

Eugene Concert Choir & Eugene Vocal Arts
CHOIR MEMBER HANDBOOK
2024-2025 Edition

Diane Retallack, Artistic & Executive Director

WELCOME

Welcome to the Eugene Concert Choir organization! This handbook is designed to provide you with background information on the operation of the Eugene Concert Choir and Eugene Vocal Arts ensemble, and guidelines for your role in the 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, 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 engage, inspire and enrich the community through performance of choral masterworks, diverse artistic experiences, and educational outreach.

REHEARSALS

Eugene Vocal Arts rehearses from 7:00 to 9:45 pm every Monday during the concert season. Rehearsals are held at Grace Lutheran Church, 710 E. 17th, at the corner of 18th 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. 18th, at the corner of 18th 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.

CHOIR STRUCTURE

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

Diane Retallack, Artistic & Executive Director and Conductor
Alyssa Morar, Marketing & Public Relations Director
Jill Switzer, Office Administration & Music Education Director
Alexander Amick, ECC Accompanist
Nathalie Fortin, EVA Accompanist
Matt Yuknas, Orchestra Personnel Manager
Kami Hendrix, Music Education Assistant
Angela Asato, Music Education Assistant
Christina Lay, Payroll Specialist

We could not exist at the high level in which we function without the help of numerous volunteers.

Teresa Lin, Choir Music Librarian, Ben Brown, Banquet Coordinator, Wayne Amondson, Bookkeeper, and numerous other volunteers 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.

Soprano 1 – Kim Wollter
Soprano 2 – Bonnie Forrester
Alto 1 – Jackie Kennedy
Alto 2 – Amy Newland
Tenor – Wayne Amondson
Bass 1 – Gary Millhollen
Bass 2 – Jon Hofmeister

The ECC Choir Operations Chair Theresa Wymer assembles all attendance reports to provide the Artistic Director with a spreadsheet of attendance for all members of the Concert Choir.

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

Choir Librarian Teresa Lin 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

Policy Regarding Illness –

In the past, choir members would “power through” an illness, coming to rehearsal sick and sitting around the edges, reluctant to miss the rehearsal. Increased caution for the spread of disease and the advantages of modern technology have changed that practice. Each of our rehearsals will be Zoom-streamed and recorded to post on our website “For Choir Members” page later in the week. There is no need for choir members to come to rehearsal sick. You can access our rehearsals from home or view the recordings at any time. Our policy for rehearsal attendance regarding illness is as follows:

- If you are exhibiting symptoms of a respiratory illness, do not attend the rehearsal in person.
- If you have recovered from a respiratory illness and are not infectious, but have a few lingering symptoms, take a COVID test to ensure negativity and report the results to the choir office through office@EugeneConcertChoir.org. Wear an N95 or KN95 face mask to rehearsal.
- If your medical history indicates that you are suffering from an allergy, rather than an illness, take a COVID test to ensure negativity and report the results to the choir office through office@EugeneConcertChoir.org.

For a performance, if you are ill, you are excused. If you are recovered from a respiratory illness and are not infectious, but have a few lingering symptoms, or if you exhibit symptoms due to an allergy, consult with the Artistic Director regarding potential performance attendance.

Remote Rehearsals & Recordings

If you are attending a rehearsal by Zoom, your attendance will show up in our online records. Our Office Administrator will report your Zoom attendance to your section leader. If you have missed a rehearsal and you access a rehearsal recording, we have no record of your diligence. Please report your viewing of a missed recorded rehearsal to your section leader to indicate your full attendance that week. If you did not miss the rehearsal but are accessing a recording for additional work on your music, there is no need to report that viewing – but congratulations! Thank you for being a dedicated choir member.

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 Eugene Vocal Arts representative and also Diane Retallack through her office email 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.

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 and to your section leader. If you are unable to send a notice by email, please contact our Office Administrator, Jill Switzer, 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.

REHEARSAL & PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

Please come early to rehearsals 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. Your name tag is also required to gain access through the Hult Center stage door entrance for performances.

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.

Rehearsal 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 at 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.

Fragrances

In order to keep from triggering 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.

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. We have options to order tuxedos, shirts and bow ties through choir apparel companies as well. Contact the choir office if you would like to order a tuxedo.

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. We have options to order tuxedos and shirts through choir apparel companies as well. Contact the choir office if you would like to order a tuxedo. 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.

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 Pearl in Eugene. Jill Switzer, Office Administrator, maintains regular office hours from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday during the Season (September-May)

Phone: 541-687-6865. E-mail: office@EugeneConcertChoir.org.

Website address: www.eugeneconcertchoir.org.

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

Eugene Concert Choir
174 E. 16th Avenue, Suite 135
Eugene, OR 97401

Choir Member Communication

The Weekly Newsletter:

This newsletter is your communication for current announcements from staff to choir and among one another within the choirs. Weekly printed newsletters are provided for choir members at the start of each rehearsal and contain essential information about our rehearsals, performances and events. We are about singing, but we are also about being a community. You may also send items to be included in the newsletter. It's okay to use this choir communications system to advertise free kittens, a piano for sale, your need for a house sitter, or your role in a play, etc. This way we minimize use of rehearsal time for announcements. Please send newsletter announcements to Jill Switzer by email, office@EugeneConcertChoir.org, no later than Friday at noon for the following week. Newsletters are also posted on our website: www.EugeneConcertChoir.org, "For Choir Members" page.

E-news Promotions:

E-news announcements are created by our Marketing Director Alyssa Morar to promote our concerts. We add you automatically to the e-news list when you join the choir. It's OK to opt out, but the e-mails are not very frequent and are a good source of information regarding our performances and events, and they can be shared or forwarded on to other groups and potential audiences.

Website: www.EugeneConcertChoir.org

Our website has information about our season, ticket sales, staff, auditions, activities, and so on. There is also an important section for Choir information. Go to Musicians – [For Choir Members](#), on the bottom of the homepage, for access to the Weekly Newsletters, schedules, rehearsal recordings, and other choir information. Facebook and Instagram users can easily share our web pages and follow our activity by clicking at the bottom of the page.

Facebook

“Like” us on Facebook and "follow" us on Instagram to get the most up-to-date posts about our concerts and events. Click on the icon on our website or our official communication.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A leave of absence from the Eugene Concert Choir or Eugene Vocal Arts ensemble may be granted at the discretion of the Artistic Director, allowing the member to return to active participation without a formal audition.

- A written request for leave would be conveyed to the Artistic Director for a period of time not greater than ten months.
- If a leave will be needed for more than ten months, it may be necessary for the member to go through a formal audition before returning. Consult with the Artistic Director.

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.

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. Contact the choir office if you have a concern about this issue.

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.