

Singapore Symphony Chorus Handbook 2010

INTRODUCTION

The Singapore Symphony Chorus, the official choir of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra (led by the SSO's Resident Conductor, Maestro Lim Yau) is a chorus of volunteer singer/musicians who are committed to rehearsing and performing the choral-orchestral repertory at the highest level of choral artistry.

Music Director: Mr. Lim Yau

The Music Director can be reached through the Choral Executive.

Choral Executive

Email: choral@sso.org.sg

Please contact the Choral Executive at the number or email address above for all queries relating to:

- Rehearsal schedules
- Attendance
- Updates of personal contact details
- Scores
- CDs of the works performed
- SSC concert tickets and discounts
- Folders
- Recruitment and auditions

FOCUS GROUP

The Chorus' Focus Group is involved in building chorus infrastructure, improving communication with the SSO and improving members' experience in the SSC. If you are interested in any of these efforts, please contact the Focus Group members listed below.

Feel free to contact any of these members to discuss ideas or concerns you may have or to volunteer for activities. This is a volunteer group with participation subject to the review of the Music Director. This list was accurate as at January 2010.

Focus Group Members 2010

Alan Smith	Tenor	alanks88@gmail.com	9879 2759
Robin Ann Rheaume	Sop	ssc@missbossy.com	9752 2416

WEBSITE AND EMAIL LIST

The Chorus Focus Group operates an e-mail list for communication with chorus members. To get on the e-mail list, please drop an e-mail to the Choral Executive.

Our website is <http://www.symphonychorus.sg>. The website includes a Members Area with the latest rehearsal schedule as well as audition info, history of the chorus and upcoming concerts.

MEMBERSHIP FEE

All new members must pay a non-refundable lifetime membership fee of S\$50. Payments are only to be made by cheque. Cheques should be crossed and made payable to "Singapore Symphonia Company Ltd".

For existing members, as of 1 April 2008, the S\$50 deposit that paid upon joining was converted into the non-returnable lifetime membership fee.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Efficient and reliable communication with members is vital to the successful operation of the chorus. There are a number of methods by which relevant information is communicated...

- Notice Board (along the corridor outside the concert hall)
- Announcements during rehearsals (usually just before rehearsal and at the break)
- Notices handed out at rehearsal (e.g. rehearsal schedules)
- Email: please ensure that the Choral Executive has your current email address.
- Phone / SMS: please ensure that the Choral Executive has your phone number.

Use all these channels to keep up-to-date and please email the Choral Executive to notify of any changes to your contact details.

RE-AUDITIONS

You have become a member of the SSC by audition. This means that you have special skills that will contribute to the quality of this ensemble. You are expected to work in order to improve your musicianship, vocal skills, and music knowledge.

From time to time you may be re-auditioned. Re-auditions may be required to determine your suitability for a specific piece of music, to determine if your vocal range has changed or to determine if you should remain in the chorus. Past members rejoining will be subject to re-audition as well as those rejoining after a long period of absence.

MUSIC SCORES

Each singer is assigned a serially numbered copy of the score and signs out for it.

- Guidance on pronunciation and musical interpretation (breath marks, dynamics, etc.) are provided during the rehearsal to assist in preparation outside rehearsal.
- The music scores issued to you are purchased by the Singapore Symphonia Company Ltd ("SSCL") for loan to the SSC. They are thus the property of SSCL. You are therefore requested to take good care of the music scores on loan to you. All markings should therefore be made only in pencil. Under no circumstances should a pen or highlighter be used.
- Scores should be returned immediately after the last performance for that work but, in any event, not later than one month after the concert. All markings should be erased prior to returning the score.
- If the scores are not returned, or the scores are damaged, you will have to bear the cost of the replacement of an original score.

CDs

Please contact the Choral Executive if you want to order a CD of the work being performed.

FOLDERS

Black SSC folders, once issued to you, remain with you until you leave the SSC. The folders are to be used on all concert nights.

REHEARSALS

A Rehearsal Schedule is given to all singers bi-annually and is available for download on the website. Generally, there is a rehearsal every Monday in Victoria Concert Hall (VCH) 7.30 pm - 10.15 pm. However, additional rehearsals may be scheduled at the discretion of the Music Director. On the week of the concert, there will be rehearsals with the SSO on the other weekd nights at Esplanade Concert Hall. These are important rehearsals that should not be missed. On concert nights, unless otherwise advised, warm-up begins at 6:00 pm.

Entrance to the Esplanade Concert Hall is through the Stage Door, which is near the box office.

ATTENDANCE

- **Rehearsals begin at 7:30 pm sharp.** Punctuality is essential. Please arrive 10 minutes beforehand to settle in.
- You should attend all rehearsals and arrive on time. If you are unable to make it or you will be late, you should Email the Choral Executive with your reason for absence/late coming.
- Your attendance will be taken for you by your respective Section Leaders.
- You are expected to stay for the entire rehearsal. The SSC Music Director should be notified in the event that a member has to leave a rehearsal before dismissal.
- During concert week, attendance at all rehearsals and performances is compulsory unless prior approval is obtained from the SSC Music Director for extenuating circumstances.

CONDUCT

- Turn off your mobile phones.
- Always have your own score. Always bring a soft pencil and an eraser with which to mark your score. Under no circumstances should a pen or highlighter be used.
- Rehearsal time is precious and often there is a lot of material to be covered in a very short time. Hence, you should conduct yourself in a professional manner, be attentive and refrain from talking during rehearsals.
- If you arrive late, take your seat quietly with minimum distraction to other members. If possible wait for a suitable pause in the singing to take your seat.
- Do not be distracted by the arrival of latecomers. Stay focused on the work being performed.
- Do not tap out the beat as this can be distracting to other singers. Only the conductor's beat should be followed.
- The rehearsal is meant solely for interpretation and never for learning notes. Thus, it is vital that members take responsibility for learning the music. It is not possible to rely solely on what is taught during rehearsals. Practice between rehearsals is necessary.

CONCERTS

To perform in a concert, you must attend at least 80% of rehearsals. If the attendance requirement is not met, your participation in the performance will be at the discretion of the Music Director.

Preparation

- Attendance at all rehearsals during concert week is mandatory in order to plan the seating arrangement and make adjustments to the concert hall. Please **MAKE PRIOR ARRANGMENTS** to ensure you can attend. Inform the Music Director and the Choral Executive if your absence is unavoidable.
- Allow plenty of time for travelling and parking.
- Attend pre-concert warm-ups – these are compulsory: there may even be last minute changes to direction - those who don't make it may miss out on key information.
- Take note of your seating position, so that the filing in process is smooth and calm.

Attire

Attire for concerts, unless otherwise stated, is:

Gentlemen

- Black suit (dinner jacket/tuxedo)
- Black bow tie
- Black shoes and black socks
- White shirt

Ladies

- All black, ankle-to-floor length, long-sleeved gown or Ankle-to-floor length black skirt or slacks with long-sleeved black blouse
- Black shoes (no sandals)
- Discreet accessories

Stage Conduct

Once you are on stage, you a part of a body of performers, committed together to provide a good performance. Proper conduct on stage is part of this commitment.

- Bring your black folders to the concert venue. Folders are to be carried on and off stage in the hand facing the audience with the SSC logo facing out.
- **DO NOT cross your legs while on stage!**
- **NO TAPPING!** Once on stage, always bear in mind that anything that could distract your fellow performers and the audience (talking, noises, tapping and other actions) must be avoided.
- Refrain from talking on stage. Allow the orchestra to tune without interruption.
- Sit and stand in a single movement. While singing, remain still but relaxed.
- Resist the urge to adjust glasses, flip hair, scratch your nose, etc. and do not respond to audience movement.
- Stand still during concerts, with good singing posture and knees unlocked. Avoid distracting the audience during a performance: do not speak to other singers; do not hum a pitch before singing; do not unwrap lozenges. Minimize movement and appear engaged.
- **Avoid heavy perfumes, cologne, scented hairspray, or similar items**, as other singers may be allergic to them and heat from stage lights may amplify fragrances.
- **Do not bring water or handbags on stage.** Leave all personal belongings, including handbags, mobile phones and water bottles, in the designated chorus dressing rooms.

Holding Your Score and Page Turns

- Page turns can be noisy and distracting if not done properly. Always prepare early for page turns. Turn pages quietly and slowly, and at an appropriate moment, eg. during loud passages
- Do not turn your page during solos or quiet passages.
- When not singing, either follow the score or turn to the next entry. Do not flick pages back and forth as this indicates to the audience that you are bored.
- Mark ahead of time where your next entrance is (eg. with a Post-it) and know the cues to your entrance so that you don't need to follow along.
- Do not put your music down during solos, between movements of a piece, or between pieces (unless instructed by the conductor).
- After finishing the last piece before an intermission or the last piece of the concert, put your music down as soon as the audience starts clapping. Folders should be held in the same hand as upon entry.

Applause and Concert Etiquette

- Do not applaud the arrival of the concert master (lead violinist) at the beginning of the concert nor in between movements.
- Sit and stand with the orchestra.
- After the concert, do not applaud the conductor or soloists until after the chorus has taken its first bow.
- Take cues from the orchestra at the end of the performance in response to applause.

SSC MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- One complimentary ticket (or voucher for one ticket) will be given to each performing member for each performing concert.
- Members enjoy priority booking for SSC concerts at discounted rates. Order forms are usually distributed at least 1-2 months prior to each concert. Contact to the Choral Executive for more info.
- **Active members are also accorded Honorary SSO Friends status** and enjoy many other benefits and privileges including priority booking and discounts on SSO concerts. See below for eligibility.
- The SSO hosts an annual dinner for SSC members.

Honorary SSO Friends Membership Criteria

For the purpose of determining eligibility for SSO Friends membership, the following criteria apply:

- In order to qualify for membership, you need to rehearse with the SSC regularly and you need to have performed in at least one concert. You must remain an active member of the choir after your first concert in order to receive your membership card.
- You must have paid your S\$50 SSC lifetime membership fee.
- You may apply for SSO Friends membership after your first concert. Returning members may also apply after their first performance following a break of 12 months or more.
- Membership is awarded for one year.

Deletions

- All Friends memberships will be reviewed as they come up for renewal.
- If you miss 2 concerts in a row, your Friends membership will not be renewed.
- Any extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration.
- The list of recommended deletions will be approved by the Music Director who will have the final say.

GUEST CHOIRS

Singers from guest choirs do not qualify for SSO membership. If you are from another choir and you have joined us as an individual (ie. you have performed but your choir has not) then you are only considered an SSC member if you have also paid the S\$50 lifetime membership fee to the SSC and rehearse with the SSC regularly.

TAKING LEAVE / LEAVING THE CHORUS

If you intend to take an extended break, please fill in and submit the SSC Leave of Absence form available at the notice board during rehearsal days. Forms can be found at the notice board during rehearsals

Members who leave without giving notice of their intention to return or who indicate they are going on leave "indefinitely" are deemed to have quit the chorus and are welcome to apply to rejoin at a later date. Likewise, any member who does not attend rehearsals for over 2 months without indicating specific intentions to return is considered to have quit.