

## **Minnetonka Cappella Choir FAQs**

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### **What are the requirements for membership?**

All students in grades 2 – 5 are welcome to join the Cappella Choir. No previous choral experience is required.

### **Can my student join this choir if s/he doesn't live in Minnetonka? Where do the members come from?**

You do not need to live in Minnetonka to join. Cappella Choir members come from many school districts including Wayzata, Maple Grove, Hopkins, Eden Prairie, Golden Valley, Edina, Minnetonka; also private and home schools. Everyone is welcome.

### **How do I arrange a voice check?**

Call or email the Music Association of Minnetonka office (952-401-5954, [mamoffice@musicassociation.org](mailto:mamoffice@musicassociation.org)) to set up a time that works for your family. New members are accepted at the start of the season in September, and in January for the spring season. Voice checks are held before and after our “Welcome” event in August, and before and after rehearsals through September and January.

### **What is the voice check like?**

The voice check is very relaxed and fun. There is no need to prepare anything! The director, Ms. Guiffre (“Ms. G”) asks students to match pitches, and assesses range, tonal memory, sight reading, and singing with accompaniment. Questions about past and current singing experience as well as instruments are included. The Cappella Choir is an educational experience as well as a performing ensemble, so the students will learn everything they need to know in the course of rehearsals.

### **When and where does the Minnetonka Cappella Choir rehearse?**

Rehearsals are at the Arts Center on 7 (18285 Highway 7, on the campus of Minnetonka High School) on Thursdays from 6-7 p.m. from September through May. There are sectionals on a rotating schedule as concerts near, which last from 7-7:30. There are two Saturday “Workshop Days”, one in early October and one in early February. These give the students a chance to focus on the music, along with fun, games and team-building activities.

### **How many performances are there in a year, and where are they held?**

Usually the students perform 2-5 concerts per season (winter and spring). Venues include local churches with the other youth choirs, and other, more casual performances added as the opportunities arise. For example, the singers participate in events like the Minnetonka Open House and Kids Fest. The Cappella Choir also performs in local choral events at the director’s discretion.

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### **What does it cost to be in the Cappella Choir?**

Costs are comparable to other activities or sports. Scholarships and a variety of payment plans are available. The Music Association of Minnetonka also offers a variety of fundraising opportunities, including evergreen/poinsettia sales in the winter and our annual plant sale in the spring. Please contact us for specific information.

### **Is financial assistance available?**

Yes, the Music Association of Minnetonka offers youth choir scholarships. Please contact the office for an application. Various fundraising opportunities are also available, including evergreen/poinsettia sales and Music Association of Minnetonka's annual plant sale.

### **What kind of music does the Cappella Choir sing?**

The director, Ms. Guiffre, selects music on the basis of quality and musical theme, regardless of religious or ethnic considerations. Recent programs include winter carols and songs, such as *The Candlelight Canon* and *Scandinavian Winter Fun*, and Pop Music through the Decades, including *Bridge over Troubled Water*, *Eleanor Rigby*, *Orinoco Flow* and *Beautiful Day*.

### **Why should my student join this choir when s/he has music in school?**

The Cappella Choir offers an enriched musical experience for students who love to sing and learn about music. Each year builds upon the preceding one, giving children who continue through the years a deep appreciation for music and their own abilities. The singers learn to work together as a team to attain their best sound, and learn to contribute individually to this overall goal. Additionally, the young singers can continue their musical performance beyond the Cappella Choir, within the family of youth choirs within the Music Association of Minnetonka, to the Concert Choir, and finally to the Chamber Choir. Working with these older groups allows the children to see what is possible for them to achieve.

### **Is attendance at every rehearsal and performance mandatory?**

We encourage families to make Cappella Choir attendance and punctuality a priority, but do not insist on perfection. Our staff and parent managers put much effort into helping make the rehearsal and performance schedule manageable. Frequent communication about schedules and events help ensure that everyone has a good understanding of coming events and opportunities. We provide a Cappella Member Handbook to each student that outlines all attendance and scheduling policies.

## **What kind of continuing opportunities are there for my singer with the choir?**

As the singers gain experience in the upper grades, they may have the opportunity to perform with and tour with our next older ensemble, the Concert Choir. These opportunities are based on the student's maturity level and ability to handle a variety of situations. They are determined by the director on a case by case basis.

Once the students move on from 5<sup>th</sup> grade, they can progress to the Concert Choir, for singers in grades 6 – 8. The Concert Choir takes young women and young men whose voices have not yet changed. Following the Concert Choir, young women in grades 9 – 12 may graduate to the Chamber Choir, which is known nationally and internationally for its vocal quality.

## **Who conducts the Minnetonka Cappella Choir?**

Kristina M. Guiffre received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Concordia University, St. Paul in 2008, where she double majored in K-12 Vocal and Classroom Music and Music: Vocal Performance. In August of 2011, Kristina was certified as an Orff Schulwerk Teacher/Practitioner through the Graduate Music department at the University of St. Thomas. In addition to being a highly skilled 1<sup>st</sup> Soprano, she plays flute, piano, guitar, percussion, hand bells, and 3 different kinds of recorders. She also teaches flute and voice lessons – contact the [MAM office](#) for more information.

Kristina has sung with VocalEssence for over 6 years. She has had the opportunity to work with some of the finest conductors and musicians from around the world. Kristina has a vast background in the arts and 15 years of dance training and many years in the theatre. Additionally, she has artistic representation with The Wehmann Agency and The Meredith Agency for music, voice over, and on-camera work.

## **Who is the accompanist?**

Angie Fechner has a Bachelor of Music in music education from UW Madison. She has accompanied choirs, vocalists and instrumentalists since junior high, taking a long break to raise and homeschool 4 children. She is now also a grandmother of 3 (4 in January) and has accompanied the Cappella Choir since 1998 and Senior Chorale since 2011.

## **Who else will be supervising my child at rehearsals? Do parents need to stay in the room?**

Typically one or both of our parent managers will be available during rehearsals, and often at least one parent acts as a “rehearsal chaperone” at each rehearsal. The chaperone accompanies children to the restrooms if needed, and can assist or make calls if a child becomes ill. Parents are welcome to take a turn as “rehearsal chaperone”, and if there is a need, the parent managers will ask for some additional help. Both managers are present for Workshop Day in the fall and winter.

**What are the core music objectives of the Minnetonka Cappella Choir? What will the students learn?**

### **Specific Objectives**

- To sing with correct posture and vocal support; extend the vocal range and learn to sing using proper pronunciations and correct diction.
- To learn to sing expressively and engage in the meaning of the texts.
- To listen to and match correct pitches on scales and intervals
- To read from a musical score
- To understand basic music terminology and concepts
- To understand and interpret text of the music
- To understand and practice basic concepts of performance etiquette
- To sing in unison, canon/rounds, 2 parts and 3 parts
- To be exposed to and study many types of music
- To memorize 15-20 minutes of music for the winter and spring concerts
- To perform in scheduled concerts
- To be supportive of fellow choir members

### **Music Theory Objectives**

- Treble and bass clef note names and solfege
- Notation skills: introduction
- Rhythmic values: whole, half, quarter, eighth, dotted half, dotted quarter, and equivalent rests
- Syncopation
- Sight singing
- Meters: simple and compound
- Beat placement in relation to meter signatures
- Introduction of accidentals
- Vocabulary
- Rhythmic dictation and interval name comprehension