



G R A N D R A P I D S
YOUTH CHORUSES

Handbook of General Information
2024-25

Grand Rapids Youth Choruses

P.O. Box 68665

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

www.gryouthchorus.org

616-901-2778

Our Mission Statement:

The Grand Rapids Youth Choruses strive to instill in the children of West Michigan a lifelong love of music by providing a program in which they can discover and refine their musical talent as choral singers, demonstrate personal growth and leadership, and develop a lifelong passion for singing. Grand Rapids Youth Choruses aspire to provide a mutually respectful system of preparation, a dedication to excellence in the performance of quality choral literature, and a commitment to seeking collaborative musical opportunities locally, nationally, and globally.
It is our mission to make the world a more beautiful place through music and community.

GRYC STAFF

Artistic Director

Leah Ivory 616.856.8093 leah@gryouthchorus.org

Pianist

Robert Edwards REpianist@gmail.com

Melodia Director

Cameo Haaksma Elzinga cameo@gryouthchorus.org

Administrator

Emma Ivory 616.901.2778 info@gryouthchorus.org

GRYC Board Members

Perrin Rynders, President
Camille DeBoer, Secretary/Treasurer
Dave Bardolph, Finance Advisor
Gideon Sanders
Candice Sytsma
Max VanWyk

Dear Grand Rapids Youth Chorus community,

Welcome to the GRYC 24-25 season! We are thrilled to be able to continue to offer our singers and their families the high level of music education and performances that you have come to know and love. Our choristers regularly deliver inspiring concerts wherever they sing - at our family concerts, at public events like the Griffins games, in collaboration with professional musicians, and on tour in the United States and overseas. We teach music from around the world to increase appreciation for other cultures and awareness of historical and current events happening both locally and in places far away from us - because issues of justice, peace, reconciliation, and restoration affect us all, no matter where we live.

The Grand Rapids Youth Choruses is in its 17th season as a west Michigan choral community and its 3rd season as our own independently operating organization. We are excited to announce a brand new choir for Kindergarteners and 1st graders called Young Voices! In this ensemble, our youngest singers will explore their voices, learn to listen and match pitch, and experience the joy of group singing. Be watching for their premiere performance at the holiday concert. Our season kicks off with a retreat held at Camp Roger, followed by our fall concert in October hosted at our home base of Calvin University. Last year, the beautiful sanctuary of Mayflower Congregational Church was the setting for our annual well-attended holiday concert. We are happy to be back there again this season and will be offering two concerts, because last year sold out! In February, our select treble ensemble Mandala will present their own concert at Park Church downtown. Soloists may be involved - you won't want to miss this! Also in February, the Youth Chorus and Mandala will be taking a brief tour to St Olaf College in Northfield, MN. St Olaf is home to one of the best choirs in the country, directed by Anton Armstrong. I had the amazing opportunity to sing under him when I was a student at Calvin University. As part of our tour, we will have a clinic with Dr. Armstrong as well as a friendship concert exchange with the Northfield Youth Choirs. At the end of April, we will celebrate the years of dedication that Sean Ivory has given to the youth choral community by singing a work that is still in progress and being written especially for the Youth Chorus. Alumni will be invited to participate in this event - another concert you will surely not want to miss! The season concludes with our spring concert and senior send-off at the Forest Hills Fine Arts Center, a new venue for us. We have invited the Forest Hills Eastern/Central/Northern singers to join us and are hoping for a great turnout!

Singing with the Grand Rapids Symphony remains a highlight for us. We will be back at DeVos Hall for all five performances with Maestro Bob Bernhardt in early December AND our Mosaic Singers will be featured in the GRS Carmina Burana performances! Singing the National Anthem at the Griffins game is another regular outreach into the community and we will be performing at the arena in March. We are excited to add new outreach events this year: holiday carol singing for the Uptown Shop Hop (Mosaic Singers), Valentine's Day singing in February at Art of the Table (Youth Chorus/Mandala), and a retirement home concert or two in March (Melodia and Mosaic Singers). Yes, it will be a busy but wonderful season!

At GRYC, we strive to provide singers and families with wonderful musical experiences in an atmosphere which recognizes the unique gifts of every individual. Our goal is for every chorister to feel safe and included in the GRYC family. All are welcome - there is a place for you at GRYC! Thank you for being a part of this village. Thank you for your commitment to excellence in singing. Thank you for choosing community. Thank you for making the world a more beautiful place with us.

Sincerely,

Leah Ivory

YOUNG VOICES, Kindergarten-1st grade

Director, Cameo Elzinga

Pianist, Candice Sytsma

Tuition: \$400

Rehearsals: Thursdays from 5:00-5:45pm, lower level of the chapel at Calvin University

MELODIA, grades 2-3

Director, Cameo Elzinga

Pianist, Robert Edwards

Tuition: \$450

Rehearsals: Thursdays from 6:00-7:00pm, lower level of the chapel at Calvin University

MOSAIC SINGERS, grades 4-6

Director, Leah Ivory

Pianist, Candice Sytsma

Tuition: \$575

Rehearsals: Thursdays from 5:00-6:30pm, lower level of the chapel at Calvin University

YOUTH CHORUS, grades 7-12

Director, Leah Ivory

Pianist, Robert Edwards

Tuition: \$625

Rehearsals: Mondays from 6:30-8:30pm, room 115 in the Fine Arts Center of Calvin University

MANDALA, select treble voices grades 7-12

Director, Leah Ivory

Pianist, Robert Edwards

Tuition: \$625, **\$100 if already a member of the Youth Chorus*

Rehearsals: Thursdays from 6:40-8:40pm, lower level of the chapel at Calvin University

PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

For GRYC family concerts, the performance attire will be GRYC t-shirts with blue jeans and comfortable shoes.

For the holiday concerts, choristers will wear all black concert attire.

YOUNG VOICES/MELODIA/MOSAIC SINGERS: Find your own concert-appropriate combination of dress pants, dress shirt (long sleeve), skirt or dress. All clothing must be opaque black (not see through). Black opaque leggings must be worn with skirts or dresses. No designs or sequins on clothing. All black shoes - comfortable but concert appropriate. No sneakers or athletic shoes. No high heels.

Young Voices singers are invited to wear a white accessory of your choosing - ie. Scarf, belt, necklace, tie, etc.

Melodia singers are invited to wear a red accessory of your choosing - ie. Scarf, belt, necklace, tie, etc.

Mosaic Singers are invited to wear a green accessory of your choosing - ie. Scarf, belt, necklace, tie, etc.

YOUTH CHORUS/MANDALA: Black formal concert appropriate clothing that can include a floor length dress (we will provide a link to order), or black trousers, black buttoned/collared long sleeve shirt, black dress shoes and socks.

Youth Chorus/Mandala singers are invited to wear gold or silver accessories of your choosing - ie. Scarf, belt, necklace, tie, etc.

TUITION PAYMENTS

We will send an invoice via email, to be paid online.

Payment option 1: one payment for the season (\$3 processing fee if paying with a card)

Payment option 2: two payments for the season, first semester/second semester (\$3

processing fee if paying with a card)

Payment option 3: 8 monthly payments processed on the 15th of each month (Sept-April)
*note: this option includes a \$10 processing fee each month

The tuition form must be filled out and turned in at rehearsal to Emma **by September 9 or 12.**

No refunds will be offered.

Tuition Scholarships:

We offer scholarships to families who are experiencing financial hardship and may not be able to participate in the choir without assistance. Please see the "Parents" section of our website www.gryouthchorus.org for a link to an application.

Tuition Discount for Multiple Children:

For households that have more than one child in our choirs we offer the following discounts:

1st child: full tuition

2nd child: 25% deduction off of the lesser expensive choir. Each additional child is an increasing 5% discount. IE - the 3rd child would receive 30% off and the 4th child would receive 35%. Please see the "Parents" section of our website www.gryouthchorus.org for a link to an application.

CLOSURES/CANCELLATIONS

If rehearsal is cancelled, GRYC will notify you by email and we will post on social media.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Each singer represents the Grand Rapids Youth Choruses. We are a professional organization and our students are expected to behave in a courteous manner at all times. GRYC does not provide supervision for choristers prior to their rehearsal times. Young choristers should be accompanied by their parents/guardians until their rehearsal begins.

All singers should plan to arrive five minutes before the scheduled start time of their rehearsal so that they can be in their places and ready to sing at the designated hour.

Singers do not leave after rehearsal has begun unless special permission has been granted. An email is necessary for late admittance to or early dismissal from a rehearsal. Please give payments, paperwork, etc. to Emma, our choir manager.

Singers may bring a bottle of water. Please make sure it has a lid or cap on it to prevent spills and if possible labeled with their name. No food, candy or gum is allowed in the rehearsal space. For optimal focus and energy, please have your chorister eat a nutritious

snack before rehearsal.

Cell phones must be turned off during rehearsals and will be confiscated if used to make calls, play games, send text messages, or take pictures. This rule also applies to any game-playing devices that are brought into rehearsals.

Thank you for your attention to these details! With their compliance to these guidelines, your children help promote the good name and reputation of GRYC.

COMMUNICATION

Directors will send regular communication via email as needed. **These emails will contain important information and should be read thoroughly.**

Parents, please communicate through our manager, Emma. If she is unable to answer a question or if a response is needed from a director, she will pass it along and make any necessary connections. Do not expect immediate responses on a performance day. Thank you for understanding!

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Regular attendance is expected and integral to our success as a choir. **Unavoidable absences must be communicated to the director in advance and/or as soon as possible.** Illness and emergencies are examples of excused absences. Homework is not an excusable absence. If more than two unexcused absences are accrued/semester, a chorister may be excused from participation in a concert or possibly for the semester. Please sign below and turn in the signature page at the first rehearsal. :) Thank you.

PARENTS: PLEASE SIGN THE SIGNATURE PAGE TO CONFIRM THAT YOU AGREE TO GRYC POLICIES. TURN IN BEFORE OR AT THE FIRST REHEARSAL. THANK YOU!

I, _____, (printed name) acknowledge that I have read the GRYC 2024-25 handbook, and accept the information and terms that were provided.

Today's date: _____

Signature of parent/guardian: _____