

PEABODY CHILDREN'S CHORUS

HANDBOOK

FOR PARENTS

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The Peabody Children's Chorus
The Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University
www.peabody.jhu.edu/chorus

PEABODY CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Handbook for Parents

(Revised September 2017)

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PEABODY CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Dear Parents,

Congratulations to you and your child, and welcome to the Peabody Children's Chorus.

I began singing in choirs when I was 5 years-old. As a child, music caught my imagination, transporting me to other cultures and times in history. Singing with friends made me feel like I was part of something bigger than myself, it gave me a tremendous sense of community and a sense of belonging. More than anything, I want to make sure that your child has the opportunity to experience choral singing as a joyful cornerstone of his or her young life.

My colleagues and I at the PCC are dedicated to the highest level of artistic expression and committed to pursuing excellence in a joyful, caring and cooperative environment. To do this, we need your support, so we have crafted this Handbook to guide you, and inform you about our policies.

If you do have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Sharon Spicher, our Chorus Manager, or me. I can't wait to work with your child during the coming year.

Very best wishes,



Doreen Falby, Director

Our Purpose

The primary goal of the Peabody Children's Chorus is to enrich the lives of participating children, and their audiences, by means of rehearsing and performing high quality music literature. We wish to keep alive the spirit of joy that people experience when they gather together to sing or to hear beautiful music. We aim to train our students to be musical leaders in their own generation by keeping alive our musical heritage—whether it be Western art songs, American folk songs, or music from other cultures. We achieve this through age-appropriate vocal training and ear training, and by striving for the highest quality performance within the various musical styles.

There are other benefits to be gained from this endeavor: a wonderful result of this process of ensemble music making is that it cultivates in each member his or her own sense of responsibility, commitment, self-discipline, confidence and poise—key ingredients for success in any field. We encourage our students to appreciate high standards of artistic excellence and to cultivate a love of beauty that will enrich all parts of their lives.

Program & Rehearsal Information

The Peabody Children's Chorus

Training Choir (age 6-10)

Choristers (age 10-14)

Cantate (age 12-18)

Chorus Prep Classes (for students who have an interest in singing but may not be quite ready to join the chorus)

Singing Circle (age 5-7)

Vocalise (age 7-9)

Campuses (*rehearsals can be made-up at either location*)

Towson Campus (Tuesday)

949 Dulaney Valley Road

Towson, Maryland 21204

Howard County Campus (Monday and Thursday)

Garden Presbyterian Church

8665 Old Annapolis Road

Columbia, MD 21045

PCC Rehearsal Schedule

Training Choir Monday, Howard County, 5:00-6:00 pm
Tuesday, Towson, 4:30-5:30 pm
Thursday, Howard County, 5:00-6:00 pm

Choristers Monday, Howard County, 6:00-7:30 pm
Tuesday, Towson, 5:30-7:00 pm
Thursday, Howard County, 6:00-7:30 pm

Cantate Monday, Howard County, 7:30-9:30 pm
Tuesday, Towson, 7:00-9:00 pm
Thursday, Howard County, 7:30-9:30 pm

STAYING IN TOUCH

We send frequent communications via email, so please make sure we have your most up-to-date email address. The best way to reach us is also by e-mail. Or, you can come to the sign-in desk during rehearsal and talk to the Chorus Manager in person. (Please don't interrupt rehearsals or speak with the director or accompanist on rehearsal evenings, as this time is very precious and is best spent greeting students, answering their questions, and focusing our attention on the job at hand.) We do want to hear from you, and we appreciate your help to make our rehearsals run as smoothly as possible. Thank you!

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

The Peabody Children's Chorus is an ensemble committed to musical excellence. If any member of that ensemble is missing, the character, spirit and sound of the whole is altered. Each individual voice and personality is of great importance to all. Your child's consistent attendance will ensure that he or she becomes a vital part of the Peabody Children's Chorus.

Training Choir and Choristers

Each student is allowed two absences per semester (semesters run September–December, and January–May). After two absences in one semester, a student must make-up any further missed rehearsals. Otherwise, a student will be prohibited from participating in any concerts that semester due to the student's lack of rehearsal preparation. Exceptions may be made in extreme cases.

Cantate

Members of Cantate are the leaders of our chorus and we have high expectations for this select group of students. Therefore, these young professionals-in-training are expected to attend every rehearsal and to make-up any missed rehearsals. Exceptions may be made in extreme cases.

To ensure the safety of our students, *a student may not leave a rehearsal early without the permission of the instructor and written notification from the parent.*

It is especially important that every student attend all Concert Week events. The Mandatory Campus Rehearsal and Mandatory Concert Rehearsal are part of a carefully thought out sequence of training which prepares the student for performance and allows each student to participate in concerts with confidence and comfort.

MAKING UP A MISSED REHEARSAL

All students are encouraged to make-up absences by attending rehearsal on another evening. Please e-mail or call the Chorus Manager *at least one full day before you plan to attend* a make-up rehearsal, so we know to expect your child, and so we can alert you if the rehearsal is cancelled for any reason. **IMPORTANT: NO make-ups are permitted during Concert Week.**

REHEARSAL CHECK-IN

Drop off and pick up your singer at the entrance to the building. Please don't arrive more than 15 minutes before the start of rehearsal, and please pick up promptly.

*****Reminder: a student will not be permitted to leave rehearsal early without a written note signed by his or her parent.**

Remind your student to:

- Check-in at the front desk (this is how we keep track of attendance).
- Use the rest-room before rehearsal
- Bring his or her music, in a folder, to every rehearsal
- Bring a water bottle (everyone) and a pencil (Choristers and Cantate only)

REHEARSAL DOs and DON'Ts

- Cell phone use of any kind (calling, texting, taking photographs or video) is prohibited during chorus rehearsal. Singers may use phones before and after rehearsal, and during designated breaks. Cell phones must be turned off during rehearsal. After one warning, cell phone use may result in expulsion.
- All students must wear comfortable, FLAT shoes or sneakers to all rehearsals, including concert rehearsals. Flip-flops and clogs are not suitable footwear for rehearsals.
- Gum and hats are strictly prohibited at all chorus rehearsals and concerts.
- Training Choir & Choristers students may not bring any food to rehearsals.
- Cantate may bring a snack and a drink for break. No opened food or drink containers are permitted in the rehearsal space.
- Students must leave the rehearsal and break areas in the way they found them (no trash on floor, etc.).

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICIES

Public school closings do not necessarily mean that chorus rehearsals will be cancelled, since our rehearsals are held after school and weather might improve throughout the day.

Please check <https://www.jhu.edu/alert/> or call (410) 516-7781 or 1-800-548-9004 for the latest news on weather-related closing information.

Waiting for rehearsal to start!



Concert Information

CONCERT WEEK

Part of our mission here at the chorus is to teach our students that, in making music, they are an important part of a larger effort; that their contribution is valuable because we are counting on them. As part of that goal, we ask each family to commit to participation in Concert Week every semester. Thank you for helping us to teach our students the value of commitment.

Concert Week involves mandatory attendance at your assigned campus rehearsal as well as a concert rehearsal and concert.

Please note your Fall 2017 Concert Week schedule below.

Howard County Campus

Mandatory Campus Rehearsal: Monday, December 11 or Thursday, December 14
(usual location, Garden Presbyterian Church)

Concert Rehearsal & Concert: Saturday, December 16 or Sunday, December 17
Rouse Theatre, Trumpeter Road, Columbia, MD 21044

Towson Campus

Mandatory Campus Rehearsal: Tuesday, November 28
(usual location, Towson Prep Campus)

Concert Rehearsal: Saturday, December 2
Peabody Institute, 1 East Mt. Vernon Place, Baltimore, MD 21202

Concert: Sunday, December 3
Peabody Institute, 1 East Mt. Vernon Place, Baltimore, MD 21202

Please note: because performing is such a physically demanding endeavor, singers should eat a nutritious meal before arriving for Concerts or Concert Rehearsals, and be well-rested.

CONCERT REHEARSAL

A student may not arrive late for Concert Rehearsals nor leave early. Please plan ahead, especially if attending the student's first rehearsal at Peabody in Baltimore. It can be time consuming to find parking and make one's way to the concert hall.

If your child is late to a Concert Rehearsal due to a circumstance that is beyond your control, please **DO NOT DISTURB** the rehearsal. Instead, please tell your child to join the other children on stage as quietly as possible.

Please note:

- Students must wear comfortable, flat shoes or sneakers to all rehearsals, including the Concert Rehearsal (flip-flops are not permitted).
- No food or drink is permitted in concert halls during rehearsals or concerts.
- Parents are not permitted to attend Concert Rehearsals.

TICKET INFORMATION

Our end-of-semester concerts, in December and April/May, require tickets for attendance. We will provide information about ordering tickets early in the year.

AUDIENCE INFORMATION

Since we wish to ensure our students have the opportunity to perform without interruption, and because we make an audio recording of our end-of-semester concerts, **we ask that you not bring along any guests under five years of age.**

The taking of **photographs** during all performances is **prohibited**. Due to copyright laws, any kind of **audio or video recording** during performances is **prohibited**.

CONCERT UNIFORM

Concert dress is worn for all Peabody Children's Chorus performances and for Uniform Check events. We check all uniforms during the fall semester to ensure that each student has the appropriate concert outfit before our first concert (see your campus schedule for dates).

To avoid last minute surprises (like sizing issues or lost items), please make sure your child's uniform is clean, pressed and completely ready **at least a week** before any performance.

All Girls

To be purchased by parents:

- Uniform blouse and skirt (order information will be given at the beginning of the year)
- Opaque black tights for Training Choir and Choristers; off-black knee highs for Cantate
- PLAIN, FLAT, non-shiny, black dress shoes (no clogs, sandals, sneakers or boots permitted); large front buckles or other decoration can be covered with black electrical tape. For safety reasons, shoes must be flat (heels of one inch or less).

Please note:

- Please pull hair back off the face whenever possible.
- Jewelry, earrings, belts, make-up, nail polish and perfume are strictly prohibited.
- White camisole may be worn under shirt if desired (no dark colored garments please).

All Boys

To be purchased by parents:

- Uniform shirt (order information will be given at the beginning of the year)
- Black dress slacks (no jeans permitted)
- Black socks and black dress shoes (no sneakers or boots permitted)
- Black belt



Training Choir



Choristers



Cantate



Student Progress and Placement

PROGRESS REPORTS

End-of-Year Reports: At the end of the school year, each student receives a progress report (a copy is included at the back of this handbook).

RESERVING YOUR CHILD'S PLACE IN THE CHORUS

In **March**, we collect information on each child's plans for the following season. This allows us to make placement decisions for current students, and to determine how many spots are available for new students. If you indicate that your child is returning to chorus, we'll hold his/her place until the first rehearsal of the new season; however, you will still have to register your child in the usual way through the Preparatory Office to attend chorus. If you do not hold a place for your child, he/she will have to re-audition to return to chorus.

VOCAL CHECK-UPS

To help us keep track of each singer's progress, we meet with the following students in May for a vocal check-up:

- *Training Choir members who will be ten years of age by December 30th, or who have sung with the Training Choir for three years;*
- *Choristers who will be twelve years of age by September 30th, or who have sung with the Choristers for three years.*

During these check-ups, we ask our students to sing a vocal warm-up (to hear their range), a song from the PCC Spring Concert, and a canon (e.g., *Row Your Boat*). These assessments help us to complete the End-of-Year reports and provide the opportunity to make decisions about the student's placement for the following year. Placement is based on the following:

- Conduct during rehearsals
- Musical ability
- Development of the voice
- Age

CANTATE EVALUATIONS

Returning Cantate students re-audition for their spots in chorus every May. In these auditions, we ask each student to sing his/her part in any song from the current repertoire, from memory. We also take into consideration attendance, and behavior in rehearsal. If a student does not pass the audition, she/he will be put on probation for the fall semester. A second audition is held in December to re-evaluate the student's progress.

Becoming a Professional Musician

We are often in the fortunate position of being able to have our singers work with professional musicians. Our singers regularly perform with other arts organizations and later, many of our students set off for college to be music majors, minors or to sing in their college chorus. Whether our students are rehearsing or performing with the Baltimore Choral Arts Society, The Peabody Symphony Orchestra, or the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra or performing at the college level, they are and will be working with musicians who expect them to exhibit a professional level of conduct appropriate to their artistic achievement. One of the ways in which we achieve this standard of excellence is by reviewing these suggestions for concert etiquette and expected behaviors together.

Some tips on behaving in a professional manner:

As a chorus member

1. Be punctual. Late arrivals are distracting for others.
2. Be prepared. A professional musician knows (in our case, memorizes) the music and is ready to be a leader in rehearsal. Bring your folders and pencils to rehearsal when appropriate.
3. Be responsible. Take care of your music scores, uniforms, etc. Return bows and ties after every concert. Return music scores when appropriate.
4. Resolve to look like a musician, even in rehearsal. Sit/stand tall, pay attention and “put the song on your face”. Please do not complain about being tired or overloaded with homework. Chances are you are not the only one “in that boat”.
5. When you are on-stage for a concert rehearsal or concert, refrain from scratching, yawning, playing with your hair (tie it back), looking at your watch or putting your head in your hands. If you make a mistake, do not wince or indicate in any way you’ve done something you wish you hadn’t.
6. When you are complimented for a performance, refrain from “downplaying” your achievements. Respect the opinion of the person who is praising you. In this case, a simple, “thank you,” is appropriate.
7. Be respectful and courteous to your peers at all times. We are all in this together. If you hear someone criticizing another singer, try to counter with a positive remark. If someone is chosen to sing a solo, please be supportive (if you were the soloist, what would you like another chorus member to say?).
8. Remember, whenever you are at an outside rehearsal or performance, or even just in the hallway during a regular rehearsal, you are a representative for your whole ensemble—behave appropriately. Think beyond your own particular needs; in making music, you are an important part of a larger effort. Rejoice in the energy that comes from being part of it and graciously accept the responsibility that goes along with membership.
9. In this connection, remember what a privilege it is to have the opportunity to work on great music with other musicians, whether in your own group or together with another ensemble, and take pride in your contribution.

As an audience member

1. Be punctual. If you must be late, enter during applause.
2. Silence all cell phones, beepers, pagers and watches that make noise; do not talk, text, or engage in distracting or noisy tasks during any individual or group performance.
3. It is never polite to rush out of the concert hall during the final applause to “beat the crowds”.

Appendix: End-of-Year Report

The Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University

The Preparatory

THE PEABODY CHILDREN'S CHORUS

End-Of-Year Report

STUDENT NAME:

ENSEMBLE:

TEACHER: Doreen Falby

Parents,

Here is a list of expectations for members of the Peabody Children's Chorus, and an indication of your child's progress in each category.

E = Excellent G = Good S = Satisfactory NI = Needs Improvement

_____ Student demonstrates commitment and helps promote ensemble unity through consistent attendance.

Total no. of absences _____

_____ Student gives best effort and demonstrates leadership in rehearsal

_____ Student prepares and memorizes music adequately

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT YEAR:

COMMENTS:

Report prepared by Doreen Falby, Director

