

encore! **YOUTH CHOIR**

Parent and Member Handbook

Encore Music Academy
Encore Youth Choir
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What is the purpose of Encore Music Academy?

Encore Music Academy was founded in 2005 and is dedicated to serving youth and adults interested in creating great music together.

OUR VISION: EXCEL through Music: Empowering EXcellence in Character by Experience and Leadership through Music

OUR MISSION: EMA will cultivate the innate musical abilities within each individual in a nurturing and welcoming environment

OUR VALUE STATEMENT: At EMA, we will foster a community that appreciates and supports all who teach and learn here.

What are the goals of Encore Youth Choir?

Each Encore Youth Choir member will:

- ✓ Be respected, welcomed and valued as an individual
- ✓ Participate in a choir which is open to people of all racial, cultural, religious and economic backgrounds
- ✓ Develop his/her singing and musicianship skills in a fun, non-threatening, educational environment
- ✓ Interact with and be exposed to music, languages and history from other cultures and traditions
- ✓ Perform music which is of the highest quality, and is challenging and exciting to learn
- ✓ Contribute to the cultural life of his/her community and surrounding areas through concerts, tours and festivals

What will I learn in the Encore Youth Choir?

Music which is:

- ❖ Age appropriate and of excellent quality
- ❖ Fun, challenging and invites learning
- ❖ From many cultures and traditions
- ❖ Grounded with excellent texts, sometimes in foreign languages

In Aria Choir, I will have the opportunity to learn:

- ✓ Basic sight reading skills using solfege to identify and read patterns
- ✓ Basic rhythm reading skills using counting system
- ✓ Foundation skills of singing incorporating body, mind, and voice concepts
- ✓ Beginning music theory through class work
- ✓ Basic performance and audience etiquette

In Bella Voce Choir, I will have the opportunity to learn:

- ✓ Advanced beginning sight reading skills
- ✓ Intermediate rhythm reading skills using more complex rhythms and time signatures, with counting system
- ✓ Foundation skills of singing incorporating body, mind, and voice concepts
- ✓ Advanced beginning music theory through class work
- ✓ More complex music, with up to two-part harmony

In Cantabile Choir, I will have the opportunity to learn:

- ✓ Intermediate to advanced sight reading skills
- ✓ Intermediate to advanced rhythm reading skills using complex rhythms and time signatures, with counting system
- ✓ Advanced singing skills with complex, challenging music
- ✓ Intermediate music theory through class work

In Di Canto Choir, I will have the opportunity to learn:

- ✓ Intermediate to advanced sight reading skills and applied music theory
- ✓ Intermediate to advanced rhythm reading skills using complex rhythms and time signatures, with counting system
- ✓ Advanced singing skills with complex, challenging music

How Do I Find Out What is Going On with Encore Youth Choir?

All of our communication is done primarily through e-mail and handouts. Our e-newsletter, ENCORE NOTES, always has important information regarding upcoming rehearsals and performances as well as any scheduling and calendar updates and announcements from the directors and EMA staff. Please open and read these as soon as possible. Our online calendars (which can be linked to Outlook or other calendar programs) can be checked at any time. We also will use Remind.Com to keep in touch via text.

E-mails from encoremusicacademy.org will always keep your e-mail address confidential. We do not publish or share e-mail addresses. EMA and EYC use Constant Contact, which is a company that provides e-mailing tools to not-for-profit and for-profit arts corporations. If at any time you stop receiving e-mail from us please notify us immediately. If you change your e-mail address, please let us know as soon as possible.

E-mail tips:

- **Please make sure that we have your current e-mail address that you check regularly
- **Please check your settings on your e-mail program so that you are allowing e-mails from @encoremusicacademy.org
- **If you have any problems or questions please e-mail info@encoremusicacademy.org

Is Attendance at Rehearsals important?

Yes. We expect all our singers to attend every rehearsal, arriving early to sign-in, use the bathroom, get a drink (or bring a closeable water bottle) and be in their seat, ready to sing promptly at the start of rehearsal. Every rehearsal is very important as each choir is preparing challenging music that will be memorized and performed in sometimes as few as six rehearsals. Study of the background, language and culture of the pieces is discussed; sight reading of melodies and rhythms to promote musicianship, warm-ups, games and exercises to improve and strengthen singing technique are just some of the other areas covered during a single rehearsal.

What if I am sick or have to miss a rehearsal?

Throughout the course of the year, many students will never miss a rehearsal while others will have to miss due to illness, family conflicts, music concerts, or school required events. Absences affect the pacing and planning of a rehearsal, the sound and progress of the entire choir and can hamper the individual's ability to adequately learn the music for the concert. Although we encourage 100% attendance, sometimes these types of absences are unavoidable. All planned absences should be communicated to us well in advance of the conflict.

In order to help us keep track of attendance, we ask that:

- 👉 You sign-in at all rehearsals.
- 👉 You e-mail your excused absence in advance. There is a link in the members section on the website which you can fill out, or e-mail
 - attendance@encoremusicacademy.org.
- 👉 If you are sick with a fever or are contagious and will not be able to sit in your rehearsal to observe
 - Call as soon as you can: 815.356.SING (7464)

No one will be asked to leave the choir because of his/her absences; however, more than 2 absences will affect the degree to which you might participate in a concert or activity. If you have missed excessive rehearsals, your conductor will make the final decision on an individual case basis, with regards to your participation in concerts and tours.

What should I bring to rehearsals?

All students must bring the following to every rehearsal – even if you have the music memorized!

1. Pencil (sharpened!)
2. Music (all of it, in the bag)
3. WATER BOTTLE (closeable so it will not spill)

What is Music Theory?

Music theory is much like spelling and grammar for any reader or writer. It is the study of the basic concepts of music through written and aural examples. Students in Aria and Cantabile will work on a section of the theory “bluebook” during rehearsals. Your theory work will be left each week so your director can see how you’re doing. In Bella Voce and Di Canto, the study of theory concepts is integrated with sight reading work. This work will be directly related to the music being prepared for concerts.

How do I receive and return my music?

Music is handed out at the beginning of the year. Every student is assigned a number: A-15 is Aria #15, B-20 is Bella Voce #20, etc. When you receive your music, you will sign an inventory sheet which serves as your agreement to return all music in excellent condition. You should store your music in the bag provided. Some choirs are issued binders and those will need to be returned at the end of the year as well. Theory workbooks will remain at rehearsals.

At the end of the year, the music will be returned during placement interviews. All music will be handed in and checked against your inventory sheet. Any student missing music or turning in music that is in unusable condition will be charged a replacement fee.

What is Retreat?

At the beginning of the season all choirs participate in a retreat. It is a required event for all singers unless the director gives special permission for the absence. The purpose of the retreat is to give students an opportunity to meet each other through singing, games and free time (which isn’t always available during our limited regular rehearsal schedule), as well as a chance to get to know the conductor and accompanist. For the conductors, they relish the extra time to work on team building and the chance to build rapport and a sense of community within each choir and between the choirs. The choirs also spend considerable time working on their music for the year.

What are Placement Interviews?

Placement Interviews occur at the end of the year for all students (see calendar). The directors will spend time listening to your child sing, sight read and talk about their choir experience and progress. If your child is at a point where they might be old enough and ready move to the next level choir, both directors will be present (current and future) to make the decision. A progress report is sent home for each student and parent and student evaluations are completed at this time. All students complete a placement interview regardless of age or intention to join next year. If continuing, the next year’s registration form and non-refundable deposit is due at this time.

What is the Cabaret and Silent Auction?

Cabaret Night is an exciting evening of great music while enjoying a delicious dinner and the opportunity to bid during our annual Silent Auction. The concert is attended by over 300 people annually and proceeds from the evening help to offset costs for all participants in all programs. Please consider volunteering to help with this annual event – it is always a terrific evening!

Here are some ways parents can help us with the Cabaret and Silent Auction:

- Finding businesses and individuals who would like to donate items or services to the Silent Auction.
- Serving on the Cabaret or Silent Auction committee
- Attending the event
- Invite friends, family, neighbors and co-workers to the event and encourage them to participate in the Silent Auction.
- Sponsor a group of tickets and invite people you think might enjoy supporting EMA and EYC

What do we wear?

All members of the Encore Youth Choir wear uniforms for our concerts. The uniform is purchased when you first join EYC or when you move up to a different choir or outgrow a current uniform. It is your responsibility to be sure that all uniform pieces are clean, hemmed/altered correctly and that your student comes to each concert performance ready. A small supply of used uniforms in various sizes may be available for sale after August 1st of each season. Please contact the office for more information. In addition to the uniform show, you will need to provide:

All girls: All necessary alterations, All black hose or tights, and all black flats. No other jewelry or colors allowed.

All boys: Nice black dress shoes, black socks, black belt and any alterations required.

Aria/Bella Top	Aria/Bella Skirt	Cantabile/Di Canto	All boys (Tie: A/B – blue C/D – black)
			

Do you have fundraisers?

Yes! Because we are a not-for-profit corporation, our funding comes from a variety of resources. Individual donations cover nearly 15% of our costs, corporate donations and grants about 10%. Tuition and ticket income covers approximately 75% of our operating costs and does not include any Encore Choir tour costs. In other words, without fundraising we would need to charge at least 25% more in tuition rates to cover our operating costs.

EMA uses the Silent Auction as well as the business program advertising funds and the annual campaign as its three main public fundraisers. These opportunities raise money for the EMA Annual Fund which offsets costs for everyone in all programs.

Fundraising opportunities planned for this year:

- 👉 Annual Campaign: Individual Donations towards EMA's Annual Fund.
- 👉 Program Advertising: Individuals and businesses purchase advertising space in our program booklets.
- 👉 Cabaret and Silent Auction: Ticket sales will cover the cost of the event any remaining proceeds will go to support EMA's programs. All proceeds from the Silent Auction will go into EMA's Annual Fund.
- 👉 Other Fundraisers, such as Culver's night, raffles, coffee or cheesecake sales, are optional and will be offered as needed to help raise funds for specific events or purchases made by the organization.

What is the Encore Touring Choir?

Encore Touring Choir consists of students in Cantabile and Di Canto who choose to participate. All students participating in Encore Touring Choir will indicate their intention to participate at the beginning of the year. The cost of Encore Touring Choir varies, and includes the cost of the trip scheduled for that year. (Payments begin up to a year in advance of the trip.) A student could potentially participate in Encore Touring Choir from 6th grade through senior year of high school.

How can parents help the choir in other ways?

We are so grateful for every bit of your support, both financial and otherwise, as well as your commitment to your child's music education. We will contact you regarding how you might help out, according to your indications on the EYC Volunteer Form.