



## MYC Member Handbook

### 2025-2026 Season

Welcome to the Madison Youth Choirs' Member Handbook! Please always feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

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## History

**Madison Youth Choirs (MYC)** was formed on July 1, 2003, through a merger of the Madison Boychoir (founded in 1971) and Madison Children's Choir (founded in 1985). The Madison Children's Choir brought a fifteen-year history of serving singers with innovative programming and creative rehearsals. The Madison Boychoir, founded by Carrel Pray, brought a more than thirty year history of performance, commitment, and advanced musical training.

Today, MYC is a vibrant community of singers learning and growing together across eleven ensembles. MYC shares its music with area audiences and often shares the concert hall with the Madison Symphony Orchestra, Madison Opera, and many other arts organizations. We

value the powerful impact of traveling together and sharing our music and perspectives with audiences outside of Wisconsin. We look forward to continuing our international tours to build upon the experiences we've shared in places like Scotland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, England, France, Japan, and Ireland.

MYC co-led the development of the Madison Youth Arts Center (MYArts), with Children's Theater of Madison, providing both organizations their permanent home on the Isthmus and forever changing the landscape of youth arts opportunities for Dane County. We are proud to call MYArts home and enjoy sharing this amazing resource with the Madison community.

## Rehearsals

Our rehearsals are the heart of our program where big ideas are explored through the lens of music. Discussions around the music are valued as much as learning the music and participants can expect to have their curiosity muscles flexed! All of our ensembles rehearse on Sundays at [MYArts, 1055 E Mifflin Street](#), our permanent home on the Isthmus. This is also our office and mailing address.

Please view and subscribe to your singer's [calendar](#) for the entire season schedule.

Music distributed to singers is the property of Madison Youth Choirs and will be returned at the end of each season. Singers are responsible for caring for their music and we ask that each family provide a 1" black three-ring binder to keep music organized and protected throughout the season. Music should be brought to each rehearsal along with a pencil.

## Performances

In a typical season, our rehearsals culminate in public winter and spring performances and sharing our music throughout the community. For the 2025/26 season our winter concert series will be held at Middleton Performing Arts Center and our spring concert series will be at the Verona Area High School Fine Arts Center. Our public concerts are ticketed events and information regarding purchasing tickets is shared with parents and the public several weeks before the event is scheduled. MYC singers wishing to attend a concert in which they do not perform always receive a complimentary ticket.

Due to copyright law, individual audio or video recordings are not permitted at our concerts. MYC concerts are professionally recorded by [Audio for the Arts](#) and are available for viewing on our YouTube channel (both during the concert via live stream and later). Seating for each concert begins approximately 30 minutes in advance. Pre-concert warm-ups are generally closed to families and audience members to allow singers to focus on their music and final instructions. Individual choirs may have other performances scheduled throughout the year; some are open to the public, while others are for private groups. When a performance is added to a calendar, families are always notified.

**Dress rehearsals** allow our singers to practice for an upcoming performance inside the concert venue to finalize musical details, and work out logistics. Casual clothing should be worn to dress rehearsals--not concert attire--unless otherwise announced. Attendance is required for dress rehearsals. Depending on the venue, dress rehearsals may be open to parents.

## Communication

To stay connected throughout our programming season, we update our members with current information through our Weekly Notes emails sent each Thursday. Thank you for reading them thoroughly and following up with us at any time if you have any questions. Weekly Notes are also [archived](#) on our website under the [Current Members](#) tab.

**The best way to reach us is via email: [info@madisonyouthchoirs.org](mailto:info@madisonyouthchoirs.org); or by calling our office at (608) 238-7464.**

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## Membership Details and Policies

### Membership

MYC is dedicated to educating a diverse group of musicians. Participating in MYC in any way makes you a member of the MYC community where empathy, mutual respect, and the exploration of big ideas through music expand how we see the world.

Members joining in the fall commit to MYC for the entire school year as we plan a full season experience around a particular theme to benefit our singers' development and deepen our sense of community.

### Attendance

The most valuable contribution musicians can make to their ensemble is their presence at rehearsal. Membership in MYC is a commitment to consistently prioritizing weekly rehearsals. Just like a sports team or the cast of a play, your fellow choir members are depending on your contributions in the rehearsal. We know that singers feel the most engaged and successful when they are consistently attending rehearsals. Accumulated absences directly impact a student's confidence, preparedness, and sense of belonging in their ensemble. Prioritizing MYC rehearsals and limiting absences, to the extent possible to two per semester, ensures your singer has the best possible experience and is well-prepared to perform in concerts. This means planning family events around MYC rehearsals, to the extent possible, to leave room for unexpected events like illness and family emergencies.

MYC believes that commitments are chronological, meaning that the commitment that was made first should be the commitment that is honored. When registering for MYC, please compare your school, sports, music, and other calendars as soon as possible and let us know of possible conflicts with your rehearsal schedule via the Absence Form. **Most importantly, please disclose your MYC participation and share your rehearsal and concert schedule when you are auditioning for a play or musical, or when signing up for other extra-curricular activities that require your attendance.**

## Reporting Absences

Absences or late arrivals/early departures should be reported to the MYC office via the [on-line absence form](#).

## School Music Program Participation

MYC considers itself a partner with school music programs in educating young musicians and promoting musical excellence. As a member of MYC, you are strongly encouraged to participate in your school music program whether through choir, band, or orchestra.

Participating in a school music group provides huge benefits to young musicians:

- Daily singing (or playing) and technique/musicianship building
- The opportunity to work with and learn from different music educators
- Additional opportunities (all-state groups, solo ensemble festivals, tours, competitions, musicals, college scholarships, etc.)
- Opportunities for leadership, to serve as role models, to give back to school music programs and keep them vital and dynamic

MYC endeavors to avoid scheduling conflicts with area school events, but this is not always possible. Please discuss pending conflicts as early as possible.

Voice placement appointments for new singers (ages 11-18) are generally in late spring, late summer, and early winter.

## Introductory Choirs

MYC offers Introductory Choirs throughout the year for students ages 7-fourth grade who are new to MYC. Students in this age range participate in an Introductory Choir prior to joining a performing choir. These comprehensive music education sessions prepare singers for membership in a performing choir by teaching basic music vocabulary, vocal technique, group singing skills, and MYC's rehearsal culture through games and fun activities.

Our [Join a Choir](#) page provides up to date information on both voice placement appointments and Introductory Choir.

## Moving Choirs

Taking into account a singer's age, grade level, and experience, we believe each of our ensembles provides an excellent environment for a singer's growth and musical development.

Although each ensemble is unique, our conductors all share the same dynamic teaching philosophy valuing thoughtful content and a nurturing process in rehearsals. What a singer might learn as well as contribute in an ensemble are equally considered when making placements.

Most singers, depending upon their age and experience, will sing in a particular choir for more than one year. While the timeline will be different for every singer, the philosophy is the same. It's not a race to move to the next choir: it's our goal that each singer have the right types of experiences in a choir, including leadership, before moving. This philosophy helps ensure the success of both individual singers and the ensemble and provides singers with the best possible comprehensive choir experience.

Although the exact process may change from season to season, the information we use to make placement decisions is the same. We look at singers' vocal, musical, and rehearsal skills. We consider age, grade, and social development. We consider each singer's time spent in our program. In short, we do whatever we can to get a picture of the "whole singer".

## **Code of Conduct**

We care deeply about cultivating a culture of empathy and respect within the MYC community and so will always strive to model an attitude that assumes the best of our students. We are committed to being clear in our communication and gentle in setting expectations within a rehearsal and relying on the self-motivation of our singers to contribute in positive ways to the rehearsal experience for themselves and for their peers. When conflicts occur or a student needs a reminder, we rely on the underlying ethos of mutual respect and genuine desire for a positive outcome for everyone involved.

## **Reporting a Concern**

MYC would like every singer to have the best experience possible and we realize that sometimes adjustments need to be made in order for that to happen. If you or your child has a concern about their choir experience, it is best to discuss the issue with your child's conductor first as they can often make immediate changes to improve the situation. If you feel the situation has not improved or feel uncomfortable approaching the conductor, please contact the MYC office who will work with you and the conductor to resolve the concern to the best of our ability. The MYC staff encourages singers and parents to bring concerns to our attention as soon as possible so we can make appropriate adjustments before the issue escalates.

## **Concert Wardrobe**

Reflecting the community aspect of choral singing, all MYC singers wear concert black wardrobe for performances. Singers may choose to provide their own concert black wardrobe or rent from MYC for \$30/season.

Each family will be asked to complete the Wardrobe Commitment Form at the start of the season indicating their plan to either provide their own wardrobe or rent. All families agree to study the [MYC Concert Wardrobe slide deck](#) to ensure wardrobe choices will be successful. Our goal is for singers to be comfortable in what they are wearing while also blending in with their choir community on concert day.

See our [slide deck](#) with detailed information and examples of MYC-appropriate concert black attire.

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## Volunteering

Parents are encouraged to share their time and talents with MYC:

- Volunteering is a great way to feel connected to our mission and to meet members of the MYC community;
- Your contributions of time and talent allow us to invest resources back into programming and expand our capacity.
- It's fun! Really!

Volunteering opportunities are shared via the Weekly Notes but if you have something specific to offer, please contact us at any time.

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## Additional Policies

**PRIVACY POLICY:** The Madison Youth Choirs acknowledges the need to request certain information from its employees, independent contractors, present, prospective, and former members and their families, volunteers, donors, and third parties who interact with employees, such as customers, vendors, or other members of the public. This information may include, but is not limited to contact information, including address, phone, and email, family status, and income levels. This information is used by MYC for various aspects of operations, communications, and fundraising.

The policy of the Madison Youth Choirs is to respect the privacy of individuals. Information gathered by the employees, independent contractors, or others working on behalf of MYC shall not be shared with any other party unless specifically authorized by the individual whose information is involved or unless MYC is legally required to provide such information.

**MYC NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:** It is the policy of the Madison Youth Choirs that participation in all aspects of MYC's programs be open to any and all. There shall be no discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex/gender, national origin, age, disability/handicap, status or service as a veteran, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other status protected by applicable law.

This policy applies to all Madison Youth Choirs employees, independent contractors, present, prospective, and former members and their families, volunteers, donors, or third parties who interact with employees, such as customers, vendors, or other members of the public.

**STATEMENT ON PERSONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR MEMBERS OF MYC:** It is the policy of the Madison Youth Choirs to have no affiliation with any religion, nor to discriminate against any individual, group, or organization on the basis of religion. Further, it is MYC policy to respect everyone's free exercise of their religious beliefs.

MYC recognizes that two important factors influencing performances are the nature of music suitable for performance and the availability of facilities for concerts. MYC acknowledges that the history and tradition of choral music has given a rich heritage of music based on religious themes or written for specific religious purposes; and that religious edifices are often the most logical sites for public performances, either within or outside the framework of religious worship services. It is further possible for the Madison Youth Choirs to hold performances in non-religious edifices, but under the sponsorship of a religious denomination. This policy must be understood to place no limitations on the performance of any music in any venue.

This policy shall be understood to generally discourage rehearsals and performances on Saturday mornings or Sunday mornings in the Madison area so that MYC staff and members can participate in religious worship of their choice; exceptions to this policy are allowed in exceptional situations with prior consultation of both parents and MYC members. Furthermore, care shall be taken in planning for such out-of-town events, and when and if possible, appropriate alternative arrangements must be made to accommodate those staff or members wishing to attend religious worship services of their choice.

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## **Tuition Details**

### **Full Season / Mid Season Tuition by Choir**

Choraliers, Con Gioia, Purcell, and Britten: \$570 / \$320

Capriccio, Holst: \$600 / \$335

Cantilena, Cantabile, and Ragazzi: \$630 / \$350

### **Tuition Due Dates and How to Pay**

**Full Season:** At a minimum, a \$50 non-refundable deposit or completed tuition assistance form is required with your registration, providing access to the first three rehearsals. After the deposit, at least 50% of your season tuition is due by **September 14** with the remaining balance due in full by **November 9**. You may choose to pay in these installments or in full. If you need more time to pay, please contact us to set up a payment plan extending beyond November 9, 2025.

**Mid Season (January-May):** At a minimum, a \$50 non-refundable deposit or completed tuition assistance form is required with your registration to access the first three rehearsals. The remaining balance is due by February 1, 2026. If you need more time to pay, please contact us to set up a payment plan extending beyond February 1, 2026.

Payments may be made by check and mailed to the MYC office at 1055 E Mifflin Street, Madison, WI 53703 or via credit card through the [payment portal](#) on the Members page (additional fees apply).

## Refunds

Full Season: Tuition, less the \$50 deposit, is refundable through September 21. After September 21, if you cancel participation, full tuition is still due and non-refundable.

Mid Season: Tuition, less the \$50 deposit, is refundable through January 25. After January 25, if you cancel participation, mid season tuition is still due and non-refundable.

## Tuition Assistance Grants

MYC commits to supporting participation for singers with financial need through its tuition assistance program. If you are unable to afford full or partial tuition, we invite you to submit the tuition assistance application (linked under the Members tab) when you register. The application is confidential and straightforward.

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## Other Ways to Engage

### Supporting MYC

Tuition covers just 40% of the actual cost of participation and we rely on other sources of funding, including additional support from our MYC families, to help us close the gap and keep tuition affordable for everyone.

Thank you for being mindful of ways you can help us increase our capacity to continue achieving our mission. Making a donation beyond your tuition payment, inviting others in your sphere to consider supporting us, or reaching out to us directly with your own ideas for advancing MYC are all impactful ways to support us.



We deeply appreciate the myriad ways our MYC families show their support and love for this organization. We could not do what we do without your engagement. You might be surprised by the impact you can have by doing just a few simple things:

- Engage with your singer's experience and enjoy discerning what they are getting out of their participation. Your positive experience is important to us and fuels our success.
- Cheer for us when you see a post on social media (like, share, comment). This simple act of engagement is an impactful way to expand our circle of friends and fans.
- Tell your friends and family about us. We hope MYC comes up often in your conversations!
- Pay tuition on time--this is very impactful and so appreciated!
- Make a donation to MYC above your tuition amount. Encourage others who are close to you to do the same.

Thank you for helping us fulfill our mission!

### **Other ways you can help**

- If you work for a company that has a charitable foundation or makes contributions to organizations like MYC, contact us. Many companies make funding decisions based on employee involvement or support; please consider being an MYC advocate in your workplace by writing support letters for funding proposals, sharing your personal story with a foundation representative, and/or inviting co-workers to MYC events. You don't have to be the company president to make a difference!
- If your company has a matching gift program, your donation to MYC could be doubled. Contact us if you need help enrolling MYC in your program.