Texas State University

Hill Country Youth Chorus

Parent Handbook

2022-2023



**Texas State University School of Music**

**Hill Country Youth Chorus**

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**ARTISTIC PHILOSOPHY and MISSION**

Founded in 2005, The Hill Country Youth Chorus (HCYC) provides an accessible, comprehensive music education and performance program that serves children and adolescents from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. The curriculum equips these young artists with the musical skills that enable them to seek the highest artistic standards in performances of challenging music. It is hoped that the discipline and concentration learned by each student-artist in rehearsal and performance will instill in them the values necessary to succeed in music and life. HCYC’s emphasis on excellence spotlights the collective strength inherent in young people collaborating for a greater good. The potential for human achievement provided by this model merits a resonance throughout the wider sphere of community life.

The Hill Country Youth Chorus provides undergraduate and graduate music education students the opportunity to gain hands-on planning, teaching and administrative experience through a guided, supervised program created to facilitate the growth and strength of vocal music programs. Our program supports the mission of Texas State University by pursuing excellence in serving the educational needs of the diverse population of the San Marcos area and beyond.

The Hill Country Youth Chorus fosters a love for singing by providing youth with a choral music experience where successive levels of high artistic achievement and performance are nurtured in each participant. All HCYC faculty and staff are avid supporters of all school music programs and our youth outreach program is intended to supplement and enhance the music training students receive in school.

# GUIDING VALUES

The guiding values of Hill Country Youth Chorus are:

* Artistry
* Respect
* Commitment
* Gratitude

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Texas State Hill Country Youth Chorus comprises of weekly group rehearsals on Monday evenings (6:30-7:45 pm). Our program follows the university semester calendar, September through mid-May.

HCYC has the privilege of utilizing the Texas State School of Music facilities. All parents are welcome to attend rehearsals in room 222.

**MONDAY REHEARSALS**

Arrival Times: Parents are encouraged to either drop off their singer(s) outside the front door of the music building, or park in the Pleasant Street Garage across the street from the music building. We invite parents and siblings to please sit quietly in the rehearsal space.

Note: Parents of Prelude singers are asked to remain in room 222.

6:30-7:15 – Prelude Choir

6:30-7:45 – Bravo Chorale

7:50-8:15 – Encore Ensemble

### TRANSPORTATION

It is the parent’s responsibility to handle transportation to and from rehearsals or performances. Parents often arrange carpools.

**PARKING**

Free Parking Option

* Parents may drop off their children before rehearsal and pick them up after rehearsal. If you intend to drop your singer off and pick them up immediately after rehearsal, then no parking pass is required.
* To drop off a singer, enter campus at the intersection of Sessom and LBJ. Turn left on to Pleasant Street. The Music Building is in front of the Pleasant Street Garage. Singers can be dropped off and picked up at this entrance. One of the HCYC staff members will stay with the singers until all students have been picked up after rehearsals. Please remind your singers that after rehearsal, they should remain in the building until their ride arrives outside the music building.

Parking Option Requiring a Fee

Parents who plan to park near the School of Music are required to purchase a parking permit.

1. $5 Daily Permit: Parents can purchase a daily permit to park in or near the Pleasant Street Garage. A machine is located in the Pleasant Street Garage to purchase the daily permit.
2. Annual Permit: Parents can purchase an annual permit by logging on to this website:<http://www.parking.txstate.edu/visitors.html>.

**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Attendance at all regularly scheduled and extra rehearsals/performances is required to maintain membership in good standing. Regular rehearsals are held on Monday evenings in the School of Music at Texas State University.

* *Prelude Choir* rehearsals are from: 6:30-7:15 pm.
  + *Prelude* singers will meet in room 221 till 7:00 pm, then join *Bravo Chorale* in room 222 for the remainder of their scheduled time.
* *Bravo Chorale* rehearsals are from 6:30-7:45 pm in room 222.
* *Encore Ensemble* meets from 7:50-8:15 pm in room 222.

In case of tardiness or absence due to illness or emergency, notify the conductor or Ms. Gianna Eason, Executive Assistant Director (gee15@txstate.edu), **prior** to rehearsal or performance in time to adjust plans and programs when necessary.

Consistent attendance is essential. The choir is dependent upon the continuity of the total group sound and development for growth and progress of the individual and collective instrument. Excessive absence of any chorister is seriously detrimental to repertoire and performance. The chorister’s attendance record is one of the major factors in consideration for solo performances, section leadership, and participation in small ensembles or special events.

**LIABILITY FORMS**

Texas State University requires a signed liability form for every staff member, student, parent and family member who attends rehearsal. Parents/guardians can either download a copy of the form or receive a hard copy of the form(s) to be filled out at the first rehearsal. One form for every singer/observer is required. Form(s) only need to be renewed once each academic year.

Liability forms for minors and adults may be downloaded from the HCYC website link provided on page 8 of this handbook.

**CLASS ORGANIZATION**

Our group classes feature 3 different ensemble models:

* Prelude Choir (6-8 years old)
* Bravo Chorale (9-18 years old)
* Encore Ensemble – advanced ensemble by audition each semester

Promotion: Promotion from one class to the next generally occurs at the end of a semester. Participation in both Prelude Choir and Bravo Chorale is based on the ages of singers. Encore Ensemble is an audition only ensemble for more mature and advanced singers. All Encore singers are required to also sing in Bravo Chorale.

**Public/Private School Music Performances**

**School Music Performances DO take precedence over HCYC performances, when there is a conflict.**

We are aware that students often participate in a variety of ensembles, or other activities, in addition to choir, and that such activities are important to developing a well-rounded individual. Any recurring conflicts in schedule need to be addressed with the director as soon as they develop, so as to create a plan of compromise between activities. Parents will receive periodical schedule updates via email.

**IN CASE OF POOR WEATHER**

If Texas State University or area schools are cancelled on the day of rehearsal, the HCYC rehearsal will be cancelled as well. If school is in session but very bad weather occurs in the afternoon and cancellation becomes necessary, parents will be notified by group text and email. In those instances, we will inform parents of a decision to cancel rehearsal no later than 2:30 p.m.

#### PERFORMANCE POLICIES

Performances are an integral part of HCYC, and essential in the development of the vocal arts.Performances and dress rehearsal schedules are announced through memos and updates from the conductor. Handouts with updated information will be distributed electronically. Electronic announcements are usually sent out weekly. In order to receive electronic announcements, you may need to release the address from your spam account. Contact the Director for instructions and information.

HCYC intends to develop a tradition of presenting consistently exceptional musical performances. Choristers easily rise to the high expectations placed upon each performer as a representative of the organization.

Call time is the time to be in the building, on the risers (in uniform) and ready to begin warm-ups with the conductor. Choristers should arrive at least 10 minutes before call time to settle their belongings, straighten their uniform and hair, and make trips to the restroom etc. Eating is advised before arriving. Arriving on time and being completely prepared for the event is an essential part of being a responsible performer.

Chorister conduct is expected to be exemplary at all times when participating in HCYC functions. This includes courtesy and consideration to public or HCYC personnel involved in the event: conductors, staff, section leaders, chaperones, and audience members. If an individual concern or problem arises, please consult a staff member, section leader or the conductor. Choristers are expected to treat all student staff with respect and understand that they are present for the benefit of the choristers, HCYC, and the performance demands. Please also be aware that chorister conduct reflects both on the individual, and the entire organization.

After the performance the standards of conduct should remain in place until departure. Each facility and holding room will be left in the condition in which it was found. All choristers need to participate fully in clean up, gathering all personal belongings, and waiting for departure with the chaperones. Please be courteous and keep noise level to a minimum, especially when waiting backstage.

Safety concerns are of the utmost importance. Every chorister’s safety from the beginning to the completion of a concert or event is vital to all of us. Choristers may not leave unaccompanied or remain behind unaccompanied. Parents must contact the Conductor before the performance IN WRITING if a singer is to leave early, or with some adult other than their parent/guardian.

Concert uniforms are required for all performances. It is imperative that we exhibit respect and pride at all public appearances. We aim to teach our singers to contribute their highest level of professionalism both on and off stage. That includes participating as a complete team member by complying with the uniform requirements to create the highest level of professionalism and artistry on stage.

Hair style is best when kept out of the eyes and off the face. Only invisible barrettes or hair clips that match hair color (not the uniform) and clear nail polish are recommended. Hairstyles should be appropriate and in keeping with the total uniform appearance of HCYC. Make-up should be understated.

# Jewelry to be worn with the uniform is small stud earrings and the HCYC 5-year pin (awarded to singers at the end of their 5th season with HCYC).

Prelude Singerswear the HCYC polo shirt **($25),** black dress pants, black dress socks and solid black closed toe shoes (no sneakers).

Bravo Girls are to wear the uniform black skirts (floor length) and white long-sleeved blouse **($65 for girls’ uniform).**

Black opaque tights, and solid black flat-heeled, closed-toe shoes will be purchased by the chorister (no sneakers).

**The skirt is hemmed approximately 1” from the floor when standing in performance shoes.**

Bravo Boys are to wear a long-sleeved tuxedo shirt **($20).**

Black dress pants, dress shoes and black socks are purchased by the chorister.

Students who need new uniforms will be measured in September or January and the HCYC staff will place the order for students’ uniforms.

**Choristers are required to be in their designated uniform for all performances.** Wear the concert uniform to all concerts unless instructed otherwise. ***Concert uniforms and polo shirts may only be worn when performing with HCYC.***

***SINGERS WHO DO NOT WEAR THE COMPLETE REQUIRED UNIFORM***

***WILL BE ASKED TO WATCH THE PERFORMANCE IN THE AUDIENCE.***

**FINANCES**

The Hill Country Youth Chorus is a self-supporting entity through tuition fees and fundraising projects. While every effort is made to keep membership fees to a minimum and to find various forms of support and underwriting in addition to quarter term fees, tuition is a fact of life. **Payments should be made payable to the Texas State University.** Please pay for the semester by the first rehearsal. If you need to make other arrangements for a payment plan, consult Dr. Brinckmeyer.

Tuition

* $100 per semester for singers in *Bravo Chorale.*
* $50 per semester for *Prelude Choir* students.
* No additional tuition is collected for *Encore Ensemble.*

Note: Families who have more than one singer in Bravo Chorale may receive a discounted rate of $75 for the second, third, etc., singer.

# Deadline for uniform payment is September 19, 2022 and February 13, 2023.

**MUSIC**

Music folders and HCYC bags are furnished for choristers. Singers are required to return their music at the final rehearsal of every semester. The first HCYC bag is complimentary. **A $30 fee is charged when damaged or lost music or the HCYC bag must be replaced.**

**HCYC FACULTY/STAFF**

Dr. Lynn Brinckmeyer, Artistic Director

Ms. Grace Cho, Accompanist

Ms. Nathalie Calvo, Prelude Director, Social Media Developer

Ms. Gianna Eason, Executive Assistant Director

Mr. Abraham Villarreal, Texas State Student Intern

Ms. Sarah Ellis, Texas State Student Intern

**ADDRESS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY Lynn Brinckmeyer

SCHOOL OF MUSIC Abigail Brown

Room 222 (Bravo Rehearsals) Nathalie Calvo

Room 221 (Prelude Rehearsals) Edison Cottle

601 University Drive Gianna Eason

San Marcos, TX 78666 Sarah Ellis

(512) 245-2194 Abraham Villareal

[lbrinckmeyer@txstate.edu](mailto:lbrinckmeyer@txstate.edu)

**WEBSITE**

<https://choirs.music.txstate.edu/ensembles/youthchorus.html>

**PAYMENT LINK**

[https://secure.touchnet.com/C24322\_ustores/web/store\_main.jsp?STOREID=410&SINGLESTORE=true](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsecure.touchnet.com%2FC24322_ustores%2Fweb%2Fstore_main.jsp%3FSTOREID%3D410%26SINGLESTORE%3Dtrue&data=05%7C01%7CLbrinckmeyer%40txstate.edu%7C39e74c4af24e4ed3e22408da76227068%7Cb19c134a14c94d4caf65c420f94c8cbb%7C0%7C0%7C637952187526795603%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=SxLHCgJ41RUgsPezBBDHpMR0xSp0fwHo7gm7DVKYqes%3D&reserved=0)

# HILL COUNTRY YOUTH CHORUS

# CHORUS POLICIES

The Artistic Director and Staff form the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is responsible for approving policies for the operation of the Chorus. An organization is successful when every member gives his or her best toward the accomplishment of a worthwhile goal. Each student’s commitment to the ensemble’s goals is respected more highly than personal ego goals. Indicators of cooperation are: listening to and following instructions, accepting new ideas, valuing all other members of the group, and speaking positively or constructively.

The Chorus policies listed below apply to rehearsals and performances. Choristers are required to attend all scheduled regular and extra rehearsals, performances and observe the HCYC standards for appearances and behavior.

* Be punctual, observing rehearsal, CALL and PICKUP times.
* Be mentally, vocally and aurally conscious and sensitive to progress in rehearsals.
* Maintain good posture at all times.
* Be supportive of all efforts of fellow choristers as they attempt to perfect their skills.
* Complete any memory and theory assignments given by the conductor.
* Take proper care of all music issued and return it in good condition at the end of the concert season.
* Be respectful to the rehearsal space, Music Building and Texas State University personnel.
* Protect health and voice: do not sing with sore throat or hoarseness. In the case of a fever/cold/flu/Covid, please keep all singers home.
  + https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html
* Notify the conductor and/or Executive Assistant Director in the event of tardiness or absence due to illness or emergency.
* Absences will be excused for school music activities and performances. If there are many additional conflicts with sports, etc., an equitable schedule can be worked out with your conductor.

HCYC acknowledges that not every one of our singers will follow the road all the way to the professional stage. Yet, the discipline and concentration children and adolescents learn in rehearsal and performance will serve them the rest of their lives, whatever their future. Singers in the choir are those with unchanged and changed/changing voices, ages 6-18.

HCYC offers three different ensembles. All students ages 6-8 sing in the *Prelude Choir. Bravo Chorale* is comprised of all of the singers in HCYC ages 9-18. *Encore Ensemble* is an auditioned group of more advanced singers who demonstrate a high level of musicianship and self-directed behavior. Auditions for *Encore* Ensemble are usually held during the last week of September and the first week of February.

**PRELUDE CHOIIR**

Prelude Choir lays the foundation for progress and development in HCYC. Attention span and quiet concentration are a point of focus, as well as practice and development in vocal technique and fundamental theory. Working goals are aimed toward both areas: the need to learn important musical basics and the need to work together as a group.

Objectives

* To be attentive and focused throughout the rehearsal
* To maintain good singing body alignment
* To sing with correct physical concepts of breath support and management; dropped, relaxed jaw on correct vowels; articulated, clear and precise consonants, distinct and correct diction
* To sing alone, without an accompaniment, securely on pitch
* To perform with confidence on repertoire evaluations
* To listen to and match correct pitches on scales and intervals
* To sing and use Solfège/Curwen hand signs (Do, Re, Mi, Sol, La)
* To sustain an average phrase in one breath
* To read from a musical score
* To understand basic music terminology and concepts through singing, chanting and moving
* To understand and practice basic concepts of performance etiquette
* To sing 2-part rounds or canons
* To study and engage with many types of music
* To memorize 15-20 minutes of music each semester
* To treat HCYC commitment with responsibility and integrity

**BRAVO CHORALE**

Bravo Chorale offers a greater diversity in individual attentiveness, repertoire, vocal skills, theory requirements, and performance demands. Choristers are expected to demonstrate basic vocal and musical competence, and beginning sight-reading concepts and skills. Rehearsal concentration and performance demands are more demanding.

Objectives

* To gain confidence by singing two-and-three-part repertoire
* To focus with increased attention span throughout a rehearsal
* To support vocal tone for accurate intonation and focus
* To sing with clear phonation on each pitch
* To sing and use Solfège/Curwen hand signs (Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, Do’)
* To adjust tone color or intonation for blending and tuning
* To sing with a variety of dynamics, duration and articulation as indicated by symbols and terminology in the choral repertoire
* To sing and memorize music quickly and accurately
* To expand theory knowledge, according to score demands
* To sight-read concepts by singing, chanting, moving and drumming
* To continue to develop the concept of head voice and activated muscles of breath support
* To sing in foreign languages
* To practice professional performance skills
* To develop understanding and expression of text through singing and chanting
* To support fellow choristers
* To memorize 30-40 minutes of repertoire each semester
* To treat HCYC commitment with responsibility and integrity

**ENCORE ENSEMBLE**

Encore Ensemble explores more demanding literature at a much quicker pace. Because it is a privilege to sing in this advanced ensemble, singers in Encore are required to demonstrate leadership, personal maturity and higher levels of musicianship during Bravo Chorale rehearsals. Performers are expected to exhibit the highest levels of artistry and professionalism possible. All singers in Encore Ensemble are required to participate in Bravo Chorale. Encore rehearsals take place from 7:50-8:15 pm.

Objectives

* To increase physical and mental stamina and focus in rehearsal situations
* To sing octavos and use Solfège/Curwen hand signs
* To perform with historical understanding and authenticity
* To develop increasing vocal strength to sustain more sophisticated melodic phrases
* To maintain a consistent vocal blend and balance while singing and listening
* To sing with a healthy tone quality with correct vowel and consonant release
* To listen for more accurate in-tune singing
* To increase independence in music reading and music memory by singing, chanting, moving and drumming
* To sing in three or four-part music with independence and security
* To sing with confidence in repertoire/sight singing evaluations
* To expand theory knowledge, according to score demands through writing, singing and discussion
* To sing a greater variety of foreign languages in vocal music
* To refine performance skills through singing, listening and personal reflection
* To serve as a model of professionalism and musicianship for the younger singers in the choir
* To support fellow choristers at all levels