



WINSTON-SALEM  
Youth Chorus

A division of Piedmont Opera



PIEDMONT OPERA

# Singer/Family Handbook

Last Revised May 16, 2019

**Mailing Address and Office Address:**

Piedmont Opera  
Attn: WSYC  
636 Holly Avenue  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

**336-703-0001**

**[wsyouthchorus.org](http://wsyouthchorus.org)**

**[mail@wsyouthchorus.org](mailto:mail@wsyouthchorus.org)**

*The mission of the Winston-Salem Youth Chorus is to engage and develop youth from diverse backgrounds and enrich their lives by inspiring excellence in choral music.*

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**Please read this information carefully, then sign and return the Acceptance of Handbook Rules/Behavior Pledge (last page) to the Chorus Manager, Chris Duffer before your first rehearsal.**

**Congratulations on being accepted into the Winston-Salem Youth Chorus!** It is a privilege to be a part of this auditioned group of singers. We hope that all singers will find being a part of this remarkable group an enjoyable experience and that you will develop a love of great choral music, discipline and the meaning of commitment which will last forever. The members of WSYC will learn to be musicians and performers. There is opportunity to learn great secular and sacred choral literature, to develop musical skills, discipline and teamwork, and to become responsible ambassadors of the chorus, their families and the city of Winston-Salem wherever they are. *For all singers' high standards of excellence, discipline, and responsibility are maintained within a positive environment for learning.*

This information is for singers and their families. It is meant to present the rules and responsibilities of being in an auditioned chorus and **to be used as a reference during the year.**

## **Contact Information**

### **Mailing and Office Address:**

636 Holly Avenue  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

### **Phone**

336-703-0001

### **Website**

[wsyouthchorus.org](http://wsyouthchorus.org)

### **E-mail**

Dr. Sonja Sepulveda, Artistic Director: [sonja@wsyouthchorus.org](mailto:sonja@wsyouthchorus.org)

Chris Duffer, Chorus Manager: [chris@wsyouthchorus.org](mailto:chris@wsyouthchorus.org)

## **Communication**

The Winston-Salem Youth Chorus is an active organization and it is essential that singers and parents read all communications carefully. E-mail is the main form of communication for WSYC. It is essential that singers and parents check their e-mail daily.

## **ENSEMBLES**

**The Winston-Salem Youth Chorus (WSYC) is made up of four choral ensembles:**

### **< Residential Chorus (RC)**

- Boys and girls in grades 3-5, beginning singers, group does not tour
- Rehearses Thursday 5:30 pm -6:30 pm
- Performs locally (no tours)

### **< Touring Chorus (TC)**

- Boys and girls in grades 4-8 (boys must have unchanged voices) who have the necessary musical experience and/or skill
- Rehearses Monday 5:30 pm -7:30 pm
- Performs locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, depending on the year.

### **< Young Women's Ensemble (YWE)**

- 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade girls
- Rehearses Thursday 7:15 pm – 8:45 pm
- Performs locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, depending on the year.

### **< Young Men's Ensemble (YME)**

- Boys with changed voices
- Rehearses Thursday 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
- Performs locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, depending on the year.

## **Rehearsals**

Most regular rehearsals are held at Calvary Moravian Church (600 Holly Ave.) per the schedule above, however, **there will be a mandatory site rehearsal prior to every major concert**. Always keep in mind that when we are performing a **major work with other groups** (whether other WSYC ensembles or outside groups), we cannot predict exactly how long the site rehearsal will last. **Site rehearsal end times are approximate.**

## Attendance Policy

**Plan your child's absences carefully!** The WSYC maintains a rigorous rehearsal and performance schedule. **Attendance at all performances is required**, unless there is a prior commitment and Dr. Sepulveda and Chris Duffer are notified **as soon as the calendar of performances is given out**. **It is mandatory that all members MUST sing in the Winter Celebration Concert and Spring Choral Concert or risk losing your good standing with the chorus.** Please check the calendar for exact dates. Each singer's voice is crucial to the artistic quality of the performance as well as the rehearsals and is vitally important in achieving the high level of musicianship expected of members of the Chorus. *A chorus roster will be sent to all families at the beginning of the year to help parents with carpooling options. Please let Chris Duffer know of any information you do not want shared with fellow chorus members by the second rehearsal.*

**The last two rehearsals preceding a major performance are of paramount importance and should not be missed. The Director reserves the right to pull any singer from a performance due to their rehearsal absence(s).**

**It is required that prior notice for absences and late attendance be emailed from the parent to the Chorus Manager, Chris Duffer and the Artistic Director, Dr. Sepulveda (include the reason for absence or tardiness).** If an absence is an emergency situation or sudden circumstance in which you cannot give prior notice, please inform us as soon as possible by emailing Chris Duffer and Dr. Sepulveda ([chris@wsyouthchorus.org](mailto:chris@wsyouthchorus.org), [sonja@wsyouthchorus.org](mailto:sonja@wsyouthchorus.org)).

## Absences Allowed

**Touring Chorus** members are allowed **4** absences per fall and **4** per spring season. Members of **all other ensembles** are allowed **2** absences per fall and **2** per spring season. These absences include illness, family emergencies and school events in which the singer is **required to participate**. School events which are considered excused absences are those in which the singer is **required by classroom teachers to participate for a grade**. **It is expected that singers will not sign up for extra-curricular activities or audition for other arts activities that take place at the same time as WSYC rehearsals and concerts.**

### **Illness**

If a singer is well enough to go to school and is not contagious, inform the Director that he/she will be attending rehearsal to listen and follow the music, marking the music appropriately, and singing inside his/her head. Even though a singer is not actively singing, he/she is actively learning.

## Weather-Related Schedule Changes

The WSYC does not follow the weather-related public-school cancellation policy. In the event of inclement weather, the Director may either cancel or delay a rehearsal, performance, or other event. A decision will be made as early as possible, at least two hours before the required arrival time for singers. **Families will be notified by email in the event of a cancellation or delay.**

### Home Practice and Music Studies

Singers are expected to take their music home for practicing each week. It is recommended that a singer spend 15 minutes each day on WSYC music.

### Code of Behavior

The Winston-Salem Youth Chorus has very high standards that the singers must follow regarding personal behavior and discipline. The following general code covers any situation:

At all times a WSYC singer is to exhibit respect for self, respect for others, respect for property, and respect for the program.

### General Rehearsal Conduct

WSYC ensembles learn a large amount of music each year making it essential that every minute be used wisely. In professional choruses one must acquire the following habits. Singers are to:

- Arrive on time. Every minute of rehearsal time is important
- Bring their music binder, sign in, and get a pencil before entering rehearsals
- Use restrooms before rehearsal

- Remove gum before rehearsal (gum chewing is not allowed at rehearsals, performances, or on tours)
- Always watch the conductor and actively participate
- Use good singing posture and breathe fully, using your breathing system to its fullest potential
- Always pay close attention to directions, tone quality produced, and phrasing
- **Be quiet and attentive when your section is not singing**
- Follow the music closely, always working toward learning the music
- Wipe your feet at building entrances, please do not track mud or snow into the building
- No food or beverages other than a **container of water with a top**
- Deposit all trash in a trash container. Clean up any spills or messes, even if they are not your own

### Care of Music

Printed music is very expensive and often difficult to replace. Singers and parents must assume the responsibility of looking after it carefully. A refundable Music Deposit of \$30 is due by the first rehearsal (required for all new chorus members). Once all music is returned in good condition at the end of the season, the deposit is refunded at your request (or rolls over into next year if continuing). Damaged music will be deducted from the music deposit refund. Please observe the following practices in caring for your music:

- Make all markings in your music neatly (**in pencil**), allowing the next person who uses the music the opportunity to read and benefit from your markings
- Handle the music with care: avoid folding, rolling, crunching, or tearing the music
- **Do not doodle on printed music or on the music binder**
- Keep all your music in your binder
- Carefully tape torn music with invisible tape as soon as the tear occurs

### Appearance

Parents should make sure that singers always take responsibility for keeping themselves well-groomed. Hair should be combed and away from the face during rehearsals and performances. Examples of prohibited dress or appearance include:

- Clothing that contains advertisements for tobacco, alcohol or drugs; pictures or graphics of nudity; words that are profane, lewd, vulgar, or indecent
- Halter or bare midriff tops, strapless shirts or tube tops
- Short shorts or skirts, bare feet
- Pants, slacks or jeans that sag below waist
- Underpants or bras showing or worn as outerwear
- Provocative, revealing attire that exposes cleavage

### Required Concert Attire

All concert attire must be purchased in accordance with the WSYC policy. This is necessary to give the group a uniform look. You will be given the catalogue information to order your singers formal attire and need to order as soon as possible to make sure you are ready to perform. Singers will not perform without proper attire. Casual attire WSYC Blue Polo will be ordered through the chorus.

### Casual Attire for All Singers

- **Polo shirts:** All singers must purchase a WSYC blue polo shirt through the chorus.
  - **White tennis shoes and white socks:** The shoes may have other light colors but be predominantly white.
  - **Blue Jeans:** Well-fitting, plain regular dark blue jeans. Jeans should not be very faded and may not have rips or tears, decorative zippers, embroidery, low crotches, hems that drag the ground, or bling.

### Formal Attire (by Ensemble)

#### Residential Chorus

##### Girls:

- **White blouse, black skirt and black tie:** purchase from WSYC approved catalogue
- **Black flat dress shoes and black tights:** shoes should not be patent leather, may not flip-flop, must have flat heels and closed toes, and must have soft soles that will not be noisy on hard floors.

##### Boys:

- **Black pants, white shirt, and black tie:** purchase from WSYC approved catalogue
- **Black dress socks and black dress shoes:** shoes should not be patent leather, may not flip-flop, must have flat heels and closed toes, and must have soft soles that will not be noisy on hard floors.

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## Touring Chorus

### Girls:

- **Long blue dress:** purchase from WSYC approved catalogue
- **Black flat dress shoes:** should not be patent leather, may not flip-flop, must have flat heels and closed toes, and must have soft soles that will not be noisy on hard floors.
- **Black Tights/Hose**

### Boys:

- **White tux shirt with black studs, black tux trousers, blue cummerbund and blue bow tie:** purchase from WSYC approved catalogue
- **Black dress socks and black dress shoes:** shoes should not be patent leather, may not flip-flop, must have flat heels and closed toes, and must have soft soles that will not be noisy on hard floors.

## Young Women's Ensemble

- **Long black dress and pearls:** purchase from WSYC approved catalogue
- **Black dress shoes and black hose:** shoes should not be patent leather, may not flip-flop, must have flat heels and closed toes, and must have soft soles that will not be noisy on hard floors.

## Young Men's Ensemble

- **White tux shirt with black studs, black tux trousers, black vest and black bow tie:** purchase from WSYC approved catalogue
- **Black dress socks and black dress shoes:** shoes should not be patent leather, may not flip-flop, must have flat heels and closed toes, and must have soft soles that will not be noisy on hard floors.

**Parents may bring gently used attire to the kick-off meeting and/or rehearsals to sell to other chorus members.**

## Jewelry & Accessories at Performances

Singers are not allowed to wear jewelry at a performance, except for the approved items below. The appearance of each individual member will be evaluated before every concert and if a singer is wearing inappropriate items, he or she will be asked to remove them.

- **Earrings:** Singers are not allowed to wear earrings during performances other than small studs. No dangles or hoops.
- **Other Jewelry:** Singers are not allowed to wear necklaces, bracelets, anklets, or any other jewelry other than the WSYC-approved pearls for the YWE.
- **Hair & Accessories:** Hair needs to be pulled back away from the face, a naturally occurring color and not high up on the head for performances. Only a small ribbon or bow on the back of a ponytail is allowed. Headbands or other large hair accessories are unacceptable.

## Medals

When a singer reaches the end of his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> year, he/she will be awarded a medal with a ribbon to be worn around his/her neck denoting how many years they have been in the chorus. A new colored ribbon will be given out before the Spring Choral Concert to be exchanged on your medal reflecting another year of membership. These ribbons show the audience your years of dedication to WSYC.

## Concert Days

Singers must be presentable during the concert, and their appearance must be neat. Concert attire must always be worn properly. Hair must be clean and kept away from the face. **Before a performance:**

- Follow a proper diet (stay away from chocolate, nuts, milk products, and caffeinated drinks) and drink lots of water!
- Be well-rested: try to rest for one hour and restrict activities prior to a performance
- **Concert attire should be clean, properly pressed, and hemmed**
- Leave home early so there is no panic to arrive on time

## Concert Tickets

Each chorus family receives ONE complimentary ticket per singer to our own concerts when an admission fee is charged (will usually be handed out at a rehearsal preceding the concert). If we are not the sponsors of the concert and there is an admission fee, complimentary tickets are up to the organization sponsoring the event.

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## Playbill

The Playbill serves as our program at concerts as well as a valuable public relations tool for the WSYC. In addition, it raises funds through the selling of advertisements.

**We ask that WSYC families help sell ad space in the Playbill and/or purchase their own “special wishes” ads for their children.**

## Parents’ Association

The Parents’ Association is made up of all the parents/guardians of our WSYC members. **At least one parent from each chorus family is required to participate in the Parents’ Association.** The parents’ association is run by the Parent Council and exists to help the WSYC with promoting and funding the chorus. Parent obligations include:

- Participation as needed for concerts and events
- Assistance in obtaining playbill ads
- At least one parent per family in attendance at each meeting
- Assistance or participation with WSYC fundraisers or financial donation to the chorus

## Parent Council

The Parents’ Council is a slate of officers that head the Parents’ Association. The council includes these leadership positions:

- President: Act as spokesperson and contact for the Parents’ Association. Assist in motivating parent volunteers and fundraising.
- Vice President: Assist the President with his/her duties. Need to be willing to roll into President Position when that position is vacated.
- Ensemble Coordinators: Coordinate fundraising and communications with your ensemble

## Parent’s Association Fundraising

The WSYC relies on fundraising as part of the operations budget and could not exist without this income. With a small staff and limited budget, WSYC could not accomplish its mission without volunteers and fundraising. The actual cost per chorus member is approximately \$1500 per year yet tuition ranges from \$350-\$550. Fundraising along with donations, grants and corporate sponsors allow for the many opportunities chorus members enjoy and deserve.

## Scholarships

The WSYC does its best to offer positions in the ensemble regardless of an applicants ability to pay tuition costs. A limited number of full and partial tuition scholarships are available for families on a need basis. **All scholarship applicants however, are expected to pay the \$25 registration fee, \$30 music deposit, purchase the \$15 tote bag and purchase concert attire.** Return the completed scholarship application with your confirmation of membership form. If scholarship recipient families do not fulfill their volunteer duties (all WSYC families have volunteer responsibilities) or a singer does not abide by WSYC behavior or attendance policies, then that family will not be eligible for a scholarship the next year.

## Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

We encourage you to “like” us on Facebook and “share” to help spread the word about the activities and achievements of the chorus. We encourage you to follow us on Twitter and Instagram

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## Acceptance of Handbook Rules

We have read the WSYC Singer/Family Handbook. We agree to follow through on all, **including fulfilling parent volunteer obligations, fundraising/donation expectation and paying all tuition and fees by the applicable deadlines.** We realize that it is a privilege to be a member of the Winston-Salem Youth Chorus, and we agree to meet these expectations and thus ensure the continued success of this chorus and an enjoyable music experience for all WSYC members. We know that if we do not fulfill these responsibilities, we can be asked to leave for the good of the chorus.

Winston-Salem Youth Chorus, Inc. ("WSYC") occasionally photographs and makes video and/or audio recordings of its members for the purpose of promotional materials for the WSYC. Signing below gives the WSYC permission to photograph and make video and/or audio recordings of your son/daughter for WSYC promotional materials only.

In consideration of the benefits to be derived and having confidence that reasonable precautions will be taken to ensure the safety and well being of my child, I hereby agree to his/her participation, and waive all claims against the board, staff and volunteers.

Singer's Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Chorus Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Behavior Pledge

All singers sign the Behavior Pledge when entering the WSYC. It is each member's duty to uphold the pledge to the best of his/her ability.

1. I will accept responsibility for my actions and accept their consequences while a member of the Winston-Salem Youth Chorus and in the community. This means that I will obey the rules of the WSYC.
2. I will respect others and their property.
3. If I witness a violation of WSYC rules, it is my responsibility to report the violation to a WSYC staff member.
4. I will be honest and considerate in all my actions, and I will have an exemplary attitude.

### **Chorus Member Signature**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and concur with the Behavior Pledge that my child signed as a member of the Winston-Salem Youth Chorus. I understand that any violation of the Behavior Pledge will result in appropriate disciplinary actions.

### **Parent Signature**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

***Parent & Singer sign this page and give to the Chorus Manager by the first rehearsal.***