

Golden Gate International Children's and Youth Choral Festival

July 13 - 18, 2026

Syllabus:
Information and Instructions

Version: April 2025

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Festival Mission and Vision

The mission of the Golden Gate International Children's and Youth Choral Festival ("Festival") is to promote international harmony through song and competition. To this purpose, the Festival:

- retains world-renowned conductors and adjudicators to lead the Massed Festival Choirs, and to provide critical evaluations of competing choirs
- engages children and youth from around the world in a multicultural musical experience
- creates performance opportunities that encourage cultural understanding and appreciation
- engages the East Bay community in cultural exchange through providing homestays for visiting choir members and festival concert attendance
- provides structured, friendly competitions emphasizing feedback to choirs and soloists to promote musical growth

2026 Schedule

Please refer to the updated schedule on the Golden Gate Festival Website: https://www.piedmontchoirs.org/golden-gate-international-festival/category/Schedule

Festival Activities

Festival participants enjoy a variety of activities that foster interaction with other participants while taking in the astounding beauty of the San Francisco Bay Area. Scheduled activities include Festival Chorus rehearsals, competitions, concerts, a cruise of San Francisco Bay, a singers' dance, and a conductors' banquet.

Housing

All international choir members 20 years of age (at the time of the Festival) and younger are guaranteed housing (billeting) with local families from **Sunday evening, July 12 through Sunday morning, July 19, 2026**. All domestic choirs may request billeting with local families, however, billeting for these choirs is on a space available basis. *Choirs are only eligible for housing if all registration materials are submitted and all fees paid by the deadlines set.* Information regarding "Festival" hotels will be sent to all participating choirs. Choirs will need to make their own housing arrangements at a hotel for singers ages 21 and up, as well as for all adult staff and chaperones.

Hospitality

Each choir will be assigned a Festival liaison to assist with local arrangements and to answer questions. The liaisons will be available by email before the festival, and by phone and email during the festival.

Transportation

Travel arrangements to and from the Festival are the responsibility of each visiting choir, including airport transfers, taxes, and tips. The Festival Administrator will be available to assist choirs in arranging transit reservations to-and-from airports. During the Festival, transportation to and from all Festival special events will be provided for billeted choirs only. The Festival can assist with booking bus transportation during the Festival week, rental cars, and other transportation needs.

Please call +1.510.547.4441 or email afegbeitel-finn@piedmontchoirs.org for information and assistance.

Age Requirements

Choirs and vocal soloists competing in the Youth category must be 25 years old or younger (date of birth on or after July 18, 2000). Choirs and vocal soloists competing in the children's categories must be 16 years old or younger (date of birth on or after July 18, 2009). 10% non-conforming allowed. Evidence of birth date may be requested at or before the time of the Festival.

Competitions

COMPETITION	REQUIRED or OPTIONAL	ADJUDICATION
Historical Competition ● Children's Choir Category & ● Youth Choir Category	Required	Adjudicated with the *Folk Competition* during a 25-minute Competition Concert. Three pieces required (see p.6 for more information)
Folk Competition ● Children's Choir Category & ● Youth Choir Category	Required	Adjudicated with the *Historical Competition* during a 25-minute Competition Concert. Two pieces required (see p.5 for more information)
Contemporary Competition ● Children's & Youth choirs compete in the same category	Optional	Each choir performs 2 selections, not to exceed 15 minutes of total music.
Gospel/Spiritual Competition ● Children's & Youth choirs compete in the same category	Optional	Each choir performs 2 selections, not to exceed 12 minutes of total music.
Vocal Solo Competition ● Children's Category & ● Youth Category	Optional	Each competitor performs 2 selections, not to exceed 8 minutes of total music.

All choirs will participate in the required *Historical* and *Folk Competitions*. Children's Choirs and Youth Choirs are evaluated in separate divisions. The Festival invites all choirs to participate in additional categories.

Choirs may choose to perform in optional competitions for *Contemporary Music* and *Gospel/Spiritual Music.* There is no distinction between Children's and Youth divisions for these categories.

Individuals may compete in the optional *Vocal Solo Competitions.* **Each choir may enter up to three soloists.** Children and Youth singers are evaluated in separate divisions. Competitors must meet the *Age Requirements* and be amateur singers. If there is any question as to a singer's amateur standing, please contact the Festival office prior to the Festival. The Festival reserves the right to determine this status.

The *Historical* and *Folk Competitions* are adjudicated at public *Competition Concerts.* Each Choir will have a 25-minute performance time during the concert. Embedded in the performance will be three pieces for the *Historical Competition* and two pieces for the *Folk Competition.* **Choirs are encouraged to add additional repertoire to their set to complete their 25-minute performance, but only the 5 pieces selected for the *Folk* and *Historical Competitions* will be evaluated by the jury.**

The Festival does not provide accompanists for choirs or soloists for any competitions.

Historical Competition

a) Each competitor will perform one selection from three of the following historical periods: Medieval/Renaissance (c.1000-1600), Baroque (c. 1600-1750), Classical (c. 1750-1820), or Romantic (c. 1820 - 1900), and 20th Century (c. 1900-2000).

b) All selections should be original compositions (arrangements are not acceptable).

c) At least one of the selections must be unaccompanied.

d) Timing for the entire competitive program (three historical pieces, two folk pieces, and any additional repertoire) must not exceed 25 minutes. Each of the selections will be timed from the beginning of the musical score to the conclusion of that piece. The jury will ignore any part of the performance that exceeds the time limit.

Folk Competition

a) Each competitor will perform two contrasting folk songs from non-classical styles, one of which must be drawn from the choir's own country, language area or cultural environment.

b) At least one of the selections must be unaccompanied.

c) Choreography and/or costumes may be used to enhance performance.

d) No microphones or electronic accompaniment may be used.

e) Timing for the entire competitive program (three historical pieces, two folk pieces, and any additional repertoire) must not exceed 25 minutes. Each of the selections will be timed from the beginning of the musical score to the conclusion of that piece. The jury will ignore any part of the performance that exceeds the time limit.

Contemporary Competition

a) Each competitor will perform two compositions.

1) A piece written after 1945
2) A piece written after 2016, in any contemporary classical style.

b) At least one of the compositions must be unaccompanied.

c) At least one of the compositions must employ innovative compositional techniques, such as non-traditional harmony and chromaticism, clusters, glissandi, alternative vocal techniques, aleatoric elements, complex rhythms, etc.

d) Timing for the two selections should not exceed **15 minutes**. Each of the selections will be timed from the beginning of the musical score to the conclusion of that piece. The jury will ignore any part of the performance that exceeds the time limit.

e) Choral music from jazz, musical theater, or popular traditions is not permitted in this category.

Gospel/Spiritual Competition

a) Each competitor will perform two contrasting songs from the African-American Spiritual and/or Gospel traditions.

b) At least one of the selections must be unaccompanied.

c) Choreography and/or costumes may be used to enhance performance.

d) One handheld microphone will be available for soloists. No electronic accompaniment may be used.

e) Timing for the two selections should not exceed **12 minutes**. Each of the selections will be timed from the beginning of the musical score to the conclusion of that piece. The jury will ignore any part of the performance that exceeds the time limit.

Vocal Solo Competition

a) Each competitor will perform two contrasting pieces.

1) A selection from the classical repertoire.
2) A selection from the folk song repertoire.

b) Both selections must be memorized.

c) Timing for the two selections should not exceed **8 minutes**. Each of the selections will be timed from the beginning of the musical score to the conclusion of that piece. The jury will ignore any part of the performance that exceeds the time limit.

Adjudication

Competitions will be evaluated by an international jury. Scoring will be done using the recognized international system of points for bronze, silver, and gold standings.

The winner of each competition category will be chosen only if one or more choirs meet the gold standard. If more than one choir reaches the gold standard, the jury will select the competition category winner based upon the aggregate point totals.

The results of the competitions will be announced following the conclusion of jury deliberations, and before the dress rehearsal for the Festival Grand Finale Concert. In addition to the trophy awarded for First Place in each category, additional choirs may receive bronze, silver, or gold certificates based on the scores awarded by the Jury.

The Jury will request performances of specific pieces by First Place Winners of the choral and solo competitions at the Grand Finale Concert. Rehearsal for these performances will take place prior to the Saturday afternoon Dress Rehearsal.

Special prizes and Command Performances may be awarded and requested at the discretion and pleasure of the Jury. Such prizes may include: Choir of Angels (citizenship), Command Performance, Outstanding Conducting, Global Heritage, National Costume, or Noteworthy Presentation of a new contemporary music composition. Choirs awarded special prizes may be asked to perform repertoire selected by the Jury and the Artistic Director for the Festival Grand Finale Concert.

Fees and Applications

Fees

The cost of the Festival is as follows for singers and accompanying choir personnel:

Role	2026 Fees
Billetted Singers*	$600.00
Non-Billetted Singers*	$425.00
Conductor	$425.00
Manager	$490.00
Accompanist(s)	$425.00
Chaperones /Others	$490.00

**Billetted Singers receive homestay accommodation from the PEBCC community. Choirs are also welcome to stay in accommodation of their own arrangement; those choristers will be billed the "Non-Billetted Singers" rate.*

The fee provides entry into competitions, concerts, social events and other Festival activities, and a copy of the Festival Program. A non-refundable deposit of $150 USD per participant is due following acceptance in order to confirm participation. The balance of the fees is due in full no later than **April 1, 2026**. Limited financial assistance (toward Festival fees only) may be available to overseas choirs demonstrating financial need. Any such requests should be transmitted at the time of initial application. Financial assistance materials will be sent to choirs along with their acceptance letters.

General Application Process

Application for participation in the Festival must be made using the Official Application Form, which may be downloaded at www.goldengatefestival.org. **Applications will be accepted from March 15 through October 31, 2025. Early application is encouraged**. Late applications will be considered only if space is available. Applications must include the following materials:

- A completed Festival Application Form.
- A .mp3 file, or a YouTube performance, or a website link to a performance recording, or a good quality, recent (within the past three years) CD recording (labeled with the name of the choir and conductor, and date of recording) of the choir, of not more than 15 minutes duration. At least one piece must be unaccompanied. APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE PROCESSED WITHOUT A RECORDING. *(Please note, CD's cannot be returned).*
- Brief biographies of the choir and the conductor.
- A photo of the choir. Please label the back of the photo or name the photo file with the full name of the choir and country.
- A photo of the conductor. Please label the back of the photo or name the photo file with the full name of the conductor, the name of the choir and country.

Submit application materials via email to etuan@piedmontchoirs.org. Choirs will not be considered until all application materials are available to the review committee.

Please review our Golden Gate Festival Cancellation Policy.

Notice of Acceptance

Formal acceptance is based on a choir's audition materials and subject to the approval of the Golden Gate Festival Committee. Notification of acceptance will be sent on or before November 15, 2025. Notifications will be sent on a rolling basis to allow choirs applying early more time to make arrangements to attend.

Confirmation and Deposit

Choirs accepted for the Festival must confirm their participation in writing and submit a non-refundable deposit of $150 USD per participant by November 30, 2025 (or within thirty days of acceptance if notified earlier than October 2025). If written confirmation and payment are not received by the applicable date, the Festival reserves the right to retain other ensembles from the waiting list (to replace unconfirmed choirs).

Late Applications

Late applications may be submitted after November 1, 2025 and acceptances will be issued as space allows. Choirs accepted to the Festival during this late period must submit written confirmation and a non-refundable deposit of $150 USD per singer within three weeks of notification. Late applicants may request, but are not guaranteed billeted housing.

Competition Entry Forms for All Competitions

Competition entry forms for all competitions must be received by April 1, 2026. Forms will be shared after acceptance.

Music Scores

All accepted choirs and soloists must provide music for the adjudicators. Five copies of all choral competition music and three copies of vocal solo competition music should be received by the Festival by **June 1, 2026**. Please note that electronic PDF copies of repertoire satisfy this requirement and should be emailed to afegbeitel-finn@piedmontchoirs.org by June 1, 2026. All expression markings must be in English or Italian, or be translated into one of these languages.

Music submitted to the Festival for adjudicated pieces will not be returned.

Accepted choirs will be sent one score of each of the common songs to be learned by all choirs. Multiple copies of all Festival music must be ordered from their respective publishers by participating choirs. The Festival expects all participants to respect international copyright law. Photocopies of massed Festival music will not be allowed.

Program Materials

Choirs must send the following materials to the Festival Office for inclusion in the Golden Gate International Children's and Youth Choral Festival Program by **April 1, 2026**:

1. Name of Choir as you want it printed
2. Biography of Choir
3. Biography of Conductor
4. Biography of Accompanist
5. Biography of Composer (premieres or commissions only)
6. Picture of Choir with following specs: black & white or color, 300 dpi
7. Picture of Conductor with following specs: black & white or color, 300 dpi
8. Picture of Accompanist (optional): black & white or color, 300 dpi
9. Program Repertoire for each concert (*Spotlight*, *Opening*) and competition (*Historical*, *Folk*, *Contemporary*, *Gospel/Spiritual, Vocal Solo*):
    - Title
    - Composer/Arranger
    - List of any soloists
    - Special instruments
    - Program order (list conductors/accompanists if multiple used)
    - Identify which are competition pieces (list conductors/accompanists if multiple used)
10. Stage needs (risers, dancing area, processionals, etc.)
11. Photos, bios, CD's and other materials submitted cannot be returned.

Obligations

Each choir is required to participate in all Festival Chorus rehearsals, concerts, and other Festival activities. Adults are responsible for supervising their choristers throughout the Festival, and all conductors are expected to attend common song rehearsals. Participants waive all rights to any form of financial compensation.

Participants waive all rights associated with photography, audio/video recordings, radio or television broadcasts and print media.

Decisions

The decisions of the Festival staff or the adjudicators are final and binding upon all parties. This is an agreed condition of entry and participation.

Correspondence

All correspondence should be addressed to:

GGF 2026 – Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir
3629 Grand Avenue
Oakland, CA 94610 U.S.A.

Telephone: 510.547.4441

FAX: 510.451.2947

Email: afegbeitel-finn@piedmontchoirs.org

Website: www.piedmontchoirs.org/golden-gate-festival

Important Festival Dates

Applications accepted	March 15, 2025 – October 31, 2025
Late applications accepted (Space permitting)	after November 1, 2025

Notice of acceptance is sent	November 15, 2025 Or earlier if requested
Confirmation and deposit due	November 30, 2025 Or within 30 days of *early* acceptance Or within 21 days of *late* acceptance
Contemporary Competition application deadline	April 1, 2026
Vocal Solo Competition application deadline	April 1, 2026
Gospel/Spiritual Competition application deadline	April 1, 2026
Historical/Folk Competition repertoire form deadline	April 1, 2026
Program materials due to Festival office	April 1, 2026
Balance of fees due	April 1, 2026
Homestay/Housing forms due to Festival office	April 1, 2026
Competition scores due to Festival office	June 1, 2026
Choirs arrive	July 12, 2026
Opening Reception (Adults only)	July 12, 2026
Opening Concert	July 13, 2026
Historical/Folk Competitions	TBD; July 14-17, 2026
Youth Vocal Solo Competition	TBD; July 14-17, 2026
Children's Vocal Solo Competition	TBD; July 14-17, 2026
Contemporary Competition	TBD; July 14-17, 2026
Gospel/Spiritual Competition	TBD; July 14-17, 2026
Bay Cruise	TBD; July 14-17, 2026
Conductors' Banquet	TBD; July 14-17, 2026
Grand Finale Concert	July 18, 2026
Choirs depart	July 19, 2026

History

Since the mid-twentieth century, there has been a tremendous proliferation of children's choirs all over the world. For 40 years, the singers of Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir have been singing, competing, and becoming friends with children of the world through extensive touring in

Europe, Asia, Central America, the Baltic States, and Russia. They have been welcomed into concert halls, communities, and homes. They have stayed with families in different countries, learning to appreciate the hospitality of different cultures. Often, these opportunities have occurred during international festivals which brought multiple choirs together. This direct participation in the lives of people all over the world has given our young people a sense of themselves as global citizens and points of comparison to reach a deeper understanding of their own communities and cultures.

Realizing the richness this international experience offered, and recognizing that there were no similar events in the United States, in 1991, the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir founded The Golden Gate International Children's Choral Festival, the first international children's choral festival in the United States.

Past Festival Conductors and Adjudicators

1991
Margrete Enevold
Cheryl Keller, Kristin Womack

1993
Bosse Johanssen
Wendell Brooks, Mark Winges, Boyd Jarrell, Kristin Womack

1995
Bosse Johanssen
Sharon Paul, Patricia Hennings, Robert Wells, Kristin Womack

1997
Judit Hartyàni
Sharon Paul, Patricia Hennings, Cheryl Keller, Boyd Jarrell

1999
Juan-Tony Guzmán
Bob Chilcott, Judit Hartyàni, Joseph Jennings, Boyd Jarrell, Cheryl Keller, Diane Gilfether

2003
Piedmont Choirs 25th Anniversary, non-competitive
Robert Geary

2006
Elena Sharkova
Karmina Silec, László Matos, Boyd Jarrell, James Toland

2009
Bob Chilcott and Pekka Kostiainen
Judit Hartyàni, Boyd Jarrell, Sara Ganz

2012

María Guinand and Stephen Leek
Wang Jin, Judit Hartyányi, Martín Benvenuto, Karen Anderson

2015

María Guinand and Aarne Saluveer
Elise Bradley, Judit Hartyányi, Martín Benvenuto, Karen Anderson

2018

María Guinand
Raymond Wise, Judit Hartyányi, Martín Benvenuto, Karen Anderson

2023

María Guinand
Raymond Wise, Aarne Saluveer, Martín Benvenuto, Michele Kennedy

Past Festival Participants

1991

Anchorage Children's Choir – Alaska, USA
Argonaut Salem Boys Choir – Oregon, USA
Choir Melodija – Russia
Contra Costa Children's Chorus – California, USA
Crook County Cadet Boychoir – Oregon, USA
Florida Boychoir – Florida, USA
Kinderchor des Osnabrucker Jugendchores – Germany
Kung Hua Elementary School Chorus – Taiwan
Oregon Children's Chorus – Oregon, USA
Peninsula Children's Chorale – California, USA
Powell River Academy Singers – Canada
Ragazzi, The Peninsula Boys' Chorus – California, USA
Santa Rosa Children's Chorus – California, USA
Seattle Children's Chorus – Washington, USA

1993

Colorado Springs Children's Chorale – Colorado, USA
Dawn Children's Choir of Moscow – Russia
Kaohsiung Municipal Children's Chorus – Taiwan
Marin Girls Chorus/ Bel Canto – California, USA
Nakhodka's Music School #2 – Russia
Nebraska Children's Chorus – Nebraska, USA
Peninsula Children's Chorale- California USA
Petaluma Boys & Girls Chorus – California, USA
San Diego Children's Choir – California, USA
San Francisco Boys Chorus – California, USA
West Jutland Conservatory Girl's Choir – Denmark
Williams Lake Children's Chorus – Canada

1995

Chor der Musikhauptschule Harbach – Austria
Clara-Schumann Kinderchor – Germany

Coro de Niños Cantores de Cordoba – Argentina
Coro de Niños de la Schola Cantorum – Mexico
Florida's Singing Sons Boychoir – Florida, USA
Kuldiga Children's Choir Cantus – Latvia
Little Singers of Armenia – Armenia
Min Chuan Elementary School Chorus – Taiwan
Powell River Academy Singers – Canada
Raduga Choir of Music School #1 – Russia
Seinäjoki Girls Choir – Finland
Viva Chorale – Canada
Vox Aurea – Finland

1997

Carmina Slovenica – Slovenia
Dawn Children's Choir of Vladivostok – Russia
Encore Children's Chorus – California, USA
Girl Choir of Florida – Florida, USA
Indonesian Children's Choir – Indonesia
Kinderchor der Singakademie Potsdam – Germany
Kór öldutúnsskóla – Iceland
Kwa-Phalo Primary School Children's Choir – South Africa
Min Chuan Elementary School Chorus – Taiwan
Powel l River Academy Singers – Canada
Santa Barbara Children's Chorus – California, USA
Szczecin Boys' Choir "Nightingales" – Poland
Taipei City Shi-Sung Primary School Choir – Taiwan

1999

Columbia Choirs of Seattle – Washington, USA
Concento Children's Choir – Hungary
Coro Infantil de la Universidad del Cauca – Cauca Colombia
Li-Yuan Primary School Choir – Taiwan
Methodist Girls' School Choir – Singapore
Northwest Girlchoir-Vivace Choir – Washington, USA
Pictures from an Exhibition of Vladivostok Children's Choir – Russia
Salt Lake Children's Choir – Utah, USA
Vox Danubia-Linz-Austria – Austria
Young Singers of Callanwolde – Georgia, USA

2003

Atlanta Young Singers of Callanwolde – Georgia, USA
Fairfield County Children's Choir – Connecticut, USA
Florida Singing Sons Boychoir/Second Generation Singers – Florida, USA
Indonesian Children's Choir – Indonesia
Oregon Repertory Singers – Oregon, USA
Pictures from an Exhibition of Vladivostok Children's Choir – Russia
Raduga Choir of Music School No. 1 – Russia
Salt Lake Children's Choir – Utah, USA

2006

Cantabella Children's Chorus – California, USA

Celestial Voices/Singers Marin – California, USA
Chattanooga Girls' Choir – Tennessee, USA
Choeur D'Enfants du Benin – Benin
Columbia Choirs of Seattle – Washington, USA
Guangdong Experimental Middle School – People's Republic of China
Kinder-&-Jugendsingakademie, Graz – Austria
Partners in Praise Girls' Chorus – Minnesota, USA

2009

Cantabella Children's Chorus – California, USA
Colorado Springs Children's Chorale – Colorado, USA
Hangzhou Aiyue Tianshi Choir – People's Republic of China
Kaohsiung Children's Chorus – Taiwan
Les étoiles/Singers Marin – California, USA
MidtVest Pigekor – Denmark
Mississippi BoyChoir – Mississippi, USA
Ragazzi Boys Chorus – California, USA
Vox Aurea – Finland (guest choir)

2012

Amoy Flower Phoenix Youth Choral Group - People's Republic of China
Bach Children's Chorus - Canada
Barrington Children's Choir – Illinois, USA
Beijing Rainbow Art Performance Troupe - People's Republic of China
Budi Mulia Dua Choir - Indonesia
Columbia Children's Choir – Washington, USA
Columbia Vocal Ensemble – Washington, USA
Choir of E. Mikeladze Central Music School – Democratic Republic of Georgia
Chamber Singers of the Fairfield County Children's Choir – Connecticut, USA
Hamburg Kinderchor Cantemus - Germany
Junior Amabile Singers – Canada
Kinder-& Jugendsingakademie Graz – Austria
Klarup Pigekor – Denmark
Marin Girls Chorus – California, USA
Partners in Praise Girls Choir – Minnesota, USA
Young Adelaide Voices – Australia
Youth Choir "Kivi" – Lithuania

2015

Alaska Children's Choir – Alaska, USA
Calgary Youth Chorus – Canada
Cantabella Children's Chorus – California, USA
Chorus Canadiana – Canada
Estonian TV Girls' Choir – Estonia
Girls' Choir of Järva County – Estonia
Green Guys – Austria
Hangzhou Aiyue Tianshi Children's Choir – China
Immaculate Heart of Mary Children's Choir – California, USA
Marin Girls Chorus – California, USA
Pueri et Puellae Cantores Plocenses – Poland
Resonanz Children's Choir – Indonesia

Kinder-& Jugendsingakademie Graz – Austria
Vox Aurea – Finland
Young People's Chorus of NYC – New York, USA

2018

Columbia Choirs - Washington, USA
Chamber Singers of the Fairfield County Children's Choir - Connecticut, USA
Choir of E. Mikeladze Central Music School - Georgia
Emmanuel Vivace - Australia
Portland Boychoir - Oregon, USA
Shanghai Little Star Chorus - China
St. Stephen's College Choir - Hong Kong

2023

Cantabella Children's Chorus - California, USA
Children's Choir "Ugnele" - Lithuania
Columbia Choirs of Metropolitan Seattle - Washington, USA
Choir of E. Mikeladze Central Music School - Georgia
Emmanuel Vivace - Australia
Estonian Television Girls' Choir - Estonia
Junior Amabile Singers - Canada
Young Musicians Chorus, Collegium Musicum - California, USA
Young Voices of the Philippines - Philippines