wear whichever concert dress of the above descriptions aligns with their identity.

Members who would find it financially difficult to purchase concert dress should inform their section leader, who will bring their concern to the attention of the Artistic Director. Assistance will be provided.

### EUGENE VOCAL ARTS

Female: Identical floor-length black and royal blue dresses, which are checked out through the Eugene Concert Choir. Black dress shoes. Minimal jewelry that does not cross the line of the dress or top is optional.

Male: Members are responsible for providing their own black tuxedo of any style, white wing-collar shirt and black dress shoes. Royal blue vests and bow ties will be checked out through the Choir.

Non-binary: Members may choose to wear whichever concert dress of the above descriptions aligns with their identity.

Renaissance Dress: If there is a concert or event that includes Elizabethan costuming, members will be fitted for a Renaissance costume, which will be checked out through the Choir.

### Fragrances

In order not to trigger symptoms in those with allergies or sensitivities to fragrance, please be careful not to wear fragrances of any kind during rehearsals and performances – no perfume, cologne, scented hair spray, lotion or aftershave, please. We are in close quarters with each other, and we breathe deeply.

### Folders

Black folders are required for most performances. Periodically, the Eugene Concert Choir orders black folders for members to purchase. Members may provide their own black folder or purchase one through the Choir. Elastic bands on the inside are desirable to secure major works. A ring binder option may be more convenient when performing many short selections.

### Performance Etiquette

Maintaining a high professional posture is an ongoing goal of the choir. Silence at rehearsals with orchestra and soloists is essential, especially when the orchestra is tuning. Do not engage in conversation while on stage, before, during, or after a performance – the conductor requires your undivided attention during that time.

## **Ticket Sales**

The importance of promoting choir performances and selling tickets to choir events cannot be overemphasized. A professional quality performance of choral music chosen to entertain and enlighten a growing community audience is what we work toward! It is extremely important that all members be actively involved in promoting the sale of tickets. Ticket sales can spell the difference between profit and deficit for the season.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Business Office Information**

Governed by a Board of Directors, the Eugene Concert Choir is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We maintain an office in the Midtown Arts Center located at the corner of 16th and Willamette in Eugene. Angela Egremont, General Manager, maintains regular office hours of 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Phone: 541-687-6865. Fax: 541-687-5745. E-mail: [choir@eugeneconcertchoir.org](mailto:choir@eugeneconcertchoir.org). Website address: [www.eugeneconcertchoir.org](http://www.eugeneconcertchoir.org).

The mailing address for the Eugene Concert Choir and Eugene Vocal Arts ensemble is:

Eugene Concert Choir  
1590 Willamette Street, Suite 400  
Eugene, OR 97401

### **Compassionate Leave**

A compassionate leave of absence from the Eugene Concert Choir or Eugene Vocal Arts ensemble may be granted, allowing the member to return to active participation without a formal audition, given the following conditions:

1. A written, confidential request for leave is conveyed to the Artistic Director.
2. The reasons necessitating the leave are debilitating illness, pregnancy or infant care, or family/personal crisis. In the event of an emergency, the written request to grant a leave may be submitted after the member has missed rehearsals. In responding, the Artistic Director will take into account the nature of the emergency as well as the timeliness, given the circumstances, of the request.
3. The period of time involved is not greater than ten months. If a leave will be needed for more than ten months, for whatever reason, it will be necessary for the member to go through a formal audition.
4. If, during the leave, the member's section went through the re-evaluation process, he or she may need to do a re-evaluation, at the discretion of the Artistic Director, on returning to the choir.

The member on leave must contact his/her section representative and the Artistic Director prior to the end of their leave, so that re-entry into the Choir can be coordinated with the season's concert schedule.