



Handbook of General Information 2019-2020

Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Chorus

P.O. Box 68665

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

www.GRSYC.org

616-881-2560

Our Mission Statement:

Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Chorus 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 Chorus 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

Conductors, Youth Chorus & Junior Youth Chorus

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

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

Conductor, Prelude Choruses

Renee Vande Wege (616) 232-6148 Renee@grsyc.org

Choir Manager

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

Assistant Choir Director

Aaron Polet Aaron@grsyc.org

616 610-7304

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
Mary Tuuk, President and CEO
Diane Lobbestael, Vice President for Development

Dear GRSYC musicians and families,

Welcome back to another wonderful season with the Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses! We are so happy you have decided to join us - some for the first time, others for their second, third.... or 12th season! The Youth Choruses continue to provide singers and families with wonderful musical experiences in an atmosphere which recognizes the unique gifts of every individual. Our goal is that every child will feel welcome, safe, and part of the GRSYC family.

The Youth Choruses were well represented by 53 singers this past June on our tour to Iceland. It was a wonderful trip.... A beautiful location, great audiences at every venue, and LOTS of sun. You can view a video on YouTube created by Glen Okonoski - just search GRSYC Iceland 2019. I mention this because we try to travel internationally every three years... be looking for an announcement about our next destination sometime this year!

This past year, Jackie Schoon resigned from her position as conductor of Junior Youth Chorus. We are sad to see Jackie go. She has been a vital part of our organization from the beginning, and has taken JYC to tremendous artistic heights. But we also know that her ongoing teaching career will ever include inspiring young people to love music and develop musicianship skills. Jackie cannot help but be an amazing teacher.

With Jackie's resignation comes a slight re-structuring of the GRSYC staff. Sean and Leah Ivory have been named Co-Directors of GRSYC and will continue to work with the Youth Chorus. In addition, Sean and Leah will co-direct the Junior Youth Chorus this year. A process is underway to determine a permanent director of JYC. Renee Vande Wege will return as director of Prelude Chorus. Holly Okonoski will continue as the GRSYC Manager. Aaron Polet has been added to our staff as an assistant director for all the choruses.

This year includes many events which, by now, are familiar to GRSYC families: Holiday Pops, our family concerts, the Christmas concert in December, a National Anthem performance at a Griffins game, etc. New this year is an exciting event in March. To commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Grand Rapids Symphony, the choral division of GRS will present a Choral Celebration on March 15 at the Calvin University (yes, it's a university now!) Covenant Fine Arts Center. This promises to be a wonderful artistic experience for all of our singers. Each choir will have the opportunity to be accompanied by the Grand Rapids Symphony. We are looking forward to this tremendous collaboration.

As always, we are looking forward to a fantastic season of music making with the singers of the Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses!

Sincerely,

GRSYC staff

PRELUDE CHORUS (Grades 1-3)

Director, Renee Vande Wege, Renee@grsyc.org

- Tuition: \$400
- Rehearsals: Thursdays, 5:00-6:00PM at Calvin College in room 125
- 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)

Co-Directors, Sean Ivory, Sean@grsyc.org and **Leah Ivory**, Leah@grsyc.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 (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)

Co-Directors, Sean Ivory, Sean@grsync.org and **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

We accept payment by credit or debit card only. Payment Options:

- 1) One Payment in full, 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

Please complete a the credit card 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, email it to Holly 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/CANCELATIONS

If Calvin University 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 University, 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 and Youth Chorus families, please communicate directly with Mrs. Ivory. You should copy Holly on any absences. Contact information is on page 2 of this handbook.

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 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.

