



ELMHURST
CHORAL
UNION

Elmhurst Choral Union Membership Handbook

Elmhurst Choral Union
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Elmhurst, IL 60126
www.elmhurstchoralunion.org

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PURPOSE

The Elmhurst Choral Union Membership Handbook provides details about the chorus and outlines the expectations for membership in our organization.

OVERVIEW

Elmhurst Choral Union (ECU) is an auditioned volunteer chorus, singing with a professional orchestra and soloists, performing classical masterworks and great choral music of all eras. Although the chorus is an enjoyable social experience for its members, it maintains a serious approach regarding musical standards and commitment.

ECU presents two major concerts each season, including a performance of Handel's Messiah every other year. Singers from the chorus who want to participate perform lighter works and music from the Great American Songbook in solos and small ensembles at the annual Medley of Melodies. Microwave Masterpieces is ECU's "instant choir" event, where adventurous singers are welcome to join us for a single afternoon rehearsal followed by a performance that same afternoon. ECU Chamber Singers is a small group of singers from the chorus that performs *a cappella* songs in senior residences and at events in the community.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The Artistic Director is appointed by and reports to the Board of Directors (Board) and is responsible for all artistic matters related to ECU. The Artistic Director will:

- Be responsible for the selection of all performing members in accordance with the ECU Membership Handbook and the organization's bylaws.
- Determine the ability of performing members to participate in accordance with the ECU Membership Handbook and nature of the performance.

REGULAR MEMBERS OF ECU

- Regular members in good standing are defined as individuals who were admitted to ECU by audition and whose membership dues and other costs have been paid in full.
- Candidates for admission as regular members must audition for the Artistic Director. If invited by the Artistic Director, they will become regular members of ECU upon payment of membership dues and acceptance of the ECU Membership Handbook.
- It is the responsibility of each member to ensure that their email address is current and to notify ECU of changes via email at info@elmhurstchoralunion.org. ECU will verify member contact information during the first few rehearsals each season.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Associate members actively work on behalf of ECU but are not singers in the chorus. Their membership is confirmed by the Board.

RECRUITING/AUDITIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS

- ECU is always looking for new singers with previous choral experience and/or the ability to read music.
- We encourage regular members to refer friends and family who qualify to apply to audition by going to the “Sing With Us” page on ECU’s website and clicking on the link under “Singer Auditions.”
- Auditions for new regular members take place twice a year.
- The Artistic Director or designate will review applications and schedule appointments for auditions.
- Auditions will close at the discretion of the Artistic Director or when spaces are filled.

REHEARSALS

- Regular rehearsals are held on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 pm until 9:30 pm at Irion Hall in Room 200 on the campus of Elmhurst University or other designated rehearsal location.
- Parking is in the large lot off Alexander Blvd. north of the campus and west of Prospect Ave. You will be given a permit at the first rehearsal that you must display on the dash of your vehicle while on campus.
- Extra rehearsals, sectional rehearsals, retreats and workshops may be called from time to time at the discretion of the Artistic Director.
- Singers are expected to come to rehearsal adequately prepared, on time, and with a writing utensil and the assigned music.
- It is important for everyone to listen to the Artistic Director concerning dynamics, phrasing, rhythm, and tempo and make notations in their music where needed.
- Pay attention while other sections rehearse. Stay actively engaged. Be respectful and avoid any unnecessary talking during rehearsals.
- There will be a ten-minute break at each weekly rehearsal, followed by announcements.
- Hold all questions until the break or after rehearsal.
- Do not wear perfume, cologne, body oils or other scented products in consideration of singers who have sensitivities to such products.
- There will be a mandatory rehearsal with the orchestra (orchestra rehearsal) the day before each major concert. These rehearsals are longer than regular weekly rehearsals, but they are necessary for a successful performance. Call time TBA for each orchestra rehearsal.

ATTENDANCE

- Attendance at weekly rehearsals is essential to successful preparation for performances.
- If you need to arrive late or leave early on a regular basis, please discuss your situation with the Membership Chair at the beginning of the season.
- Regular members who miss more than the allowable number of rehearsals for a concert program must discuss their situation with the Artistic Director regarding their ability to perform in the concert. This will be determined for each concert season.
 - The Artistic Director has the authority to decide that a regular member will not participate in a performance due to lack of regular attendance, unsatisfactory progress in the study of the chosen program, or other cause.
 - After discussion with the Board, the Artistic Director may terminate a regular member from ECU at any time on musical grounds or for other cause.
- If an absence from a weekly rehearsal is necessary, inform the Membership Chair via email or text before that rehearsal. Contact information will be provided each season.
- Sign in on the attendance sheets provided at the beginning of each rehearsal.
- Regular members are expected to seek out any information given in missed rehearsals.
- Be on time and ready to sing at call time for every orchestra rehearsal and performance.
- Seating charts for rehearsals and concerts are established by the Artistic Director and must be adhered to.

MEMBERSHIP DUES & OTHER COSTS

- Membership dues will be set annually by the Board and are to be paid by regular members at the first rehearsal of the fall concert season for both the fall and spring seasons. If a regular member joins at the beginning of the spring concert season, they will pay the full year's membership dues at that season's first rehearsal.
- A regular member who is experiencing financial difficulties can contact the Board President confidentially at the beginning of the fall season to see if they qualify for one of a limited number of scholarships established by ECU to cover membership dues.
- Membership dues may be waived at the discretion of the Artistic Director and the Board.
- Regular members will purchase music at the beginning of each season from ECU for the amount determined by the Board based on the cost of the music. Singers may use their own music only if it is the same version chosen by the Artistic Director.
- Regular members are required to purchase a minimum of 5 tickets to each of ECU's two major yearly concerts at a reduced rate; members are free to sell their tickets.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

ECU is an independent, self-sustaining non-profit Illinois organization with federal 501(c)(3) status. ECU's costs for the two major annual concerts are in the tens of thousands of dollars; this includes fees for professional orchestras and soloists, marketing, printing, website maintenance, and orchestra scores, among many other costs. ECU's revenues come from concert ticket sales, ad sales for concert programs, grants and fundraising activities. Any profits are rolled over to our next season to sustain the organization. Regular members are asked to support ECU by selling tickets and program ads and supporting fundraisers.

CONCERT ATTIRE

- All solid black: tops (with at least a capped sleeve), skirts/dresses (with black nylons/leggings), slacks, black closed-toe shoes (small-scale jewelry is acceptable); **OR** tuxedo or "tux-like" suit: white shirt, black bow tie, black jacket, black pants, black socks and shoes.
 - Small jewelry is acceptable, but nothing shiny or glittery that would reflect light.
 - No scarves or other large decorations.
- Do not wear perfume, cologne, body oils or other scented products.
- Music must be secured in a black folder for concerts unless otherwise instructed by the Artistic Director.

HEALTH SAFETY/COVID POLICY

The current ECU policy is that wearing masks in rehearsals and performances is optional. The Board reserves the right to change this policy at any time based on the CDC guidelines or if it deems such a policy change is necessary.

ANNUAL MEETING

- All regular and associate members are invited to ECU's Annual Meeting, which is held each year after the last major concert and before the end of the fiscal year.
- The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to report on that year's activities and the status of the organization and to elect new members to the Board who were previously nominated.
- All members will be notified of the date, time and place of the Annual Meeting.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & OFFICERS

- The Board is responsible for overseeing the operations of ECU.
- New Board members are nominated and elected annually by the membership. All regular and associate members are eligible to serve on the Board.
- The Board is composed of no less than 7 and no more than 11 members, who may serve two consecutive 3-year terms.
- The officers of the organization are President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. The roles of the officers can be found in the organization's bylaws.
- Non-elected positions such as Fundraising Chair, Marketing Chair, Membership Chair, Public Relations Chair, etc., are appointed by the Board.

NONDISCRIMINATION & ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Elmhurst Choral Union does not and shall not allow discrimination on the basis of race, skin color, age, creed, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity/expression), ethnicity, ancestry, mental or physical disability, marital status or family structure, military or veteran status, or any other status protected by law in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, recruitment, membership, Board of Directors membership, hiring and firing of staff or contractors, selection of volunteers, and providing services. All members, staff, volunteers, contractors and other affiliates agree without exception to not discriminate against any other based on these same values.

ECU makes reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship.

Reporting

Any individual with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the activities or operations of ECU is encouraged to discuss these issues with the Artistic Director or a member of the Board of Directors if they are comfortable doing so. Individuals can raise concerns and make notification in confidence without fear of retaliation.

Anyone found to be engaging in any type of discrimination may be subject to disciplinary or corrective actions, from a warning up to and including termination of membership, contract, or volunteer participation.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Elmhurst Choral Union does not and shall not allow harassment on the basis of race, skin color, age, creed, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity/expression), ethnicity, ancestry, mental or physical disability, marital status or family structure, military or veteran status, or any other status protected by law.

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct—physical, verbal, or even suggested—that makes a reasonable person feel uncomfortable, humiliated, offended or mentally distressed. Elmhurst Choral Union is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone. All members, staff, volunteers, contractors and other affiliates agree without exception to not verbally, physically, or sexually harass any other based on these same values.

Reporting

Any individual with questions or concerns about any type of harassment in the activities or operations of ECU is encouraged to discuss these issues with the Artistic Director or a member of the Board of Directors if they are comfortable doing so. Individuals can raise concerns and make notification in confidence without fear of retaliation.

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