

Oratorio Society of Minnesota Members' Guide 2022-23

Membership

To fully appreciate what OSM stands for, members should be familiar with our mission statement: *The Oratorio Society of Minnesota challenges and delights its audiences and singers through dynamic and diverse choral music performed with skill and passion. Its civic engagement and educational programs foster lifelong choral singing.*

Membership means commitment to the rehearsal and performance schedule. Please mark your calendars accordingly. Schedule changes are sometimes necessary; these are announced at rehearsals and through Choir Genius. Some singers may be unable to follow through on their commitment due to such reasons as illness, a family issue, unforeseen travel, or work conflict. Please inform the OSM Chorus Manager, Julie Kirsch, of such situations promptly at oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com. Don't just disappear! Singers who repeatedly drop out without giving notice will need to obtain the Artistic Director's consent to return to the group.

Membership also means sharing your gifts whenever possible. Members share their musical talents, but you may have additional abilities to share with the group. As a nonprofit organization, the existence and advancement of OSM are extremely dependent on the donated time and talents of its dedicated volunteers and there are many opportunities for singers to perform in additional roles. The more singers (and family members) we have participating in additional volunteer tasks, the stronger the group will be. Joining a committee or signing up for short-term tasks such as envelope stuffing or party organizing, is expected and encouraged for all members. It is also an excellent way to get acquainted with other members.

Singers are also encouraged to connect with OSM and with each other on Facebook, and are periodically invited to share feedback anonymously via online surveys.

OSM membership also means being a team player and making every effort to work harmoniously with others; please be aware that a singer may be dismissed from the organization if their conduct is deemed by the board of directors to be detrimental to OSM.

Members are expected to continue their musical development and may be assessed by the Artistic Director periodically to see what they could be working on to continue improving their musical skills. Please be aware that a singer's participation may be suspended at the Artistic Director's discretion if their vocal condition or level of musicianship compromises the artistic quality of OSM performances; they may re-audition after the problems have been addressed.

You are required to register in the membership area at osm.choirgenius.com, where you can provide your contact information and concert participation status, and access rehearsal and procedural information, the member photo directory, home practice resources, your ticket sales record, etc. But please remember that even if you check yourself for a concert in the member area, you will not actually be on the roster until you have emailed your intention to the OSM Chorus Manager, Julie Kirsch, at oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com. We sing our best when we have a full audience, and OSM also depends on ticket revenue to help with operating expenses. Consequently, OSM membership also means promoting the concerts with your friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, and casual acquaintances, and a commitment to selling a certain number of tickets per season. **Please read the following section carefully!**

OSM Ticket Sale Commitment 2022-2023

In lieu of paying dues, each member must sell 4 tickets per concert or 8 tickets during the 2022-2023 concert season. The OSM concert season includes the fall and spring concerts. You may, for example, sell 6 tickets for the fall concert and 2 tickets for the spring concert.

If an OSM member sings in only one concert during the season he/she must sell a minimum of 4 tickets. Members are encouraged to sell more tickets if possible as OSM relies heavily on ticket sales to meet our annual budget. OSM's goal is to fill as many seats in the performance hall as possible.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Ticket Sales Commitment

1. If I am part of a couple who sings in OSM, must both of us meet the ticket sales quota?
—Yes. Each OSM member is responsible for meeting his/her ticket sales quota.

2. What happens if an OSM member does not meet the ticket sales quota at the end of the season?

—During the course of the year the number of tickets each member sells is tracked and recorded in Choir Genius. You may check there to see how many tickets you've sold. A member may not begin the new concert season without fulfilling his/her ticket sales commitment. To remain in good standing, members with a ticket sales shortfall must pay the amount of the tickets they did not sell. For example, if you sold 6 tickets over the course of the season (and there were two concerts) and tickets cost \$25 per ticket, you would owe \$50 (the equivalent of 2 concert tickets). This would not be considered a tax-deductible donation.

3. If I sell 15 tickets in a season, will I receive credit the following season?
—No. But OSM truly appreciates your effort in selling extra tickets!

4. If I make a generous contribution to OSM do I still have to sell tickets?
—Contributions are greatly appreciated. They help us achieve innovative and ambitious musical goals. But in the spirit of fairness and consistency, the ticket sales requirement applies to all OSM members.

5. If I sell preferred tickets, does this mean I can sell fewer tickets?
—The ticket quota remains the same.

6. What if one of my guests did not purchase tickets through me but is attending the concert because of my invitation, will I still receive credit for their purchase?
—Yes. Contact OSM's Ticket Sales Manager, Kim Petersen, kimvolker@gmail.com, to receive credit.

If you experience financial difficulty and can not meet the ticket sales requirement, we encourage you to contact the OSM Chorus Manager, Julie Kirsch, at oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com. We always try to work something out that helps our singers.

2022-2023 Music Scores Policy

Scores will be purchased through OSM. All purchased music must be paid for at the time it is distributed. Payment may be made on the Choir Genius website. If you prefer, cash is also accepted at a practice. Please remember to bring your checkbook with you to rehearsal. If paying by cash, please try to have the correct amount because change may not be readily available.

Practice at Home

Members are expected to work on music between rehearsals — fixing notes, difficult spots, texts, phrasing, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, etc. Should you miss a rehearsal, please ask someone in your section for markings you may have missed. Despite busy schedules, dedicated members spend at least a couple of hours per week on this, in addition to regular vocalizing. If you can sit down at the piano at home to work on your part, that's great! Since this is not an option for many people, the use of such home practice aids as midi files, Cyberbass, and CDs is encouraged, and members will be kept informed about their availability. If you have any questions about musical notation or other issues, please alert us by e-mail (see below) so we may provide assistance.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held each Monday evening from 7:15–9:30 pm at Macalester Plymouth United Church, 1658 Lincoln Ave., St. Paul, MN. If there is a break, it will not be a long one, so before and after rehearsal is the best time for ticket sales, socializing, etc. The rehearsal time may be extended to 9:45 in the weeks immediately preceding a performance, to allow for additional refinements.

Rehearsals are the core of our experience in the Oratorio Society—they provide the essential time to prepare the wonderful and often challenging choral works. Rehearsals need to begin promptly at the time specified, which means that members must be in their seats, preferably warmed up, and ready to sing at that time.

It's a good idea to be at the rehearsal location about 15 minutes ahead of time — to find a parking spot, get inside, take off your coat, pick up handouts, visit, and so forth. It really makes life a lot easier for everyone to build in that extra 15 minutes!

Always bring a pencil with you to rehearsal to mark your music.

Please, no heavy fragrances that may affect the allergies of others. Unscented deodorant and clean clothes are appreciated. Please, no onion, garlic, tobacco, alcohol, or other strong odors on breath.

Please have the courtesy to listen attentively and refrain from unnecessary talking or interrupting during rehearsal and announcement time. If you need to remind your neighbor to be courteous so you can hear the conductor or other speakers, please try to do so diplomatically. All members are expected to interact in a mature and peaceful manner; verbal and physical aggression are causes for dismissal.

During rehearsals, please turn off your cell phone, or put it on vibrate. If you are experiencing an urgent situation during the evening and need to communicate with someone, please have the courtesy to go out in the hall to do your calling, texting, or emailing so you don't distract other singers.

Members who attend a rehearsal and are not able to fully participate because of illness can get the director's notes from another chorus member. Please follow the CDC/practice venues guidelines for returning to practice. Recording the choir practice is being considered.

We occasionally plan gatherings for the break or after rehearsal. Sign-up sheets will be circulated for those who would like to provide treats.

Attendance

Please remember to check yourself in on the attendance sheets every week so you will not be counted absent when you are actually present. It is important to take care of this as it could affect your eligibility to perform in concerts. According to current policy, a singer who misses more than two rehearsals per quarter may be expected to attend a make-up rehearsal (usually with the assistant conductor) before performing in a concert. This is also a time when any chorus member can attend and take advantage of this additional rehearsal for a little extra practice.

If you miss due to illness or a scheduling conflict, please notify Julie Kirsch at oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com so we will be aware of your situation. Please notify us also, if you need to drop out--instead of simply not showing up for an extended period.

Announcements

There is a very short time during each rehearsal for important announcements; other items of information are communicated in a newsletter, handout, or Choir Genius. We can't afford to spend rehearsal time getting into discussions or reports. If you have a pressing matter that affects the entire group, please e-mail it to the Chorus Manager at least one day before the rehearsal (instead of a last-minute "ambush" on Monday night). If you wish to share flyers or invitations for musical events, please touch base with Julie Kirsch, Chorus Manager, in advance. There is a place on the Choir Genius platform to post information as well.

If you have more complicated issues that require discussion, please communicate them directly to a board member or e-mail Julie at oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com.

***OSM Board of Directors: This is a partial list of board members which will be updated in the coming weeks.**

Briar Duffy

Mark Gustafson

Karen Jollie

Andrea Hansen

Rick Saumer

*As new members join the board of directors in the 2022-2023 season, their contact information will be on the Choir Genius website.

Concert attire and accessories

The purpose of OSM's dress code is to keep the audience focused on the music and minimize distractions. **THANK YOU FOR MAKING OUR GROUP LOOK PROFESSIONAL & CONSISTENT WITH OSM'S ATTIRE GUIDELINES!**

Black Folders: Members provide their own black (matte finish) folder for music and must take it to dress rehearsals and concerts. Folders can be purchased through OSM if you wish.

Men wear black tuxedos, white dress shirt with white studs or buttons, black bow tie, black cummerbund, and black socks and black shoes. There may be concerts where men are asked to wear black dress shirts; information will be provided as to where these may be purchased. The dress shirt should not have a collar type that flips up at the ends. The shoes can be dress or casual but should not be tennis or athletic type. The bow tie should not be distractingly large.

Women may wear the dress style OR skirt & top OR dress pants & top of their choice within the following guidelines. Please remember: Our goal is to keep audience members' attention on the music and

faces, not the attire.

FABRIC & STYLE IN GENERAL

- Black, matte-finish fabric, please. Generally, this rules out shiny satin or silk, as well as lace. Short-napped velvet is allowed. If wearing skirt or dress pants + top (rather than a dress), please try to match the fabric type and shade of black as much as possible.
- Sheer fabric must be fully lined, including sleeves.
- Please no ruffles or sparkles that catch the light!

NECKLINE

- Any simple neckline is acceptable. Collars are acceptable, but please no turtlenecks or mock turtlenecks—and no ruffles, please.
- Please avoid showing of cleavage! The lowest point of neckline should not show cleavage while in singing position or while seated. Please check in the mirror.
- Shoulders must be covered.

SLEEVES

- Long sleeves are required; no sheer, lace or balloon-shaped sleeves. Black simple long-sleeved jacket (no sheer or ruffled sleeves) is allowed if you have a short sleeved or sleeveless dress or blouse.
- Wrist finish may be elastic, plain hemmed, buttoned, or cuffed.

SKIRT OR PANTS

- Skirt or dress pants may be full or narrow. Palazzo-style pants are allowed. Please note: dress pants are not black jeans, activewear, cropped pants, leggings, or jeggings. They must be full-length dress pants. Please no ruffles or uneven hems.
- Length: a long skirt or pants is very important. Hemline normally would touch top of your shoe at the front. If top of your ankle shows, the hemline is too short and should be lengthened. **Be sure to wear your concert shoes when setting the length of your dress or pants. Hemline length is most commented on by audience members! Also be sure length is not so long that it threatens to trip you on stairs, etc. Experiment with your concert shoes on.
- Back slit in skirt is fine, but please, no higher than back of knee.

WAIST

- Waist may be gathered, loose, belted, empire...
- Guidelines for belt if worn: black matte, no shiny belts. If buckle is included, make it black.

SHOES AND HOSE

- Black matte or patent low-heeled shoes (2” or lower), please. No boots or ballet slippers, please. Be sure you test your shoe height while wearing your apparel to attain the proper skirt or pants length, i.e. no shorter than ankle length. Remember to choose shoes that provide support, room and comfort.
- Black hose, please, with skirt or pants—knee-high hose is fine! Hose is required--no bare legs.

JEWELRY

- Jewelry is optional. If you choose to wear jewelry, please follow the guidelines:
- Earrings: small earrings, gold or silver. If wearing hoop or dangle earrings, please keep them 1” or less in length.
- Necklace: plain gold or silver chain necklace without pendant. Please keep size of chain link to 1/2” or less.
- Rings: please leave your large, sparkly costume rings at home!

For ready-made dress/pants resources (or to view style examples), see <http://www.stageaccents.com>. Great styles are: Dress - Maltese Long Sleeve #8601, Geneva Long Sleeve #8665. Palazzo pants - Glory Palazzo #4629 (straight-legged trousers are fine), Skirt – Glory #4634, Jacket (if wearing short-sleeved or sleeveless top) - Glory #4624. *Please note ship times, which in some cases can be 4-6 weeks.*

Choir Genius

All communications distributed on behalf of the Oratorio Society of Minnesota to OSM membership through its use of Choir Genius are primarily used for OSM purposes only, such as to share information or for emergency notifications.

Anyone wishing to send a message to the OSM membership should submit the message to Julie Kirsch, OSM Chorus Manager, for approval and processing. Requests should preferably be submitted a few days prior to the desired distribution date. Please be aware that your message may be edited if deemed appropriate.

It is important to make sure you can receive official OSM communications, which will be sent from Choir Genius. If you have not been receiving OSM communication, you might check your spam folder and also verify that we have your correct contact information.

Cancellations

The Oratorio Society will cancel performances only if the venue itself closes. Please keep yourself informed of closings at WCCO-TV or radio and watch your e-mail for an announcement from OSM. In the unlikely event a concert must be cancelled, it is the OSM member’s responsibility to inform your ticket customers, so please keep their contact information handy! In the case of weekly rehearsals at MPUC, these will be canceled if the Artistic Director decides to cancel and you will be informed by e-mail.

Performance and Staging Guidelines

The following guidelines have been developed over the years by Oratorio Society chorus members. Suggestions are always welcome.

Preparation

- Please make every effort to smell clean and fresh, because we will be in close quarters! A shower and shampoo within 24 hours prior to both dress rehearsal and concert would be appropriate, as well as unscented deodorant and clean clothes.
- No perfume, cologne, heavy hairspray, or after-shave. Some singers have serious allergies.
- No onion, garlic, cigarette, cigar, pipe, alcohol, or other strong odors on breath.
- Turn off chimes and alarms on watches and beepers, or don't wear the watch or beeper. No cell phones, please.
- Have sections of the music you are not singing **clipped or bound together** so you are not turning pages during passages of music being performed by soloists and/or the orchestra alone.

On-Stage Etiquette

- Carry music in whichever hand the conductor specifies, down at side, going on and off stage.
- Be prepared to clear a path for conductor, soloists, and musicians if necessary.
- Bring your music up when the conductor puts a foot on the podium as the concert begins & starting the second half of the concert.
- Be sure to watch the conductor as much as possible. This may sound like an unnecessary reminder, but it's amazing how singers show the tops of their heads to the audience.
- Look pleasant (or show appropriate emotion), relax, enjoy the music and concert experience.
- Please turn pages inconspicuously and well ahead of choral entrances.
- Stand or sit quietly. Avoid talking or making direct eye contact with members of the audience while performing. Expressive movement during singing can enhance one's experience of the music; be aware, however, that too much movement may be distracting.
- During any long periods of time when you are not singing, hold your music at "resting" in position, but a little lower than when you're singing. (Ex: while conductor or other speaker is addressing the audience; during solos and instrumental interludes)
- Please do not follow along in your score during solos or instrumental interludes. Stay engaged with the music, but keep your head up. These pages should have already been clipped together. The audience wants to see your face; not the top of your head.
- Put your music down to your left side when the conductor steps off the podium at the end of the first half and the end of the concert, or if there is choral movement from one part of the stage to another.

- Please do not clap for anyone on-stage, since you are part of the performance. However, a relaxed stance and a smile are encouraged.
- We will begin to exit the stage when the applause has subsided, or as the conductor specifies. Leaders should begin to exit immediately at that point. Be sure to go all the way out of the back stage area as quickly as possible to avoid a traffic pileup. Please do not stop to talk until the entire chorus has exited the stage - keep the lines moving.
- Encore - these vary, so pay attention to the conductor to see when/if the chorus exits, or remains on stage.