



Guelph Youth Singers

Building Choral Excellence in Our Community

2019 2020 Handbook of General Information

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*Please put this book in a place where you
will find it for future reference!*

Mission Statement: To develop the artistic soul and musical skills of children and youth through exposure to professional instructors, diverse repertoire and performance experiences; to instill in young singers a love of choral music, and a joy of singing and performing together; to provide the general public with enjoyable choral performances of the highest calibre.

Contact Information

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Welcome to Guelph Youth Singers!

Guelph Youth Singers is a community choir that provides opportunities for talented children within Guelph and surrounding counties to sing and enhance their skills in musical knowledge and theory, to foster personal friendships, to hone social skills and develop performance ability.

The GYS Experience:

- *Weekly rehearsals with training in vocal technique, repertoire, theory and sight-singing*
- *Weekend workshops with professionals*
- *Social and learning weekends with other exceptional choirs*
- *Performance opportunities with professional musicians in some of Ontario's best venues.*
- *The opportunity to sing with Guelph's prestigious and national award-winning choir.*
- *Qualified families can receive bursaries to assist with program fees as funds permit.*

GYS Structure

GYS is a non-profit corporation and a licensed charitable organization. As such, it is managed by a Board of Directors comprised of parents and community members. The annual budget is \$190,000, of which twenty percent is generated through a variety of fund-raising efforts. The remainder consists of choir fees, grants and other income generated through performances.

As with most non-profit organizations, GYS relies on the time and talents of many volunteers. Every parent is expected to help out in the organization. There are many opportunities available, so with little effort, parents can find something to fit their abilities and available time. *Please see the sheet on volunteering enclosed in this package for more information.*

Some areas for involvement include:

- Helping out at rehearsals, workshops and performances
- Publicity and fund-raising
- Social media support
- Assisting with theory marking, memory testing, and other music education activities
- Music library
- Uniforms
- Administrative assistance

Parents' Start-Up Meeting and Annual General Meeting

Each year begins with a Start-Up Meeting, to be held this year on Wednesday, Sept. 11 from 6:00-7:00 pm in the Recital Hall of the GYMC. Parents are urged to attend and choristers are welcome.

This meeting will include:

- A snapshot of the coming season
- Details on volunteer opportunities
- A presentation of the unaudited financial statement from the previous year as required by our corporate structure
- A chance to meet with one another, ask questions, arrange car-pooling, etc.

Choir I Information

Rehearsals are Tuesdays from 4:00-5:45 pm. Educational activities are available from 4:00 pm onwards, and all choristers should arrive by 4:15 pm. Choir I is for children aged 6 and up who are able to maintain a fairly consistent head tone (if this is a term new to you, you will soon understand it!) and can reach a high F fairly easily. Theory instruction is also integrated into the rehearsal. Theory homework is optional in this choir, but available to all choristers.

Choir II Information

Rehearsals: Tuesdays from 6:00-8:00 pm. Sight-singing, memory and skills testing activities for all choristers at 6:00 p.m. Choir II is open to singers between the ages of 8 and 12. In Choir II, a chorister will start to read music from their own vocal score, be able to sing confidently in two or three-part harmony, and begin to understand and embody the power and beauty of their newly-maturing voice. Singers will participate in Sectional Tutorials on alternating weeks with Voice Coach Marion Samuel-Stevens. Festivals and workshops highlight a season filled with local performances and collaborations. After the success of our musical 'fun project' in the past two seasons, Choir II will again become the principal performers in the Junior Musical to be presented in the spring. (Expectations: Full participation in our Theory program, and recommended private lessons with one of the GYS recognized voice coaches.)

Choir III: Cantabile Choir Information

Rehearsals: Wednesdays from 6:00-8:10 pm. Welcome to Choir III. You are now a Senior Chorister in GYS. Cantabile is a singer's introduction to the senior stream of choirs. With that comes an artistic adventure like no other. Fantastic music, workshops, thrilling performance opportunities, and touring are some of the benefits from participating in this advanced ensemble. Singers will participate in Sectional Tutorials on alternating weeks with Voice Coach Marion Samuel-Stevens. Cantabile joins Chamber Choir to form **Choir III**, most recently touring New York, Alberta, Canada's Maritime provinces and British Columbia.

(Prerequisite: Audition and significant advancement in the GYS Theory program).

Choir III: Chamber Choir Information

Chamber Choir rehearses on Wednesdays from 6:50 to 9:10 pm, joining with Cantabile Choir from 6:50-8:10 pm. Open to high school singers by audition or invitation, Chamber Choir sings the most challenging repertoire. All singers will have completed the entire Theory and Sight Singing program and work at an accelerated level. This ensemble is a perennial winner at Provincial and National festivals and exemplifies the best of the choral arts. Chamber Choir combines with Cantabile to form **Choir III**, our touring choir.

(Prerequisite: Completion of Theory program, and audition or invitation. Chamber Choir is *not* considered a Core Choir).

SATB Information - BACK THIS SEASON

SATB Choir rehearses on Wednesday afternoons from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. This provincial and national award-winning mixed voice ensemble of 12-16 singers is open to changed or changing male voices and senior level treble voices. Contemporary collegiate a cappella repertoire is balanced with more traditional music to make this diverse ensemble a significant group in Canada's Mixed Voice Youth Choir scene.

(Prerequisite: Completion of Theory program. Numbers will vary to accommodate a balance in voice parts).

Music Theatre Academy Information

Rehearsals: Sundays from 2:00-5:00 pm. A weekly three-hour session will include solo and group work in music, drama, and dance, preparing performers for post-secondary schooling, an advantage in auditions for theatre and musicals, or simply as an elevated high-intensity training program. Guest clinicians will include professionals from the Stratford Festival, the Confidential Music Theatre Project, and the Toronto theatre, dance and opera world. Participants will work on monologues and vocal solos, improvisation, stage combat, various dance styles, theatre tech, ensemble singing and group scene work. The season will be highlighted by performance opportunities and a year-end staged presentation.

(Prerequisite: Audition and membership in GYS core choirs II, III, sheVoce or Young Men's Ensemble. Grade 12 students may join the Music Theatre Academy without registration in GYS choirs.)

General Choir Information

Auditions & Re-Auditions

Entrance into GYS is dependent on a selective audition to determine placement and readiness for the Choir. In order to assess strengths and weaknesses, the Music Director will, at his discretion, re-audition current choristers who may want to move to another choir within GYS.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals for the entire season are scheduled as far in advance as possible, though changes are sometimes necessary. All rehearsals and events, including workshops, festivals and dress rehearsals, are not optional. Please review the section on commitment for full details and expectations.

Arriving at Rehearsal

Upon arrival at GYMC, choristers should sign-in and hand in theory workbooks which will be marked at rehearsal and should be picked up by the chorister before going home. Please be sure that your chorister arrives on time, that is, **at least 10 minutes early**, in order to hand in items, pick-up music, greet friends, and be ready to sing!

Pre-Rehearsal Activities

Educational activities may include theory flashcards and skills testing. Using theory flashcards that support the theory workbooks, choristers review musical concepts in pairs or with mentors or parent volunteers. Individual skills testing may involve: singing along with hand sign patterns, keyboard tasks, memorization of texts, interval singing, sight-singing, etc. All these skills support good choral singing and skills building.

Absences

Choristers should miss rehearsals only for illness. Please use the contact number on the front cover to let us know your chorister is ill. If a chorister is absent and no phone call has been received, the chorister's home will be contacted to let them know their chorister has not arrived. If a chorister is not contagious and feels well enough to come and listen, he/she is encouraged to attend rehearsal to benefit from the instruction that the Conductor gives. If a chorister misses two rehearsals or more in any term for reasons other than sickness, they may be asked to leave the choir. No refund of any fees will be given in this case. Unavoidable conflicts other than illness sometimes arise (such as Royal Conservatory Examinations) and in that case, the Artistic Director should be contacted in advance, in writing (email is great!), and given the reason for the projected absence, with a copy of the notification being given to the Administrator.

Weekly Memos

A weekly, choir-specific memo is sent around by email each Friday. Memos contain notes from the conductor as well as event and fundraising details. ***They should be read immediately as some items are time sensitive.*** Memos are the communication life-line of the choir. Older choristers will also be on email distribution lists and there is an expectation that they will read and respond to memo items.

Theory Programme

All members of Choir II, and some members of Choir III, must complete theory homework. It is optional for choristers in Choir I; *however, any chorister who is entering Choir II must have completed Book 1 before entering or in September.*

The theory and ear training programme has been a popular and successful part of GYS and a key component in building choral excellence. The programme helps choristers to understand the theory behind sight-singing and to read with both solfa syllables and intervals. Each workbook is supported by a CD or by online access, with tracks corresponding to each lesson. The workbooks are written to be a specific aid to building sight-singing skills and the theory understanding needed to support choral singing. They are not intended to replace a full keyboard theory programme, and there are skills included that are not developed in a keyboard programme.

The programme of workbooks used by GYS choristers is called *A Young Singers' Journey*. The five levels of workbooks are sold through GYS at the office or rehearsals for **\$25** each. Most choristers should complete approximately two books during the season. The books are marked weekly by parent volunteers and mentors. Theory coaching is available during pre-rehearsal activity (Choir I) and during the early part of Choir II rehearsals. If a chorister has been having difficulty with certain concepts, the chorister may be asked to redo all, or part, of a workbook before proceeding to the next one.

Vocal Coaching

Guelph Youth Singers no longer offers private lessons as a part of our formal programming. We still see the value of this incredible resource for all of our singers, but as a choir organization, need to focus our efforts on offering the highest level of choral education, and maximize the singers' time together as an ensemble.

Expertise in developing the healthiest singers is paramount in producing great choirs, and Markus and Heather keep vocal pedagogy at the forefront of all of their teaching. Choir II and Cantabile will continue their relationship with our head vocal coach, Marion Samuel-Stevens, as she is involved in our weekly rehearsals, leading sectionals and assisting Markus in the healthy development of our young singers.

GYS urges *all* members of GYS to consider incorporating private vocal lessons in your schedule. Marion Samuel-Stevens and Angela Monkhouse will continue to be our 'in-house' teachers, meaning that they are our preferred teachers on hand, but lessons will be negotiated privately between families and the individual vocal coach. We all know how outstanding Marion and Angela have been as teachers in GYS, and we hope everyone will continue our relationship with these fantastic artists.

The greatest advantage to you is that you can now schedule lessons that are longer than 10 minutes in duration! Please feel free to contact both Marion and Angela at the addresses below. We encourage you to do this ASAP as their schedules will book up quickly with singers wanting longer lessons.

Marion Samuel-Stevens: marionss@edgarkent.ca

Angela Monkhouse: mrswheelhouse@gmail.com

Homework and Practice Tracks

Practicing at home reinforces what has been done at rehearsal and accelerates the learning of both notes and words. It also helps the ear to develop much more quickly than can be achieved in just one rehearsal per week. Recordings of repertoire are sent out on Dropbox (or CD if requested) for choristers where needed and as time permits. These aids should be used for practice with the music to improve music reading and accuracy. All Choir I & II and most Choir III music is memorized for performances and should be memorized as early as possible in each term. *Please note that GYS practice CDs are considered GYS property and must be returned at the end of each term.*

Music

Music is a major expense for GYS. To keep costs down, GYS has established a cooperative arrangement with other choirs. Lost or damaged music is a major problem and threatens our ability to borrow from other choirs. Markings on the music must be limited to neat, easily erased markings and only those relevant to music. To reduce wear, tear and loss, music should always be kept in the music bags and/or folders.

Please note that lost or damaged music will result in a replacement charge of at least \$5 per piece of music, to allow for the cost of the piece of music, shipping charges, and possible administrative charges from a supplier. These replacement charges must be paid before registration can be accepted for a subsequent year. A deposit of \$30 for music is required at the beginning of the season.

GYS Uniform

All GYS choristers should have a GYS polo shirt. Choir I & Choir II choristers have the option of also purchase a GYS t-shirt. A GYS hoodie is optional for all choristers except those in Choir III (who must purchase one as part of the touring choir). An order form from Minuteman Press will be given out at the first rehearsal so that families can order and purchase these shirts. In addition, Choir III/sheVoce girls purchase a formal concert uniform which consists of a $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeve blue top and black palazzo pants. These are sewn by a local seamstress and require a fitting either during the summer or first thing in September. A \$50 cash deposit is required at the fitting with a \$100 charge applied when the outfit is completed. Choir III/Young Men's Ensemble boys purchase their own plain, black dress shirts (with black buttons) & black dress pants. A \$15 deposit cheque is required at registration for the loan of a GYS tie. Choir I & II choristers perform in the GYS polo shirt with their own plain, black dress pants. All choirs wear black socks/hose and black dress shoes.

Performances

Performances are always an exciting event for choristers. At the major concerts of the season, there is a dress rehearsal, either the evening before or on the day of the concert, followed by the concert in the evening of the concert date. Choristers who miss the dress rehearsal or are not considered ready to perform may be asked to sit out a concert. Lack of attendance, tardiness, and not having music prepared can all affect a singer's performance at rehearsals and concerts.

Retreats, Workshops, Festivals and School Concerts

One-day fun music carnival for Choirs I and II, and an overnight camp for Choir III, are held in the fall of each year. These camps, a mix of social and musical activity, are a great way for choristers to get to know one another and to get a jump-start on the season's music. A fall over night camps are being held at Camp Ki Wa Y for Choir III. A camp bus will provide transportation both to the camp and back again from the Guelph Youth Music Centre. Payment for the carnival and camp is included in the registration fees.

Workshops and festivals are held on weekends in a variety of locations. They often include guest choirs, a guest conductor or a drama coach. Workshops are held for the fun of interacting musically and socially with other children's choirs and with new conductors. For Choirs II and III these events may involve bussing out of town. Payment for retreats, workshops and festivals is included in the registration fees.

Choir Tours

Touring allows the choir to grow musically. Choristers benefit from the extra performance opportunities, as well as from hearing other choirs. The choristers enjoy social activities, are well supervised, and broaden their musical experience. To allow for tour fundraising and exceptional touring opportunities, Choir III choristers will have the opportunity to go on a choir exchange or tour every other season. 2019/2020 is a tour season.

Chorister's Commitment

Choristers are required to sign their registration form to indicate their commitment

- ***To be at every rehearsal and concert, in place and ready to sing on time, with all music and two pencils***
- ***To read and/or have parents read all memos immediately***
- ***To participate cheerfully in all rehearsals, concert and fundraising activities***
- ***To acknowledge that they are now members of Guelph Youth Singers and must act professionally at all times***

GYS choristers, when with the Choir, are always representing themselves, their families, and the Choir. GYS strives for a high standard of behaviour, in addition to a high standard of performance. A Code of Behaviour is below, and choristers are asked to read it and accept it as being part of the commitment that they are signing on the registration form.

Chorister's Code of Conduct

The chorister's signature on the registration form indicates an agreement to abide by the following Code of Behaviour.

Be aware at all times of the professional image of the Choir and behave in a dignified and respectful manner. Each chorister represents Guelph Youth Singers.

Be courteous to chaperones, staff, other volunteers and other choristers.

Rules to be followed at any GYS event:

- Choristers must always be in the care of a chaperone. Any leeway for high school aged choristers is allowed only at the discretion of the head chaperone and the conductor. Choristers must not wander away from the group at any time.
- Gum and junk food are not permitted at any choir event, including rehearsals.
- Electronic devices are not permitted at any choir event, including rehearsals.
- No cell phones are allowed unless there has been prior communication between the parents and head chaperones about their usage.
- Uniforms must be worn respectfully: intact and not in combination with other clothes.
- Discreet makeup is permitted for older choristers.
- Any jewelry or ornamentation worn onstage must be discreet.
- Choir uniform items must be worn at all designated times to identify choristers as members of GYS.

Discipline: Any chorister whose behaviour is deemed to be out of line with this code may be prevented from taking part in a Choir event or from touring, or may be sent home from a tour at their parent's expense.

At all times choristers must be concerned with the safety, well-being, image and professionalism of the entire choir and every individual chorister. If there is a question about the appropriateness of any action, or some other matter that needs to be addressed, choristers should speak to the conductor or the head chaperone.

Parent's Commitment

The parent's signature on the registration form indicates an agreement to the following:

I have read the enclosed registration documents and other information provided and have signed the registration form to indicate that I agree to participate as stated below:

- to support my child by making it possible for him/her to be in attendance and on time for every rehearsal and concert
- to keep track of all information received through memos, emails or phone calls
- to participate in fundraising as I am able
- to be an active volunteer for the organization.

I understand that from time to time, GYS choristers and parents have photos and videos taken for promotional or other purposes and, unless I notify GYS in writing to the contrary, I consent to such photos and videos being taken of me and/or my child. We ask for your help with safeguarding our children and our art by not videotaping or photographing our concerts. I realize that Guelph Youth Singers will act carefully and thoughtfully on my child's behalf at all times. With that understanding, I release Guelph Youth Singers from any liability with regard to accidents that may happen while I am, or my child is, participating in Guelph Youth Singers activities.

Guelph Youth Singers' Commitment

GYS is committed to creating a positive, safe environment for our choristers and staff. The intention of the GYS Safety and Protection Policy is to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to protect the members and supporters of Guelph Youth Singers and to ensure that proper steps are taken in the event that an incident is reported.

Membership: When choristers join GYS, the following information is required: the chorister's name and that of their parent(s) or guardian(s), mailing address, phone number, email address, emergency contact and medical information for use in the absence of the parent(s) or guardian(s). The mailing address is where notices, registration packages and other pertinent mailings are sent. If a donation is made, the mailing address is required on the tax receipt by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

GYS Privacy Policy

Guelph Youth Singers is committed to protecting the privacy of the personal information of its members, board of directors, employees, web-users and other stakeholders. GYS does not sell, trade, or give out its membership mailing lists. During the course of its various programs and services, GYS frequently gathers and uses personal information. Anyone from whom such information is collected may expect that it will be carefully protected and that any use of, or other dealing with, this information is subject to consent.

Personal Information Defined: Personal information is any information that can be used to distinguish, identify or contact a specific individual. This information can include an individual's opinions or beliefs, as well as facts about, or related to, the individual. Business contact information and certain publicly available information, such as names, addresses and telephone numbers as published in telephone directories are not considered personal information.

Privacy Practices: Personal information gathered by Guelph Youth Singers is kept in confidence. Only authorized GYS personnel, or those assigned by GYS personnel, have access to this information based only on their need to deal with the information for the reason(s) for which it was obtained. Safeguards are in place to ensure that the information is not disclosed or shared more widely than is necessary to achieve the purpose for which it was gathered. Personal information that is no longer required to fulfill the stated purpose will be destroyed or made anonymous (for example: emergency contact and medical information).

Financial Information

GYS Fee Structure and Fundraisers

The costs associated with sustaining the extent and quality of GYS programming are high, but GYS works hard to keep fees as low as possible. The fundraising commitment is in place to make choir membership financially feasible for most families. Families who choose to take part in certain designated fundraisers earn fundraising credits. The designated fundraising event for the 2010/20 season is:

- Fundscrip (50% of the money earned for GYS by your gift card purchases go toward your fundraising credit)

Another designated fundraiser may be added during the choir season. *Please refer to the separate Fundraising page in the registration package for a more detailed explanation of the designated fundraisers.*

What your fees and fundraising pays for:

- *Instruction from accomplished and highly skilled conductors*
- *Rehearsals in an acoustically superior venue*
- *Theory and sight-singing instruction*
- *Fall retreat experience in a country setting*
- *Professional accompaniment*
- *Rental of original choral music*
- *Kiwanis Festival participation*
- *Programme administration.*

At the time of writing (June 2019), we have done our best to include all known expenses in the payment form, but wish to advise chorister families that during the season schedule changes (such as unplanned events) may require separate charging. A few known upcoming expenses to be aware of are:

- Music theory workbooks : \$25 each published book

A full refund (less membership fee of \$50) will be made to parents of choristers who withdraw in writing from the choir prior to the Choir's third rehearsal of the season. After this time, there will be no refunds. At the discretion of the conductor an exception can be made for boys who are no longer able to sing in a treble choir.

On the registration payments form, you are given the option of paying your fees by:

- 1) submission of 9 post-dated cheques (dated from September 1, 2019 to May 1, 2020 inclusive.)
- 2) paying the entire amount owed for the upcoming choir year on September 1, 2019.
- 3) splitting the total into 2 installments post-dated September 1, 2019 and January 1, 2020.

Post-dated cheques must accompany the registration form. All cheques are made payable to Guelph Youth Singers. There is a charge of \$37 for all returned cheques; \$30 of which will be channeled to the GYS Bursary Fund, and the remaining \$7 will be for bank charges. We highly encourage you to return your completed registration documents with the required post-dated cheques as soon as possible. All post-dated cheques and completed registration documents must be received by the administrator prior to a chorister being able to participate in rehearsals.

"New-Chorister" Incentive for GYS Families

GYS families will receive a \$50 fee credit for each new chorister that registers with GYS in the 2019/20 season as a result of their recruitment. This credit will be issued at the end of the GYS season.

Scholarships

GYS accepts applications for scholarships from promising students of vocal music seeking to pursue the GYS educational opportunity. The applicant should demonstrate superior musical and vocal ability, dedication to choral music, and general qualities of good citizenship. Choristers should send a letter detailing their musical experience and studies to date, and their involvement in the community to the administrative office by August 31. The Artistic Director will make a recommendation to the Board which will determine the recipient and value of the scholarship to be awarded. Scholarships will not necessarily be awarded each year.

Bursaries

GYS accepts applications for bursaries based on financial need and the availability of bursary funds.

Choristers and/or parents should submit an application form, available from the Choir administrator. The application should be returned to the Choir office. All applications will be reviewed by the Bursary Committee **in confidence**.