



CHOIR HANDBOOK

OVERVIEW

Chœur des enfants de Montréal performs a diverse and spirited repertoire encompassing music from the Renaissance to the present day. Their work focuses on classical music, but also includes folk, gospel and contemporary music. The choir celebrates the work of Canadian composers and the rich musical traditions of Québec.

The diversity of the music reflects the multi-cultural nature of Canada and Montréal. Unlike any other youth choir in Montréal, the choir repertoire includes children's operas, commissioned musical theatre compositions and cantatas. The children learn to sing in many languages. Over the years, the choir has performed songs in French, English, Welsh, Gaelic, German, Latin, Serbian, Maori, Japanese, Hebrew and Spanish.

The choir was created in 2001 by a group of parents whose children had sung with Iwan Edwards in the F.A.C.E. Treble Choir and who wanted to make this outstanding musical education available to all children in Montreal. The choristers come from more than 20 different primary and secondary schools and various cultural and economic backgrounds, united by their passion for singing.

WHEN ARE THE REHEARSALS?

Rehearsals are held at the NDG Community Centre (corner of Décarie and Côte St-Antoine, entrance at 3757 Prud'homme - on the main floor) between September and June as follows:

- Training Choir: Thursday, 4:15 – 5:15 p.m.
- Junior Choir: Wednesday, 4:15-5:30 p.m.
- Senior Choir: Wednesday, 5:45 – 8 p.m. (+ occasional weekend day as per schedule)
- Chamber Choir: Thursday, 5:45-7:15 p.m. (+ occasional weekend day as per schedule)

There may be additional rehearsals in the week or two leading up to a concert.

Please note that parents will not be able to remain in the room during rehearsals (with the exception of parent chaperones). Also children in the Training and Junior Choir must stay in the rehearsal room until parents pick them up – PLEASE be on time. We will hold an open rehearsal twice a year to allow parents to observe their child's work.

ATTENDANCE AT ALL REHEARSALS IS MANDATORY - WHY?

Attendance at all rehearsals is mandatory so that the choir can progress. If children don't attend on a regular basis, the entire choir suffers. Children who attend regularly find themselves getting bored because songs have to be repeated over and over for children who missed a rehearsal. And children who miss rehearsals find themselves always playing catch-up and never really mastering the music.

If children are unable to attend on a regular basis, they may not be able to remain in the choir and/or may be required to audition in order to participate in the next concert.

If your child must miss a rehearsal, you **must** inform the choir manager by email a.cooper@sympatico.ca or by phone (450-458-7129) and your child **must** explain the situation to the directors at the next rehearsal.

LEARNING THE MUSIC

Your chorister, particularly if new to the choir, may need your help in learning the music. On stage, choristers do not have scores and no one likes to be lost in front of an audience. Even if your chorister says that he or she knows the music, you should check to see if this is actually true. Some children become discouraged because it is hard if you have never had to memorize music (and words in many languages), and experienced choir families have strategies that may help. Sometimes choristers get together outside of rehearsals to practice together. Don't be shy to ask the parents responsible at rehearsals or any board member for hints and advice.

WHAT DO THE ANNUAL FEES COVER?

Annual fees go towards the costs of:

- a mandatory weekend retreat for the Senior Choir held at a music camp each fall
- all rehearsals
- purchase/rental of all scores and rights payments
- hall rentals for rehearsals and for performances
- salaries of the choir director, the assistant director and a part-time administrator (and musicians when applicable)

Payments must be included on the day of registration (see the registration form for more information).

WHY DO I HAVE TO SELL TICKETS TO THE CHOIR'S CONCERTS?

Choir fees only cover about 20% of the choir's operating costs, which include the salaries of the choir directors and a part-time choir administrator, the weekend retreat, rental of the NDG Community Centre and concert venues, sheet music, musicians, printing of programs and tickets, etc.

The bulk of the remaining operating costs are covered by grants, donations and ticket sales. We also receive fees when performing with other groups, and generate revenue through the sale of advertising in concert programmes and of CD's.

While the choir will be invited to sing as part of other concerts throughout the year (for which a performance fee is received), the choir itself will be presenting three concerts per season where we are responsible for generating revenues to cover all the costs.

You will be given several adult, senior and student tickets to sell for each of these three concerts (approximately 6 weeks prior to the concert). If you cannot sell all of your tickets, please consider making a donation to the choir.

ADVERTISING SALES IN CONCERT PROGRAMMES

Another source of revenue for the choir comes from the sale of advertisements in the three concert programmes.

Businesses can purchase full-page, half-page, quarter-page or business card size ads.

Full page (7.75" high x 4.75" wide)

Half page (3.875" high x 4.75" wide)

Quarter page (3.875" high x 2.375" wide)

Business card (1.9375" high x 2.375" wide)

Advertising is a good source of revenue for the choir and it's a great way for a local business to support the community.

The deadline for finalizing the sales and providing the artwork is 2 weeks prior to the concert (to provide enough time for the graphic design and printing of the program).

CONCERT DRESS CODE / COSTUMES

To reflect the professionalism of the choir, a dress code **must** be followed for concerts. Parents are responsible for providing the outfit. If you are missing a part of the outfit, please contact the parent in charge of concert dress. We have several spare skirts, blouses/shirts and pants.

- Plain white cotton shirt or blouse with LONG sleeves
- Plain black pants (boys) or ANKLE-LENGTH skirt (girls) – no flounces, buttons, pleats or silky shiny fabric!
- Black stockings or socks
- Black dress shoes – low heels
- No glitzy hair ornaments or dangly earrings

If the children are performing musical theatre works, the Choir will provide the needed costumes.

PERFORMANCE PROTOCOL

As experienced actors can testify, performance protocol applies before, during and after concerts, because players remain "in the limelight" in the eyes of their audience, even after a performance is officially over!

Before Concert Performances

- Arrive on time at the designated concert venue. Get organized and dressed QUICKLY and QUIETLY.
- Keep your personal effects in order and in one place.

During Concert Performances

- Know when to stand, sit, clap and bow during concerts. Use correct posture at all times.
- Refrain from TALKING or WHISPERING with other choristers during the performance or while sitting as "spectators" in the audience or elsewhere on the stage during a concert.

After Concert Performances

- Maintain the concert "dress code" at all times. This includes leaving shirts tucked in after concerts, when still on the premises of the performance, outside the dressing room.
- Clean up any papers, drinking cups, food wrappers etc. and replace furniture or other items used in the dressing area. This is particularly important to uphold the Choir's reputation and to ensure that it will be considered for future repeat engagements.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure that your child attends rehearsals regularly and arrives on time.
- Ensure that your child learns his/her music each week.
- Ensure that your child has the appropriate concert dress.
- Sell tickets and promote concerts.
- Help out by volunteering in at least one activity: chaperoning at an event, fundraising activities, etc.

ORIENTATION AND PARENTS' MEETINGS

An orientation meeting for new parents will be held near the end of September. A general parents meeting will be held in November. Please see the schedule and check your email for updates. Sign-up sheets for volunteers will be available.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Only the choir director, assistant director and the part-time administrator receive payment for their services. Everything else is done by parent volunteers, including the Board of Directors.

The choir always needs people to help in the following areas:

- Ticket Sales
- Fundraising – through private and corporate donations
- Auditions – providing/collecting information to/from potential choristers
- Costumes/Concert Dress
- Rehearsal Monitors
- We like to have one parent who agrees to stay for a few minutes at the end of the rehearsals until all choristers have left. These parents do not have to attend the rehearsal, just stay for a few minutes at the end (2-3 volunteers would be good).
- Chaperones
 - For concert rehearsals (1-2 people required)
 - Backstage at concerts (2-3 people required)
 - Fall Music Retreat (3 people required)
- Recruitment of new choristers
- Advertising Sales in programmes
- Writing press releases, proof-reading, photography

If you are interested in taking on any of the above, please speak to the parent in charge at the rehearsal, to any of the people who are currently involved or to one of the volunteer Board members.