



## **Parent/Student Audition Information Meeting**

Everything worth having in life usually involves determination, preparation, commitment, courage, hard work and a teachable spirit. Each promotion in choir demands more growth and skill. Growth requires change, and change does not happen overnight. Our preparatory choirs introduce our students to many valuable musical concepts including: singing with clarity, performance protocol, singing on pitch, forming good vowels, learning the art of diction and the understanding of diaphragmatic breathing. We not only teach our students to sing, but we help our young people to understand what is on the page of music through theory lessons. We also give them the tools to begin to learn to read a musical melody they have never heard before through sight singing. In addition, they are taught responsibility through meeting expectations by deadlines through the administration of lyrics and theory tests. We work very hard to prepare our students for the next promotion.

Our CL and AV groups are both honor ensembles. They require our students to sing more difficult music. Because of this, we must have certain standards for membership or they will cease to be honor ensembles. For example to become a member of the National Honor Society, students must be recommended by a faculty member and have met the cumulative GPA requirement. Once these criteria are satisfied, students are considered for membership on the basis of service, leadership and character. If students were allowed into the honor society without achieving the required GPA, the integrity of the group as a whole would be compromised.

*Similarly, for our honor ensembles, we do not allow entrance into these groups based on the number of years a student has enrolled in the choir but rather on the following criteria:*

1. Understanding more complicated rhythms
2. Singing on pitch
3. Singing a cappella while maintaining the key
4. Having energy and facial expression in order to communicate a vibrant message
5. Being faithful to attend choir rehearsals and arriving early

6. Possessing good diction
7. Having an understanding of diaphragmatic breathing
8. Having the ability to learn a lot of music (and sight singing becomes important in this!)
9. Students must also show good character as they are the “face” of HCCC and represent our organization to some very prestigious civic leaders, sports organizations and educational groups.

In order for students to prepare for a strong audition, we want to share with you the specific areas that we will be assessing.

**There will be four components to your audition:**

1. A cappella singing
2. Singing a required piece
3. Sight singing
4. Interview

While some may feel overwhelmed with four separate parts to your audition, having multiple components gives each student more possibilities. Think of a test that has just one question. If you struggle with this one question, you will do poorly on the entire test. Few people will feel comfortable in all four areas, so it will give students an opportunity to shine, for example, in three areas and reveal an area of needed growth in one.

**Singing:** This year, everyone will sing “My Country Tis of Thee” a cappella. Please know your starting pitch! We are looking for students who can begin and end in the same key. In addition, you will be singing a piece from our upcoming Christmas production entitled “Sending You a Little Christmas.” There will be an excerpt online so that students can learn their specific part. All guys should sing either bass or tenor. Obviously, higher voices will sing tenor and lower voices will sing bass. Ladies will sing either soprano or alto only. We are looking for expressive faces, clarity of tone and ability to understand the words. If you have been in choir, these are skills we regularly stress.

**Sight singing:** Examples will be taken from actual excerpts from the current sight singing year. The excerpt will combine some fundamentals of theory as well. You will be given time to carefully look through the line and will also be given your starting note before you have to sing it out loud to the panel. If you miss a note, please know that we will still consider all the notes you sang correctly. Once you begin singing, please do not stop!

**AV and CL Interview:** Everyone will be asked a random question. You may also be asked why you wish to be in the group and what you feel you could contribute to it. Please carefully think of your answer before you begin, and practice being concise. All answers should be in complete sentences.

### **Suggestions for a good audition**

- Wait for the directors to tell you they are ready for you to begin.
- Announce your name and the ensemble name. Be warm and engaging but not goofy and slaphappy. We are serious about your audition and want you to be as well.
- Preparation is key. Know your words, melody and starting note. Practice some random questions at home using in a complete sentence. Make sure your answer is concise.
- Try not to be nervous. We are **for** you not **against** you! We want you to succeed and we want to help you grow!
- Minimize your mistakes. A good performer never points out missteps or mistakes. i.e. He doesn't look at the ceiling or the floor when he can't remember his words. He always keeps going and makes something up!
- We want **a lot** of energy and an engaging face that includes your audience in your performance!
- Confidence. We have beginning and intermediate choirs to help students learn confidence in performance. By the time students get into advanced choirs, we want students who aren't shy and afraid to put all their emotions out there.
- Look at your audience. Every person on the audition panel wants to be included in your performance.
- Try to answer your interview question in a complete sentence. "If I am selected as a member of CL, I ...." (Try not to pause and think of your

answer as you are going along) Have it formed in your mind before you begin your sentence. Be concise. Your answer does not have to be long.

There will be no dance auditions until we do our next dance (most likely not before 2021). At this time we will open up auditions to any high school students who wish to participate in dance.

We will be informing students with the results of the audition through posting your audition number on the member page of the website. We only have a certain number of slots for students to fill out the various ensembles. If we have 7 basses in a group and no tenors, we would obviously be looking for more tenors. Many times these auditions have a lot to do with the proper balance of voices.

Just as an honor society member must maintain his GPA and keep his character in tact, we expect our AV and CL students to work hard to keep their position in these groups. We have had a lot of growth! Since there is no more grandfathering into these groups, it is possible for a student to lose his/her position in an honor group if there is:

1. Lack of diligent work (not listening to recordings, lack of knowledge of lyrics/parts)
2. Show no improvement (not progressing in theory, sight singing, learning music, developing expression, or learning movements)
3. Are half-hearted in rehearsals (talking, cell phone use, lack of attention or effort)

Decisions on ensemble placement are not made by one person but by a panel of directors. We will also have information on those who did not pass theory or a section of it, those who have been consistently late, those who didn't pass their lyrics test the first time, and those who didn't listen to their recordings. Each of these components plays a role in which students will be chosen.

### **Things to remember**

- We notice those who have a gracious and humble spirit when they make an ensemble! Humility is an attractive character quality. Conversely, nothing is more unappealing than a "sour grapes" attitude by those who don't make it or place blame on the directors.

- Parents can help their students to see that this is not the end of the road. There may be more opportunities in the future.
- Unless a student is a rising senior, we want to see him/her try out next year. In fact we are happy to share with students what they can do to improve so that they can work on that area for the next audition.
- While auditions can be nerve-racking, we want the students to be at ease as much as possible. Handling stress is a great way to prepare for that first job interview or the first college presentation. Someone once said, "Those on the mountain top didn't fall there." We invite you to work hard and keep climbing to new heights!