

PEABODY CHILDREN'S CHORUS

HANDBOOK

FOR
PARENTS

Note: Please save this handbook for as long as your child is in chorus.
Only one copy is issued.

www.peabody.jhu.edu/chorus



THE PEABODY PREPARATORY
OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

PEABODY CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Handbook for Parents

(Revised September 2011)

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PEABODY CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Peabody Children's Chorus. I hope your child will find singing in the chorus to be an enjoyable experience, and that it will lead your whole family to an even greater love of music.

This handbook is designed to help you understand our purposes, and to provide you with information about our organization. Please read it carefully and keep it in a safe place for reference.

If you ever have any questions, do not hesitate to get in touch with me or our Chorus Manager. Also, check our website at www.peabody.jhu.edu/chorus often for information and updates. I am looking forward to working with your child during the coming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doreen Falby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, circular flourish at the end of the name.

Doreen Falby, Director

Our Purpose

The primary goal of the Peabody Children's Chorus is to enrich the lives of participating children, and their audiences, by means of rehearsing and performing high quality music literature. We wish to keep alive the spirit of joy which people experience when they gather together to sing or to hear beautiful music.

We aim to train our students to be musical leaders in their own generation by keeping alive our musical heritage—whether it be Western art songs, American folk songs, or music from other cultures. We achieve this through age-appropriate vocal training and ear training, and by striving for the highest quality performance within the various musical styles.

There are other benefits to be gained from this endeavor: a wonderful result of this process of ensemble music making is that it cultivates in each member his or her own sense of responsibility, commitment, self-discipline, confidence and poise—key ingredients for success in any field of endeavor. We encourage our students to appreciate high standards of artistic excellence and to cultivate a love of beauty that can enrich each individual's experience for a lifetime.

General Information

STAYING IN TOUCH

Please do stay in touch with us; but please do so by email, telephone or letter whenever possible. Please do not interrupt rehearsals or speak with the director or accompanist when they are in the rehearsal room. (This time is very precious and is best spent greeting the students, answering their questions, and focusing our attention on the job at hand.)

Along the same lines, please do not ask the student to pass along a message to us unless it is in the form of a written note.

The best way to reach us quickly is by e-mail.

We do want to hear from you, and we appreciate your help to make our rehearsals run as smoothly as possible.

HOMEWORK

We rehearse and perform art songs and folk songs, of many cultures, languages, historical periods, and styles. Sometimes we also commission new works, which are premièred by the chorus.

Students are expected to memorize all music for performances; we do not use scores at concert rehearsals or concerts.

Training Choir and Chorister parents: Please practice texts of songs at home with your child to assist him or her with memorizing words.

Chamber Singer parents: Please encourage your singer to practice his or her music at least four times a week outside of rehearsal. Chamber Singers are sometimes provided with a CD that they must use to study at home.

TAKING CARE OF SCORES

All musical scores are the property of the Peabody Children's Chorus, and may not be copied or transferred to another person or organization without the prior approval of Mrs. Falby. These scores are often very costly and sometimes difficult or impossible to replace. Therefore, each student must assume the responsibility of looking after our music very carefully.

Markings in the music should be made IN PENCIL (*NEVER IN PEN*). They must also be neat and legible so the next person to use the music has no difficulty reading it. ALL music must be returned by the concert rehearsal.

We appreciate your help and support as we encourage our young musicians to treat our music with respect.

Rehearsal Information

ATTENDANCE POLICIES (also see concert rehearsal attendance policies, on page 6)

The Peabody Children’s Chorus is an ensemble committed to musical excellence.

If any member of that ensemble is missing, the character, spirit and sound of the whole is altered. Each individual voice and personality is of great importance to all. Your child’s consistent attendance will ensure that he or she becomes a vital part of the Peabody Children’s Chorus.

Training Choir and Choristers

Each student is allowed two absences per semester (semesters run September–December, and January–May). After two absences in one semester, a student must make-up any missed rehearsals at the other campus. Otherwise, a student will be prohibited from participating in any concerts that semester due to the student’s lack of rehearsal preparation. Exceptions may be made in extreme cases.

Chamber Singers

Our Chamber Singers are the leaders of the chorus and we have high expectations for this select group of students. Therefore, these young professionals-in-training are expected to attend every rehearsal and to make-up any missed rehearsals by attending the other campus. Exceptions may be made in extreme cases.

As we want to ensure the safety of our students, *a student may not leave a rehearsal early without the permission of the instructor and written notification from the parent.*

It is especially important that every student attend his or her regular campus weekly rehearsal immediately before a concert rehearsal. This mandatory rehearsal is part of a carefully thought out sequence of training which prepares the student for performance and allows each student to participate in concerts with confidence and comfort.

MAKING UP A MISSED REHEARSAL

All students are encouraged to attend rehearsals at other campuses in order to make-up absences. Please e-mail or call the Chorus Manager *at least one full day before planning to attend* another campus, so we know to expect your child, and so we can alert you if the rehearsal is cancelled for any reason.

Following are rehearsal times for both campuses (directions are located on page 12):

Towson Campus – Tuesdays	Howard County Campus – Thursdays
Training Choir 4:30–5:30 p.m.	Training Choir 5:00–6:00 p.m.
Choristers 5:30–7:00 p.m.	Choristers 6:00–7:30 p.m.
Chamber Singers 7:00–9:00 p.m.	Chamber Singers 7:30–9:30 p.m.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Parents may drop off and pick up the singer at the entrance to the building (or at the end of the ramp in Howard County). Parents of younger Training Choir students are encouraged to park and walk their children to and from the chorus sign-in desk at the beginning and end of rehearsal.

Children should never be left unsupervised at any of our campuses.

Choristers and Chamber Singers must stay in assigned areas during breaks:

Towson: in the foyer of the building.

Howard County: in the Fellowship Hall

Remember: a student will not be permitted to leave rehearsal early without a written note signed by his or her parent.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

For students:

- All students must wear comfortable, FLAT shoes or sneakers to all rehearsals, including concert rehearsals. Flip-flops and clogs are not suitable footwear for rehearsals.
- Gum and hats are strictly prohibited at all chorus rehearsals and concerts.
- Students must bring their music folder to every rehearsal.
- Choristers and Chamber Singers must bring two sharpened pencils with erasers and a **non-spill water bottle** to every rehearsal.
- Training choir students are not to bring any food or drink to rehearsals.
- Chamber Singers may bring a snack and a drink for break. No opened food or drink containers are permitted in the rehearsal space.
- Students must leave the rehearsal and break areas in the way they found them (no trash on floor, etc.).

For parents:

- Parents are welcome to visit the rehearsal room once or twice during the year. In order to ensure the least amount of distraction for students, we limit the number of parents who observe on any given day. Please call or e-mail to alert Mrs. Falby in advance if you plan to observe, and please assume you can attend unless you hear from us.
- Parents may not observe rehearsals during the month of September or during the week prior to end-of-semester concerts.
- Parents are not permitted to attend concert rehearsals.
- We send letters to parents electronically, so please check your e-mail frequently.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICIES

Public school closings do not necessarily mean that chorus rehearsals will be cancelled, since our rehearsals are held after school and weather might improve throughout the day.

Please call the Hopkins Weather Hotline at (410) 516-7781 or 1-800-548-9004 for the latest news on weather-related closing information.

Concert Information

CONCERT UNIFORM

Concert dress is worn for all Peabody Children's Chorus performances and for Uniform Day in November. We check all uniforms on Uniform Day in order to ensure each student has the appropriate concert outfit before our first concert. If your child cannot attend Uniform Day, please have your child wear his or her uniform to the next regular rehearsal.

ALL Girls:

- To be purchased by parents:
 - Uniform blouse and skirt (order information will be given at the beginning of the year).
 - Opaque black tights for Training Choir and Choristers; off-black knee highs for Chamber Singers.
 - PLAIN, FLAT, non-shiny, black dress shoes (no clogs, sandals, sneakers or boots permitted); large front buckles or other decoration can be covered with black electrical tape. For safety reasons, shoes must be flat (heels of one inch or less).
- Peabody Children's Chorus will provide bow.
- Please pull hair back off the face whenever possible.
- Jewelry, earrings, belts, make-up, nail polish and perfume are strictly prohibited.
- White or beige camisole may be worn under shirt if desired (no dark colored garments should be worn under your concert shirt).

Boys: Training Choir and Choristers only

- To be purchased by parents:
 - White, long-sleeved shirt; *oxford cloth* with button-down collar.
 - Black dress slacks (no jeans permitted).
 - Black socks and black dress shoes (no sneakers or boots permitted).
- Peabody Children's Chorus will provide tie.

Boys: Chamber Singers

- To be purchased by parents:
 - Uniform shirt (order information will be given at the beginning of the year).
 - Black dress slacks (no jeans permitted).
 - Black socks and black dress shoes (no sneakers or boots permitted).
- Peabody Children's Chorus will provide tie.

CONCERT REHEARSAL

So that our concert rehearsals and performances run as smoothly as possible and in order to ensure a safe, well-ordered and rewarding experience for all our students, we require all singers to be present for their scheduled concert rehearsal to be eligible to sing in a performance.

Religious reasons concerning the student's immediate family are the sole exceptions to this attendance rule. In order to allow us to plan well for our concerts and so we can find a "concert buddy" for your child, a request for absence due to religious reasons must be submitted in writing **AT LEAST FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO THE PERFORMANCE.**

We usually hold end-of-semester concerts in both Baltimore and Columbia. If your child cannot make the concert rehearsal or concert at their own campus, and you would like to request that your child sing at the other location, please email the Chorus Manager at least **FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO THE PERFORMANCE.**

Important: A student may not arrive late for concert rehearsals nor leave early.

Please plan ahead, especially if attending the student's first concert rehearsal at the Peabody campus (downtown). It can be time consuming to find parking and make one's way to the concert hall at the Preparatory's main campus.

If your child is late to a concert rehearsal due to a circumstance that is truly beyond your control, please **DO NOT DISTURB** the rehearsal. Instead, please have your child join the other children on stage as quietly as possible, and please talk with Mrs. Falby after the rehearsal is over.

**** Students must wear comfortable, flat shoes or sneakers to all rehearsals, including the concert rehearsal (flip-flops are not permitted).***

**** No food or drink is permitted in concert halls during rehearsals or concerts.***

**** Parents are not permitted to attend concert rehearsals.***

AUDIENCE/TICKET INFORMATION

Our end-of-semester concerts, usually in December and April/May, require tickets for attendance.

***Towson** students perform at the Peabody campus (downtown) in the Miriam Friedberg Concert Hall. To reserve your tickets for both the fall and spring concerts, please call the Peabody Box Office **in September**, at (410) 234-4800. Each family is guaranteed three tickets. Additional tickets may be requested, and the Box Office staff will do their best to fulfill these requests if extra tickets are available.*

***Howard County** students perform at the Jim Rouse Theater for the Performing Arts in Columbia, MD. Ticket order forms are distributed prior to the Winter and Spring concerts. Each family is guaranteed three tickets. Additional tickets may be requested on the ticket order form, and we do our best to fulfill these requests if extra tickets are available.*

** Please note that concert locations may change depending on hall availability. We will notify chorus families well in advance should this occur.*

Since we wish to ensure our students have the opportunity to perform without interruption, and because we make an audio recording of our end-of-semester concerts, **we ask that you not bring along any guests under five years of age.**

The taking of **photographs** during all performances is **prohibited**. Any kind of **recording** during performances in the **Friedberg Hall** is **prohibited**. Parents may usually videotape performances from the **balcony** of the Rouse Theater.

Student Progress and Placement

PROGRESS REPORTS

Interim Progress Reports: The Preparatory can dismiss a student for lack of interest or progress and for behavioral problems. If there is something affecting your child's progress, such as multiple absences, your child's teacher will complete an interim progress report. This is simply to ensure you are made aware of anything that is making your child's experience with us less than it should be.

End-of-Year Reports: At the end of the school year, each student receives a progress report.

So that you can see what is expected, a copy of the end-of-year report is included at the back of this handbook.

RESERVING YOUR CHILD'S PLACE IN THE CHORUS

In **March**, we collect information on the number of current students who plan to return to chorus the following year. This information is used to determine how many spots are available before we audition new members. It is also used by the director to assist in making decisions about placements for the coming year.

We will ask you to complete an INTENT TO REGISTER FORM to indicate whether or not your child plans to return to chorus and return it to the "sign-in" parent at rehearsal. If you do not return this form, your child's place will be forfeited and he or she will have to re-audition to join the chorus. Returning this form will hold your child's place, but will not constitute registration. You will still have to register your child in the usual way through the Preparatory Office.

VOCAL CHECK-UPS

To help us keep track of each singer's progress, we meet with the following students in May for a vocal check-up:

- *Training Choir members who will be ten years of age by December 30th, or who have sung with the Training Choir for 3 years;*
- *Choristers who will be twelve years of age by September 30th, or who have sung with the Choristers for three years.*

Appointment sign-up times are listed on the INTENT TO REGISTER FORM (see above).

During these check-ups, we ask our students to sing a vocal warm-up (in order to hear their range), a song from the PCC Spring Concert, and a canon (e.g., *Row Your Boat*). These assessments help us to complete the End-of-Year reports and provide the opportunity to make decisions about the student's placement for the following year. Placement is based on the following:

- a) Conduct during rehearsals
- b) Musical ability
- c) Development of the voice
- d) Age

EVALUATION FOR CHAMBER SINGERS

Returning Chamber Singers re-audition for their spots in chorus every May. We hear them sing in small groups and also individually. In these auditions, we ask each student to sing his/her part in any song from the current repertoire, from memory. We also take into consideration attendance and behavior in rehearsal. If we do have any students who do not do well on the audition, they will be put on probation for the fall semester. A second audition is again done in December to re-evaluate the student's progress.

Becoming a Professional Musician

We are often in the fortunate position of being able to have our singers work with professional musicians. Our singers regularly perform with other arts organizations and later on, many of our students set off for college to be music majors, minors or to sing in their college chorus. Whether our students are rehearsing or performing with the Baltimore Choral Arts Society, The Peabody Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Opera Company, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra or performing at the college level, they are and will be working with musicians who expect them to exhibit a professional level of conduct appropriate to their artistic achievement. One of the ways in which we achieve this standard of excellence is by reviewing these suggestions for concert etiquette and expected behaviors together.

Some tips on behaving in a professional manner:

As a chorus member

1. Be punctual. Late arrivals are distracting for others.
2. Be prepared. A professional musician knows (in our case, memorizes) the music and is ready to be a leader in rehearsal. Bring your folders and pencils to rehearsal when appropriate.
3. Be responsible. Take care of your music scores, uniforms, etc. Return bows and ties after every concert. Return music scores when appropriate.
4. Resolve to look like a musician, even in rehearsal. Sit/stand tall, pay attention and “put the song on your face”. Please do not complain about being tired or overloaded with homework. Chances are you are not the only one “in that boat”.
5. When you are on-stage for a concert rehearsal or concert, refrain from scratching, yawning, playing with your hair (tie it back), looking at your watch or putting your head in your hands. If you make a mistake, do not wince or indicate in any way you’ve done something you wish you hadn’t.
6. When you are complimented for a performance, refrain from “downplaying” your achievements. Respect the opinion of the person who is praising you. In this case, a simple, “thank you,” is appropriate.
7. Be respectful and courteous to your peers at all times. We are all in this together. If you hear someone criticizing another singer, try to counter with a positive remark. If someone is chosen to sing a solo, please be supportive (if *you* were the soloist, what would you like another chorus member to say?).
8. Remember, whenever you are at an outside rehearsal or performance, or even just in the hallway during a regular rehearsal, you are a representative for your whole ensemble—behave appropriately. Think beyond your own particular needs; in making music, you are an important part of a larger effort. Rejoice in the energy that comes from being part of it and graciously accept the responsibility that goes along with membership.
9. In this connection, remember what a privilege it is to have the opportunity to work on great music with other musicians, whether in your own group or together with another ensemble, and take pride in your contribution.

As an audience member

1. Be punctual. If you must be late, enter during applause.
2. Silence all cell phones, beepers, pagers and watches that make noise; do not talk or engage in distractive or noisy tasks during any individual or group performance.
3. It is never polite to rush out of the concert hall during the final applause in order to “beat the crowds”.

Helpful Hints

VOCAL HEALTH

- Drink plenty of water.
- Do not sing if there are any signs of hoarseness in the voice.
- Avoid soda, milk and milk products before a performance.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Avoid shouting; speak as little as possible in noisy environments.
- Refrain from using a “pop-style” voice (called a chest or belting voice). Sing with a high, light voice at all times (head voice), and without an artificially produced vibrato (“shake” in vocal sound).
- Refrain from participating in other singing activities (such as musicals) unless the person in charge is an expert in working with children’s voices. Also make sure other activities will not conflict with PCC rehearsals or performances.

LISTENING

Please encourage your young musician to listen to all styles of music. Consider attending some of the many vocal, instrumental, chamber music and orchestral concerts at the Peabody Institute. For information about these concerts (many of which are free), visit the Peabody website at www.peabody.jhu.edu, or call the Peabody Box Office at (410) 234-4800 to request a concert calendar. Some concerts may require ticket purchase, but Peabody students are eligible for one free ticket to any performance (must present Preparatory ID or other form of enrollment verification).

Some other musical organizations in the area:

- *Baltimore Choral Arts Society* (410) 523-7070
- *Baltimore Concert Opera* (443) 844-3496
- *Baltimore Symphony Orchestra* (410) 783-8000
- *Columbia Festival of the Arts* (410) 715-3044
- *Columbia Orchestra* (410) 465-8777
- *Columbia Pro Cantare* (410) 465-5744
- *Concert Artists of Baltimore* (410) 625-3525
- *Handel Choir of Baltimore* (410) 366-6544

Appendix I: End-of-Year Report

The Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University
The Preparatory

THE PEABODY CHILDREN'S CHORUS

End-Of-Year Report

STUDENT NAME:

ENSEMBLE:

TEACHER: Doreen Falby

Parents,

Here is a list of expectations for members of the Peabody Children's Chorus, and an indication of your child's progress in each category.

E = Excellent G = Good S = Satisfactory NI = Needs Improvement

_____ Student demonstrates commitment and helps promote ensemble unity through consistent attendance

Total no. of late arrivals/absences: _____

_____ Student gives best effort and demonstrates leadership in rehearsal

_____ Student works on and shows progress in the development of vocal technique

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT YEAR:

COMMENTS:

Report prepared by Doreen Falby, Director Date _____

Appendix II: Directions to Campuses

Peabody campus (downtown), (410) 659-8100, press 0 for operator, or 3 for Preparatory Office (direct line – 410-234-4630).

These directions will take you to the Peabody parking garage, located at the northwest corner of St. Paul and Center St. There is also some street parking in the area. Enter the Peabody Institute on Mt. Vernon Place. We will put up signs to help you find your way to PCC Rehearsals or Concerts.

From Towson

- Take I-83 south almost to end, pass exits for Charles & St. Paul
- Exit onto Guilford for about a block
- Right on East Monument St.
- At the top of the hill, take a left on St. Paul and get in right lane immediately.
- Peabody Garage is on right; go in second arch-like door, take ticket, and park.
- To get to the main entrance, walk out of the garage, turn left on to St. Paul St., then left onto Mt. Vernon Place. The entrance is on the left about two thirds of the way up the block.

From Howard County

- I-95 to Baltimore
- I-395 exit, stay in right lane
- Road splits—stay right for Martin Luther King Boulevard
- Get in middle lane (right lane will disappear in a few blocks)
- Right onto Druid Hill Avenue (the one after Pennsylvania Ave)
- Follow Druid Hill as it bears slightly to the left onto Center Street; drive several blocks.
- Immediately after the main building of the Walters Art Gallery (on the left) there are 2 roads which turn left onto Charles Street (the 2 roads are separated by a grassy area and a sharp hill, on which stands the tall Washington Monument; take the second left.
- To get to the garage, turn right at the light onto Mt. Vernon Place, then right at the light onto St. Paul
- The Peabody Garage is on your right just before the light at Center Street; go in second arch-like door, take ticket, and park.
- To get to the main entrance, walk out of the garage, turn left on to St. Paul St., then left onto Mt. Vernon Place. The entrance is on the left about two thirds of the way up the block.

Appendix II: Directions to Campuses

HOWARD COUNTY CAMPUS, Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, 10689 Owen Brown Road, Columbia, near the intersection of Owen Brown and Cedar Lane.

From Towson

- Baltimore Beltway I-695
- I-70 west toward Frederick
- Route 29 South toward Columbia (left exit)
- Take exit 18, Broken Land Parkway, toward Columbia Town Center (stay left at the fork on the ramp, and turn left at light at end of ramp)
- Turn left onto Hickory Ridge Road
- Turn left at the light onto Martin Road
- Turn right onto Owen Brown Road, go 3/4 mile to church entrance on left (the entrance is before the traffic light at Cedar Lane)

TOWSON CAMPUS, 949 Dulaney Valley Road, Towson. (410) 825-3911

From Howard County

- Route 29 north
- I-70 east towards Baltimore
- Baltimore Beltway I-695 northeast towards Towson
- Exit 27A, Dulaney Valley Road south
- Second left onto Southerly Road
- First left into Prep parking lot

Appendix III: Request for Recommendation

Peabody Children's Chorus

- Students, please complete this form and give to Mrs. Falby at least three weeks before the recommendation is due.
- Please attach any applicable forms, and a copy of your résumé, if available.
- I will seal and mail the letter directly, unless you inform me otherwise.
- Please do not attach an envelope.

Information about you:

Your Name _____

How many years you have been in the Peabody Children's Chorus? _____

List any special PCC events in which you have taken part _____

Have you received a Peabody Achievement Award from the chorus? _____

If so, when? _____

Information about the recommendation:

When is the recommendation due? _____

Name & title of person to whom letter is to be sent _____

Address of person to whom it is to be sent _____

Is this a recommendation for high school? college? other? _____

Comments/additional information: _____
