



CANTABILE
choral guild

Cantabile Chorale Guidelines

2006-2007

Cantabile Chorale, a program of the Cantabile Choral Guild, is dedicated to excellence in musical performance. Membership in the chorus is a commitment as well as a privilege and a pleasure. These guidelines represent part of that commitment.

Responsibilities of Membership

A chorister's fundamental responsibility is to work with the artistic director and fellow choristers to make music.

Attendance is expected at all rehearsals. Singers are ordinarily expected to participate in all three quarters of a concert season. The rehearsal period for each program is called a quarter.

Absences from regular rehearsals: Give notice in advance of any foreseeable absence or lateness, and promptly explain any unforeseen absence. The personnel list at the end of these guidelines says who to notify. If notifying by email, please send the message to the artistic director as well. If you miss a rehearsal, arrange with someone in your section to tell you what music was worked on and give you any markings you missed. Then practice that music at home in order to keep up.

Absences in concert week: If you know at the start of a quarter that you will have to miss a dress rehearsal or concert, you must get the approval of the artistic director in order to sing that quarter. Absence from dress rehearsals or concerts without prior approval is normally excused only in the case of illness.

Leaves of absence: If you cannot sing for a particular quarter, you may ask the artistic director for a leave of absence. You will be readmitted the following quarter without an audition.

Dues and music: It takes money to keep the chorus running. Your financial support is essential. Membership dues are \$125 a quarter, payable at the first rehearsal of the quarter. You must also buy your music, typically for \$20 to \$30 a quarter, also payable at the first rehearsal. You will not be allowed to take music home from rehearsals until you have paid in full. In special circumstances, see the executive director to arrange for late or partial payment. It is best to make such arrangements before the start of the quarter so that you can take your music home right away. A prorated refund on dues is available if you leave before the fourth rehearsal in the quarter. You cannot return your music for a refund unless there is a shortage and it can be resold to another chorister.

In rehearsal,

- Be on time and take part in the warm-up even if you have warmed up your voice beforehand. The focus of many warm-up exercises is on the ensemble sound. Your participation helps the whole group.
- Bring a pencil to mark whatever breaths, cut-offs, phrasing, dynamics, and so on that the director gives. And then, of course, observe the markings.
- Pay attention. When singing, watch the director and listen to the rest of the group. When nobody is singing, keep your pencil ready and listen to the director. Do not talk to your neighbor when others are singing or the director is speaking.
- Ask questions and make suggestions appropriately. If immediate attention is needed, raise your hand. Some questions are better kept until the break or until after the rehearsal. For complex questions or suggestions, you are encouraged to email or phone the artistic director outside of rehearsal. Checking email regularly and reading the handouts can help you avoid asking questions that have already been answered. If something on a handout is not clear, it is generally best to ask about it before the rehearsal, not in rehearsal.
- Avoid all scents and perfumes, which can make it impossible for fellow choristers with allergies to sing.

Home study: Learn your part at home, and drill any difficult passages to work them into your voice. Rehearsal time is primarily for working on the tuning, ensemble sound, and musical interpretation, not for teaching each part their lines. Practice CDs are generally available at the start of the quarter for a nominal cost. Through the Cantabile web site (www.cantabile.org), MIDI files that emphasize your part are usually available for music that the chorus had to publish for itself and sometimes for purchased music that was composed long enough ago to be in the public domain.

Email and web postings: Many kinds of information are communicated electronically.

- the director's plan for the next rehearsal
- voicing charts detailing who sings which lines
- rehearsal calendars
- chorus rosters
- pronunciation guides and translations for foreign texts
- standing charts for the concert venues
- materials for publicizing concerts

Choristers are ordinarily expected to print their own copies of handouts that are distributed as files attached to an email message or as postings on the Cantabile web site. Links to newly posted handouts will be sent out via email. When you receive an email message or a handout with markings for the music, mark your score before the next rehearsal. You may receive some printed handouts in rehearsal, especially if they were not ready until the day of the rehearsal.

Ticket sales: The singers are the best promotional tool the chorus has. The majority of ticket sales come from you. A ticket coordinator will give you concert tickets to sell and collect the funds from your sales. Please try to sell at least five tickets for each program. You are also encouraged to sell subscriptions at the beginning of the season. You may sell tickets to friends and family of any age at the discounted rate for seniors. To promote the concerts, you will be asked to circulate flyers, posters, and email messages.

Rehearsals and Workshops

At the start of a season, a complete rehearsal schedule is distributed showing dates, times, and venues. The schedule is also available on the Cantabile web site (www.cantabile.org). So are directions to all the venues.

Regular rehearsals are held weekly in Palo Alto on Monday evenings.

Workshops are scheduled once a quarter on a Saturday but may be omitted in a long quarter with plenty of regular rehearsals. The goals of an all-day workshop are to spend concentrated time working on the music, to develop vocal technique, to improve ensemble and sectional sound, and to build community. The morning session typically consists of a long warm-up and a full rehearsal. The afternoon session is usually divided between work with a guest clinician and another full rehearsal.

Dress rehearsals are held in the concert venues during the last weeks of a quarter. Wear your concert shoes or ones with similar heels so that sight lines can be checked, but there is no need to wear the rest of your concert outfit. Put your music into a concert binder to get used to holding it that way.

Concert warm-ups are held 90 minutes before concert time to prepare the chorus vocally, musically, and psychologically. Like the other rehearsals, they are mandatory. Arrive on time.

Concert Dress

Men: Tuxedo or black suit. White shirt with a plain or pleated front, no ruffles. Black bow tie, socks, and dress shoes.

Women: Chorus-issue black velvet tunic. Dressy, black, full-length skirt or pants. Black or neutral hose. Black dress shoes. No purses, shawls, or other accoutrements on stage.

Everyone: "Black" means solid black. Jewelry must not be large, sparkly, or colorful enough to attract the audience's attention. Avoid scents: no perfume, aftershave, or cologne, no scented mousse, hair spray, or soap, and no garlic, onion, tobacco, or alcohol on the breath. Music must be in black folders or black covers.

Concert Department

If you bring people with you, ask them to wait in the lobby or elsewhere during the warm-up. Audience members are not permitted in the house until the doors are opened to the public.

Pay attention to the instructions for getting on and off the stage and avoid unnecessary discussion. If you are not a row leader or designated sitter, you have no concern other than following the singer next to you. The order of leaving is generally the exact reverse of the entrance order; which means you will follow out the same person as followed you in.

Entering and leaving, carry your music in the hand away from the audience.

During the concert, keep your focus on the music whether you are singing at the moment or not. This relates to stage presence. Your face and body language show you are engaged with the performance. That, in turn, engages the audience. Similarly, avoid extraneous noise or movement during the music as it will distract the audience.

Do not lift and open your music until the conductor signals you to do so. Similarly, stay with the music until it is truly stopped. Do not anticipate the end of a piece or a movement by turning the page or rearranging your music. The conductor will signal the end with dropped arms or a page turn.

When a page turn happens to fall in a quiet passage, mark your score not to turn the page in time with the music. Turn the page early, or else delay the turn if you do not sing at the start of the next page or have memorized that music.

When standing through a long solo, hold your music at your side. You can keep your place with a finger. When sitting through a solo, you may keep your music open, but do not page along with the soloist. Turn immediately to your next entrance or the standing cue. You may page along in dress rehearsals, however.

Accept the applause for your performance with a smile. You may acknowledge the conductor, soloists and instrumentalists, but do so with decorum.

When filing out after the performance, do not break ranks to join your friends. Continue with the chorus all the way out of the hall.

Auditions

New members: New member auditions are held by appointment in June and August and may also be held at other times when there are vacancies. An applicant must ordinarily commit to a full season. The audition is for the artistic director to get to know the applicant's voice and to decide whether it meets the standards of the chorus.

Returning members: Former members who return after an extended absence will be auditioned in the same way as new members. Their readmission will depend on the condition of the voice and on current vacancies. The artistic director will waive this requirement for a singer who returns after an approved leave of absence and might waive it for some other brief absences.

Performance checks: Choristers who miss three or more rehearsals in a quarter or are late to four or more are subject to a performance check. The artistic director will notify singers with poor attendance of the date and time. Checks are typically held at the last rehearsal before the dress rehearsals. A singer who will be absent that day is responsible for make alternative arrangements. In a performance check, a chorister must demonstrate facility with the music, singing alone or in a small group, to be allowed to continue. This requirement may be waived if the director determines from rehearsals that a chorister does know the music well.

Continuing members: New members typically are auditioned again after their first season. In some years, the artistic director may decide to hold chorister evaluations for all singers at the end of a season. The format could be a group audition using repertoire from the season or could be like the auditions for new members. Although a singer can be asked to leave as a result of such an evaluation, the primary intent is for the artistic director to stay familiar with all the voices in the chorus, discuss areas in need of improvement, and urge those who should improve their voices to take lessons.

Solo and Small-Group Auditions

The artistic director may assign a vocal solo or a small ensemble in any of the following ways.

- Hire a professional soloist from outside the chorus when that is appropriate for the high artistic standards of the performance.
- Select particular choristers without an audition when the director feels that certain voices are the right ones in terms of vocal timbre and musicality.
- Ask more than one chorister to audition for the same solo.
- Open up auditions to the entire chorus.

Open audition dates: The director will give clear dates by which choristers must be ready to audition and when auditions will be cut off. Because it is important that the selected soloists have time to prepare fully for performance, it may not be possible to delay auditions for individual candidates who are absent or ill.

Open audition process: The director may conduct open auditions (a) privately, (b) with all candidates on hand so that voices can be balanced and matched, or (c) in the context of a choral rehearsal. The results of open auditions will be announced only after all candidates have been heard and will not ordinarily be given on the day of the audition.

Feedback: If not selected, please do not be disappointed or angry. If you are not chosen the first time you audition, the director has at least heard you and will be thinking of you for future solos. If you want feedback about your audition, please talk to the director. It is usually best to arrange to talk in person, outside of the rehearsal hall, away from distractions and interruptions.

About Cantabile Choral Guild

Cantabile Choral Guild, formerly the Baroque Choral Guild, has shared the joy of classical choral music through performance and education since it was founded in 1979. In addition to its adult chorus, the Cantabile Chorale, the Guild serves youth from the mid-Peninsula to San Jose through Cantabile Youth Singers under the artistic direction of Elena Sharkova and a Summer Music Day Camp for elementary school students. The young participants in Cantabile Youth Singers advance through four levels of instruction that integrate vocal training, music theory, and high-level performance opportunities. The staff of professional artists who lead this comprehensive music curriculum have extensive experience in performance and education.

Personnel

Chorale Artistic Director

Sanford Dole sanford@cantabile.org, home phone: 510-535-0876

Executive Director

Sonja Wohlgemuth sonja@cantabile.org, office phone: 650-424-1410

Cantabile Office

Cantabile Choral Guild 953 Industrial Ave, Ste 118, Palo Alto, 94303, www.cantabile.org

Chorale Operations Committee

Wendy Bartlett wendy.bartlett@hp.com, work phone: 408-285-6262, home phone: 650-941-9094

Carol Buchholz carol.buchholz@gene.ge.com, work phone: 408-925-1785, home phone: 408-978-9070

Norm Proctor norm.proctor@alum.mit.edu, home phone: 650-856-0449

Notification of Absences

Norm Proctor norm.proctor@alum.mit.edu, home phone: 650-856-0449