



Handbook of General Information 2018-2019

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

Artistic Director

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

Co-Director, Youth Chorus

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

Conductor, Junior Youth Chorus

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

Conductor, Prelude Chorus

Renee Vande Wege (616) 232-6148 rvandewege@gmail.com

Operations Manager

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

GRAND RAPIDS SYMPHONY

Marcelo Lehniger, Music Director
David Lockington, Music Director Laureate
Bob Bernhardt, Principal Pops Conductor
John Varineau, Associate Conductor
Pearl Shangkuan, Chorus Director
Peter Perez, President and CEO
Diane Lobbestael, Vice President for Development

Dear GRSYC family,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 season! The staff of GRSYC is excited to begin another wonderful year of learning and performing great music. Singing in a choir is an activity that is open to everyone, regardless of background. By coming together week after week, we create a community that is unique and beautiful.

As a staff, our goal is to provide musical opportunities that are enriching and challenging. Through the learning and performing of excellent choral repertoire, we will encourage our singers' musical and personal growth, and help them to strengthen their self-confidence. We also endeavor to create a larger community including families, friends, local musicians, and our patrons in West Michigan.

Our collaborations with the Grand Rapids Symphony this year include a performance of John Williams' soundtrack for **Home Alone** (live with the film at DeVos Hall), Gustav Mahler's 3rd Symphony, and Holiday Pops. We are so thankful for this partnership and for the opportunities it provides our young singers.

Traveling as a choir is an amazing way to learn about the world and to strengthen bonds with fellow choir members. Past choir tours have taken singers to Prague, Trinidad, Indiana, Iowa, and New York City. In June, the Youth Chorus will embark on a performance tour of Iceland, one of our world's most strikingly beautiful locations. We will perform in unique venues, learn about the history of Iceland, and enjoy days with 20 hours of sunlight! Sign-ups are happening now, and an updated itinerary will be coming soon.

We are thrilled to welcome Renee Vande Wege to our staff as the new conductor of Prelude Chorus. Renee's musicianship and passion for teaching is evident in everything she does. She will provide a wonderful musical and vocal education for our young ones.

As we embark on another season's journey together, the staff of GRSYC would like to thank all of you for your dedication and support. It means so much to us. Please reach out to us with questions and concerns, and we will do our best to answer and work through whatever situations arise.

Best wishes to all of you. I'm looking forward to a great year!

Sincerely,

Sean Ivory
Artistic Director, GRSYC

INDIVIDUAL CHOIR INFORMATION

Prelude Chorus (Grades 1-3) Director, Renee Vande Wege, rvandewege@gmail.com

- Tuition: \$400
- Rehearsals: Thursdays, 5:00-6:00PM at Calvin College
- 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: \$525
- 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@grsync.org
Co-Director, Leah Ivory, Leah@grsync.org

- Tuition: \$575
- Rehearsals: Mondays, 5:00-7:00PM at Calvin College, Recital Hall
- Performance Dress:
 - Girls: Black concert dresses, 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: **payment by credit or debit card only**

- 1) One Payment in full, will be processed mid-October
- 2) Two Payments, first half applied mid-October and 2nd half mid-February
- 3) Eight monthly payments, auto-billed beginning mid-October

To pay by credit card you need to complete an authorization form. This form is posted on our website under "Parents", we will also have copies available 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 1st:**

GR Symphony, attn: Debra Lehmann

300 Ottawa NW Ste. 100

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Tuition Scholarships:

We offer partial and full scholarships to families who are experiencing financial hardship and may not be able to participate in the choir. Please see the "Parents" section of our website www.grsync.org for a link to an application.

Tuition Discount for Multiple Children:

For households that have more than one child in our choirs we offer the following discounts:

1st child: full tuition

2nd child: 25% deduction off of the lesser expensive choir

Each additional child is an increasing 5% discount. IE - the 3rd child would receive 30% off and the 4th child would receive 35%.

Please see the "Parents" section of our website www.grsync.org for a link to an application.

CLOSURES

If Calvin College closes due to weather, we do not hold rehearsal. If rehearsal is cancelled GRSYC will notify you by email.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Singers do not leave the room after rehearsal has begun unless special permission has been granted. An email is necessary for late admittance to or early dismissal from a rehearsal. Please give payments, paperwork, 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.

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.

Each director will send regular communication via email as needed. These emails will contain important information and should be read thoroughly.

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that choristers will participate for the entire season and attend all rehearsals (within the allowable number of absences) and all concerts. Concerts are not optional.

Choristers will be allowed 3 absences per semester. Please reserve these absences for illness, unexpected emergencies, and for required school activities/performances. Singers who miss more than the allowed number of absences may be excluded from an upcoming performance, or removed from the organizational roster.

Absences must be communicated with the director as soon as possible.

- Prelude Chorus families, please communicate directly with Ms. Vande Wege
- Junior Youth Chorus families, please communicate directly with Mrs. Schoon
- Youth Chorus families, please communicate directly with Mrs. Ivory

If, for any reason, a singer cannot actively participate in a rehearsal, he or she should still attend and observe attentively to the music being rehearsed.

An absence is an absence. Arriving late or leaving early will count as a partial absence. Two partial absences will equal one absence. The only time we will stretch past the allowable number of absences is when there are conflicts with required activities that are part of a grade for school, or family emergencies. Any additional activity (sports, musicals, dramas, forensics, etc) which is **voluntary** on your part will require you to say to that supervisor, coach, or director that you have only a certain number of allowable absences from a prior commitment, which is the Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses. If you want to audition for a school musical or play, remember that your **prior commitment** is to the GRSYC. This means you will need to be organized with your schedule. Write in GRSYC rehearsal times and concert dates. Write in your school concert dates and exam schedule. Look at the calendar before you plan a vacation. Thank you for your commitment to excellence, which can only be accomplished when we are all together!

REHEARSALS

Come prepared to listen, to work, and to sing. We have only limited time 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.