



Handbook of General Information 2016-2017

Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses

P.O. Box 68665

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

www.GRSYC.org

616-881-2560

Our Mission Statement:

Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses strive to instill in the children of West Michigan a lifelong love of music by providing a program in which they can discover and refine their musical talent as choral singers, demonstrate personal growth and leadership, and develop a lifelong passion for singing. Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses aspire to provide a mutually respectful system of preparation, a dedication to excellence in the performance of quality choral literature, and a commitment to seeking collaborative musical opportunities locally, nationally, and globally.

Contact Information

Conductor, Youth Chorus

Sean Ivory (616) 856-8092 Sean@grsyc.org

Conductor, Junior Youth and Prelude Choruses

Jackie Sonderfan Schoon (616) 308-2174 Jackie@grsyc.org

Assistant Director/ Youth Chorus Accompanist

Leah Ivory (616) 856-8093 Leah@grsyc.org

Manager

Holly Okonoski (616) 881-2560 Holly@grsyc.org

GRAND RAPIDS SYMPHONY

Marcelo Lehninger, Music Director
David Lockington, Music Director Laureate
Bob Bernhardt, Principal Pops Conductor
John Varineau, Associate Conductor
Pearl Shangkuan, Chorus Director
Peter T. Kjome, President and CEO
Roger D. Nelson, Vice President and General Manager
Diane Lobbstael, Vice President for Development

September 2016

Dear Singers and Parents,

Welcome to the ninth season of the Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses! We are proud to be part of a vibrant arts organization in West Michigan. The Youth Choruses have a unique opportunity to sing some of the world's most beautiful choral literature with West Michigan's finest musicians. Our concerts are attended by thousands of people every year.

Highlights of the 2016-2017 season include:

- GRSYC Fall Retreat at Camp Manitou-Lin
- Our first family concert of the year on October 28 at Calvin College's Fine Arts Auditorium
- Holiday Pops with Bob Bernhardt and the Grand Rapids Symphony
- Singing the National Anthem at the Grand Rapids Griffins Hockey game

If Calvin College closes due to weather, we do not hold rehearsal. If rehearsal is cancelled GRSYC will notify you by email. Choirs do not rehearse during the December holiday break or spring break. The schedule of the year's activities is at the end of this handbook. It is vital that rehearsal or performance conflicts be communicated as soon as possible. If, after checking the schedule, you know that a conflict exists, let us know right away. It helps us plan for rehearsals and performances when we know a chorister will be missing. Unless there is a medical or family emergency, sudden absences (one or two days notice) must be avoided. Additionally, coming late to rehearsal or leaving early is extremely disruptive – please refrain from doing this if at all possible.

The Youth Choruses aspire to professional performance standards. As such, make every effort to be at rehearsal and avoid scheduling other activities during choir time. Work done during rehearsals cannot be made up!

This handbook is intended to be a reference for choir schedules, fees, uniforms, policies, and the calendar for the year. Please read the following information about tuition costs, rehearsal times, and performance attire for all three choirs. If, after reading, you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

Thank you for being a part of GRSYC! Together we make the world a more beautiful place.

Sincerely,

Sean Ivory

GRSYC Director

INDIVIDUAL CHOIR INFORMATION

Prelude Chorus (Grades 1-3) Director, Jackie Schoon, jackie@grsync.org

- Tuition: \$375
- Rehearsals: Thursdays, 4:15-5:30PM at Calvin College in the Recital Hall
- Performance Dress:
 - **Girls:** Long-sleeved white shirts (no turtlenecks, designs, sequins or words, please), black pants, black skirt or black palazzo pants, black opaque tights or black socks and black dress shoes.
 - **Boys:** Long-sleeved white shirts with a collar (no turtlenecks, please), black pants (no jeans), black socks, black dress shoes.

Junior Youth Chorus (Grades 4-6), Director, Jackie Schoon, Jackie@grsync.org

- Tuition: \$475
- Rehearsals: Thursdays, 5:00-7:00PM at Calvin College
- Performance Dress:
 - **Girls:** wear **white from the waist up and solid black from the waist down**. Girls must order a 3/4 sleeve length white tunic through GRSYC, and have these options for solid black from the waist down:
 - A black floor length skirt may be ordered through GRSYC - OR you may purchase on your own:
 - Black pants (not jeans)
 - Black palazzo pants
 - Knee-length (or longer) black skirt
 - NO LEGGINGS

All girls must wear black, opaque (meaning one cannot see through) tights or socks. All girls must wear black shoes. As we strive for a uniform look, girls must refrain from wearing necklaces. Small, stud earrings are allowed.

- **Boys:** wear white tuxedo shirt with royal blue matching bowtie and cummerbund (ordered through GRSYC), your own black pants, black belt, black socks, and black shoes.

Youth Chorus, (Grades 7-12) Director, Sean Ivory, sean@grsyc.org

Assistant Director, Leah Ivory, Leah@grsyc.org

- Tuition: \$525
- Rehearsals: Mondays, 5:00-7:00PM at Calvin College
- Performance Dress:
 - Girls: Black concert dresses (ordered through GRSYC), black nylons/tights, comfortable low-heeled or flat black shoes. No distracting jewelry or hair accessories. Thin black headbands are acceptable.
 - Boys: Black dress shirts, black dress pants, black shoes and socks (purchased on your own).

TUITION PAYMENTS

Tuition Options:

- 1) One Payment in full, due 10/15, by check OR credit card
- 2) Two Payments, 50% due 10/15 and 50% due 2/15/17, by check OR credit card
- 3) Eight monthly payments, credit card **ONLY**, auto-billed beginning 10/15

To pay by credit card you need to complete an authorization form. This form is posted on our website under “parent resources”, Holly will also have copies at the parent meeting and at rehearsals. You only need to fill this out one time, and turn it in at rehearsal or mail it to the Symphony by October 10:

GR Symphony, attn: Debra Lehmann

300 Ottawa NW Ste. 100

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

As the year begins, we want to make sure everyone has a clear understanding about the basic behavior expectations that we have of singers in our performing ensembles.

1. Each singer represents the Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses. We are a professional organization and our students are expected to behave in a courteous manner at all times. GRSYC does not provide supervision for choristers prior to their rehearsal times. **Children in PC and JYC should be accompanied by their parents/guardians until their rehearsal begins.** We are guests at Calvin College, a school and place of business.

- All snacks must be consumed prior to rehearsal or at break. Students must properly dispose of wrappers and crumbs.

- As choristers leave rehearsal with a small treat, be certain to not let the wrapper fall to the ground.

- Absolutely no running, horsing around or climbing is allowed in the hallways prior to rehearsal.

Thank you for your attention to these details. With their compliance to these guidelines, your children help promote the good name and reputation of GRSYC.

2. All singers should plan to arrive five minutes before the scheduled start time of their rehearsal so that they can be in their places and ready to sing at the designated hour. Locate your music folder, and QUIETLY enter the Recital Hall and take your assigned seat. **These directions are of great importance especially for the Junior Youth Chorus, whose members will enter during the last few minutes of the Prelude Chorus' rehearsal.** Singers do not leave the room after rehearsal has begun unless special permission has been granted. A note is necessary for late admittance to or early dismissal from a rehearsal. Please give attendance notes, payments, permission slips, etc. to Holly, our choir manager.

Singers may bring a bottle of water to sip drinks when needed. Please make sure it has a lid or cap on it to prevent spills. No food, candy or gum is allowed in the rehearsal room. For optimal focus and energy, please have your chorister eat a nutritious snack before rehearsal.

3. All singers should use the bathroom before the rehearsal starts...as necessary. Singers will not be excused for bathroom breaks during the rehearsals...except in the case of extreme emergencies. Children of eligible ages should have no trouble waiting until the end of their rehearsal to visit the bathroom again. If you are concerned that your child will be unable to comply with this requirement, please contact your child's director.

4. Cell phones must be turned off during rehearsals and will be confiscated if used to make calls, play games, send text messages, or take pictures. This rule also applies to any game-playing devices that are brought into rehearsals.

5. Mrs. Schoon will send Prelude and Junior Youth Chorus a weekly memo via email. These memos will contain important information and should be read thoroughly. You may also view memos on our website under "Parent Resources", www.grsync.org.

Youth Chorus members will also receive any important information from Mr. Ivory through email.

ABSENCES

Since choral music education is a progressive process, attendance at all rehearsals is critical. Missing even one rehearsal can seriously impact both the progress of the individual and compromise the overall standard of the choir. Recognizing that conflicts do arise and singers can become ill, each singer is allowed **two excused absences per semester**. Save these absences for illness, school performances, or a family emergency.

Successive absences will be excused at the discretion of the conductor. Simply informing the conductor of an absence will not guarantee an excused absence. Singers missing more than the allowed number of absences may be excluded from an upcoming performance. In a case when singers know they will be unable to participate in an upcoming performance, they should still attend as many rehearsals as possible. Often music that is taught may be included in more than one program and singers are expected to know and be able to perform all choir repertoire included in a season. If, for any reason, a singer cannot actively participate in a rehearsal, he should bring a written note and observe quietly and attentively.

Illness, conflicts due to school performances, or death in the family will be considered excused absences. Please communicate with your child's director as much in advance as possible if a rehearsal must be missed.

Membership in the Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses assumes a commitment to attending performances. Singers who habitually miss scheduled rehearsals or performances may be removed from the organizational roster.

REHEARSALS

Come prepared to listen, to work, and to sing. We have only 2 hours each week to learn a large amount of repertoire and sing it professionally and inspirationally! This is a great place to meet and make lifelong friends, but please be focused during rehearsal.

GRSYC rehearsals are open. Parents, you are welcome to sit and listen. We ask that you keep your conversations in the hallway, please. Any talking that takes place in the rehearsal room is disruptive to the directors and students. Thank you for your consideration.