

University of Michigan Arts Chorale

2009 Winter Term
ENS 351

John Trotter, Conductor
Alejandro Manso, Assistant Conductor
Brandon Straub, Pianist

Fall Semester Calendar:

Rehearsals: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00-6:00 p.m. in Aud 4 of the MLB.

Special Events ***required***:

Arts Chorale Retreat Saturday, January 24, 1:30-5:30 pm
Huron Hills Baptist Church, 3150 Glazier Way, Ann Arbor
Pre-Hill Concert Ann Arbor Choral Exchange: Saturday, March 14, call time 6:30 pm.
Huron Hills Baptist Church, 3150 Glazier Way, Ann Arbor
Dress Rehearsal: Sunday, March 22. 6:30 pm call, done at 10. Hill Auditorium, with orch.
Concert: Tuesday, March 24. Hill Auditorium (regular meeting at 4 pm in MLB,
dinner break 5:30-6:30, 6:30 call in Hill Auditorium. Concert at 8 pm.)

Ensemble Goals:

1. Experience: We, as a group, will experience music of various styles and cultures as fully engaged musicians, not as passive consumers. These experiences will stretch each of us technically, musically, intellectually, and emotionally.
2. Education: Our current levels of musical education, knowledge, and skill will be enhanced as we study music reading, phrasing, diction, vocal technique, breathing, and the many other facets of choral music. We will encounter texts from a variety of cultures and social contexts, and will strive to bring the composer's work to light through effective interpretation and presentation.
3. Enjoyment! Choral music is not only a unique way to share our humanity, but it can be a *lot* of fun. Singing is a courageous and generous act. Please ensure that appropriate respect is shown to your colleagues at all times through active and constructive participation.

Concert Dress:

MEN: white dress shirt (long-sleeved), black bow tie, black pants, black socks, and black dress shoes. Please, no cologne.

WOMEN: Black blouse (3/4 sleeves or longer), Black skirt (mid-calf or longer) or flowing pants, and black closed-toe shoes. Please, no perfume.

Dues

Dues of \$45 (of which \$10 is a music deposit, which you may receive as a refund after your last semester) are payable if this is your first semester in Arts Chorale, \$35 if you are a returning member.

Policies:

Arts Chorale is both a one-credit class offered through the School of Music and a student organization registered with MSA. You have the option of registering for Arts Chorale (ENS 351). The course may be repeated for credit. LSA students should note that AC counts toward your creative expression requirement.

Whether or not you are registered in the course for credit, the success of this ensemble is based upon active participation during rehearsals. Your time and talent are among the greatest assets you bring to Arts Chorale. Missing rehearsal(s) WILL affect the entire group. Therefore, please note that:

1. Rehearsals will begin on time. Each member is expected to be seated appropriately and ready to sing (ie. with music in order and pencil in hand) at 4:10.
2. Regular attendance is expected. Attendance records are kept by the executive committee, and unexcused absences are subject to the attendance policy. If you have more than three absences, you will unfortunately not be able to sing in the concert: if in doubt, stay in touch with the executive committee about your attendance record!
3. If you are taking the course for credit: after two (2) unexcused absences, no credit will be given for the course. Two (2) tardies will count as one absence. Late arrive of more than 20 minutes will be considered an absence.
4. It is your responsibility to discuss with the conductor at the start of term:
 - a) any conflicts you may have with special events (listed above)
 - b) any *ongoing* scheduling conflicts you may have with regular rehearsals.
5. Absences/tardies from regular rehearsals will only be excused due to:
 - Emergency (the success of this excuse is a highly unusual event contingent on other highly unusual events)
 - Documented school obligation such as an exam (must provide syllabus and date of exam two weeks prior to the test date)
 - Illness with medical verification
 - Religious observances
6. All concerts and dress rehearsals are mandatory. Missing the dress rehearsal will result in not singing in the concert. If the course is taken for credit, a grade of F will be assigned in this case.

Expectations:

Rehearsing and performing choral music requires complete mental focus and physical engagement. Students are expected to demonstrate total commitment to the ensemble and respect to their colleagues in rehearsal by:

1. Arriving early to be seated with pencil in hand and music in order by 4:10.
Everything we do, we do together. The time we share in rehearsal is by far our most important resource.
2. Maintaining excellent seated or standing posture in rehearsal.
Singing is a whole-body exercise using both voluntary and involuntary muscles. Balanced posture is essential to good breathing and support, and enables both beauty and stamina in performance. It is a non-negotiable element of choral training.
3. Refraining from speaking during rehearsal.
Choral music is art in sound, and is vocal and verbal by nature. Rehearsal is a fast-paced environment which demands a great deal of the singer's listening, memory, and analytical skills. It is unacceptable for a singer to have to deal with the distraction of competing conversation. If you have a question, please ask the conductor for clarification or simply wait until the matter is clarified in due course.
4. Following along in the music when not singing.
Frequently, your section will be asked immediately to join in where another section is already singing, or will be expected to apply directions given to them to your own part. Your ability to make these adjustments "on the fly" is essential to efficient rehearsal.
5. Learning your music on time.
You will be provided with a "performance-ready schedule" which lists when each piece and movement is "due", and where applicable, the date by which it is to be memorized. On or after this date, you must be prepared to sing this piece as part of a small group when called on during rehearsal.
6. Breathing fully (and early) *every time* and maintaining breath support throughout the phrase. Maintain ribcage expansion while breathing and singing. Maintain a free, open throat at all times.
7. Striving for perfect unison.
Beautiful unison requires:
 - unified vowels: constantly work to improve, clarify, and beautify your vowels. Compared with speech, good singing vowels will feel exaggerated.
 - fine-tuned pitch: any top-notch choral group habitually makes minor pitch adjustments as a matter of course. Ask yourself: "have I adjusted my pitch lately?"
 - open listening: expand listening effort especially at phrase endings and cadential points.
 - adequate breath support (see #6)
 - excellent posture (see #2)
 - correct diphthongs: when pronouncing a diphthong, the primary vowel is elongated.
 - avoidance of excessive vibrato

A good rule of thumb is: NEVER ASSUME – ALWAYS LISTEN

8. Bringing the music alive.

Each choir member must use his or her own creative intelligence, imagination, initiative, and artistic intuition. Work for living, well proportioned and beautifully contoured phrases. A musical phrase is always *becoming*, it is never static.

“Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent”

- Victor Hugo