



rwcc membership handbook

rwcc mission

To provide an environment for women of various ethnic, cultural, and life experiences to meet, sing, and grow together. The chorus is dedicated to the goal of excellence where music is the vehicle for the messages of peace, understanding, and cooperation for the entire community. While the performing element of RWCC is comprised solely of women, the continued success is attributable to the support of both men and women in the Rochester area.

history

RWCC began in 1978 as *Rochester Womyn's Community Chorus*. Its philosophy at that time was to provide a vehicle for the feminist women's community through singing. The *Directors* for the next five years were professional musicians and the chorus sang only music composed by women. All decisions, including musical ones, were made by consensus and feedback.

The chorus disbanded for a brief time in 1984, and resumed its activity in 1985, led by the current *Director*. The new name became the *Rochester Women's Community Chorus*. The chorus changed its structure and intent to include all quality music that did not contain lyrics of an oppressive nature.

In 1999, the RWCC became a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization and established a *Board of Directors*, in whose hands the fiscal responsibilities, planning, and major decisions are entrusted.

The RWCC continues to grow in numbers, and increases its outreach to the greater Rochester community.

performance commitment

The RWCC is a medium sized organization that takes pride in the quality of its performances. There are two major concerts a year, and one or two "run-outs" or smaller performances. All singers are expected to sing in the major concerts, while "run-outs" are based on singers' availability. The concert year runs from September till June.

Dates of major performances are announced at the beginning of each season. If there is a conflict with a date, it is very important that the *Director* be apprised of this immediately so that sections and music can be rearranged accordingly.

rehearsal structure

Rehearsals are held on Wednesday evenings from September through June. They begin at 6:30 pm and last until 9 pm, with a fifteen minute break and five to ten minutes for business.

Rehearsal tapes are available to all chorus members no later than four rehearsals after the beginning of a new concert season.

There are usually at least two sectional rehearsals and one full-chorus, day-long or overnight rehearsal retreat held prior to each major concert. All singing members are expected to attend these extra rehearsals.

chorus structure

board & committees

The RWCC is run by the *Board of Directors*, elected annually. However, each member of the chorus can influence chorus activities by joining one (or more) of the standing or ad hoc *committees*. Those teams are responsible for such aspects of the RWCC as music selection, performance enhancement, concert production, rehearsal retreat planning, fundraising, membership recruitment, and website/publications design. New committees may be formed at any time as needed.

section leaders

Each section of the chorus (Soprano 1 & 2, Alto 1 & 2) has a designated volunteer who acts as a *Section Leader*. These women are your link to other chorus members, other sections, the *Board*, and the *Director*. If there are musical or non-musical problems within a section that come up from week to week, the *Section Leader* will communicate the concerns to the *Director* or an appropriate *Board* member or *Committee Chair*.

snoopy and welcoming

There is a *Snoopy Club* which is responsible for acknowledging celebratory events and times of hardship for individual members. There are also a few *big sisters* or *buddies* who will welcome new members as they join, in order to answer any chorus-related questions. Social events are periodically planned for the chorus, and everyone is invited to bring guests to these functions.

An updated copy of the roster is distributed to all singers upon the closing of new members recruitment, after the first month of each season.

inclement weather/emergency cancellation policy

Occasionally, a rehearsal may be cancelled if our rehearsal space is closed. When that is the case, the *Director* will change the RWCC hot line message accordingly, and she will attempt to notify each of the *Section Leaders*. If there is a reason to expect that the rehearsal might be cancelled, members are asked to telephone either their *Section Leaders* or the hot line (234-4441) after noon on the day of rehearsal to ascertain whether rehearsal will be held.

membership requirements

musical criteria

We are a non-auditioned group open to every woman who would like to sing. It is understood that everyone has different skills and learning styles. The ability to read music is not necessary. There is a voice placement for each new member of the chorus, and periodically for existing members, to help determine balance and voice part. Anyone who cannot match a musical pitch will be encouraged to work individually with the *Director* for a period of about six months to improve their vocal skills prior to singing in the chorus. They also will be encouraged to be part of the group by participating in one of the many necessary non-singing tasks. Upon placing a small *music deposit*, each singer will have her own copy of all of the music. (If the deposit is a problem due to financial hardship, it may be waived by the *Treasurer*.) It is strongly encouraged that all music be memorized for performance.

attendance

Singers are expected to attend all weekly, sectional and retreat rehearsals, as well as all major performances. It is also important that everyone arrives on time so each rehearsal can start on time with the full chorus.

In the event of illness, emergency, or another conflict, singers are asked to notify the *Director* or a *Section Leader* of their absence or late arrival **in advance**, either by contacting them directly or leaving a message at 234-4441.

dues

No one involved with the chorus is salaried, although fees may be paid to guest artists, musicians, interpreters, and other professionals associated with specific events. Rehearsal and concert spaces, concert production, music, and a host of other expenses are necessary to keep the chorus alive.

Since we are a not-for-profit organization, dues and ticket sales make up the bulk of our funds. The dues for singers will be determined according to the present budget and the amount of available funds. **No one is denied membership because of a lack of funds, and RWCC emphasizes that members speak to their *Section Leader*, the *Treasurer*, or the *Director* in the case of financial hardship.**

non-singing tasks

In order that all the vital tasks that “make or break” the chorus be recognized, and everyone in the chorus feels a sense of ownership in our accomplishments, it is important for the singing members in RWCC to take part in at least one committee or volunteer for one non-singing assignment when possible.