Mint City Singers Choir Handbook

Mint City Singers is a community-based choir comprised of people from St. Johns, Michigan and the surrounding communities. It provides opportunities to sing and perform a wide variety of choral music, cultivate self-expression through group choral singing, and contribute to the cultural diversity of the community.

The Mint City Singers (MCS) is a branch of the Clinton County Arts Council (CCAC), and as such, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. In order to ensure individual personal success and the success of the MCS, please carefully read the information contained in this Handbook to understand how to fulfill the goals and expectations outlined. If you have questions or concerns, contact the Director, Steven Easterling at 810-624-5385.

Prospective Membership:
MCS is an adult (age 14 on up) non-auditioned SATB (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) choir which combines beautiful singing and musical learning in a safe and fun community environment. While being able to match pitch or read music is not a requirement, it is helpful (along with a pleasant voice and a sense of humor). Membership is for one session at a time – Fall/Winter 2021 (September – December) and Winter/Spring 2022 (January – May) with a culminating concert and outreach performance at the end of each session. Additional performances can be added, with a positive vote by the General Membership. Commitment to one session at a time allows for the possibility of greater membership success.

Rehearsal Time and Place:
Required rehearsals are Monday evenings, 7:00 – 9:00 pm at the Redeemer Church, St Johns Campus 200 E. State Street St. John's, Michigan, unless otherwise noted. The last two rehearsals prior to the session concert are mandatory. Additional voluntary rehearsals will be scheduled at the discretion of the Director – dates, times, place TBD as needed.

Rehearsals will automatically be canceled if the St. Johns Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather. An e-mail will be sent to members and a phone call made via the MCS phone tree as well.

How Are You Supported as a Member?
Rehearsals include warm-ups, the practice of music by sections (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), and rehearsal as an entire ensemble. A Leadership Committee exists to support your concerns and ideas.
General Expectations:
Be respectful of yourself and others in what you say and do – voices, capabilities, differences.
Be positive and bold – take risks for the benefit of yourself and the choir.
Take ownership of your learning and ownership of the ensemble.
Be capable of working successfully within a large group.
Have reliable transportation.
Consider your personal physical and mental endurance as it relates to rehearsal/performance.
Adhere to proper etiquette and legal expectations on social media.
Reimburse MCS for:
  1. Lost music
  2. Music damaged beyond ordinary use.

Rehearsal Expectations:
Attend regularly scheduled rehearsals. (See Attendance Policy)
Notify the Director in advance if you are unable to attend a rehearsal.
Arrive a few minutes early prepared with folder and pencil.
Socialize prior to, during breaks, and after rehearsals and performances – not during.
Contact the Director at times other than rehearsals about non-rehearsal concerns/needs.
Be willing to set-up and clean-up as you are able.
Be respectful of the rehearsal space. Leave it as we found it.

Performance Expectations:
Participate in the published required pre-concert rehearsals, concert, and outreach performance, and any additional performance to which you have committed.
A concert is approximately 1-1 ½ hours with a 10-15 minute intermission.
Have music in performance order and be knowledgeable of riser position prior to the performance.
Assist with set-up/clean-up as requested and able.
Contribute to simple refreshments for after-concert reception.
Provide your own concert attire. (See Concert/Performance Attire)

Attendance Policy:
MCS members are required to attend rehearsals regularly and on time with a three excused absence maximum per Session. To take part in the scheduled performances for that Session with more than three absences, please contact the Director. Each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in conjunction with the Leadership Committee.
Concert/Outreach Performance Attire:
Members are required to provide their own concert attire.

Concerts:
Women: Long-sleeve/three-quarter-length-sleeve black blouse (not turtlenecks, polo shirts, or sweaters).
Black skirt or dress slacks.
Black dress shoes with nude-colored nylons.
Earrings, and rings, no other jewelry.
Scarf to be provided by choir; given at concert and returned at end.

Men: Long-sleeved dress black shirt (not turtlenecks, polo shirts, or sweaters).
Black dress slacks.
Black dress shoes with black socks,
Black belt or suspenders.
Tie to be provided by choir; given at concert and returned at end.

It is the responsibility of choir members to return scarves/ties to the MCS inventory immediately following a concert.

Outreach Performances:
Your choice of black and white clothing with color accents (shoes, scarves, ties, suspenders, jewelry)
December Outreach – accents of red
Spring Outreach – accents of green

Registration:
New and returning members are required to complete a Membership and Commitment Form. Forms may be obtained and printed from the CCAC website http://www.clintoncountyarts.org/, or picked up at the CCAC Art Gallery, 215 N Clinton Ave, St Johns, Michigan. Completed forms may be brought to the first rehearsal of the session.

Membership fees are $50 per session. The fee includes the cost of doing business: performance venue, music, accompanist, instrumentalists, etc. If you are experiencing financial hardship, please contact the Director to inquire about applying for a Member Sponsorship. All inquiries are confidential.

Please make checks (no cash) payable to Mint City Singers and bring to the first rehearsal of the session.
Director – Steven Easterling

Biography:
A resident of Saint Johns since 2008, Steven Easterling has a Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Performance from the University of Michigan and a Master of Music Education from Central Michigan University and a post BA teacher certification from Michigan State University. Mr. Easterling has taught music in the Laingsburg Community Schools since 2005 and been the director of the Laingsburg Community Singers since 2000. Previously he taught voice, choir, and early childhood music at the Flint School of Performing Arts. Mr. Easterling has recently performed as a tenor soloist at the William Tennant Performance Shell and the Wilson Center in Saint Johns, as well as a member of the Steiner Chorale in Lansing.

Accompanist – Jeff Richards

Jeff Richards hails from St. Johns where he studied piano under Jean Hull and Dianttha Witteveen. He has a degree in piano performance from Michigan State University where he studied under Deborah Moriarty. Jeff has served as staff accompanist in Chicago at several universities including Northwestern, Loyola and DePaul. He has also musical directed shows for Royal Caribbean International and has been the audition pianist for The Rockettes. Jeff is currently the Director of Music at St. Joseph Parish in St. Johns. In addition to serving as accompanist for the Mint City Singers he also plays for the Laingsburg Community Singers.

Mint City Singers
Leadership Committee

Kelly Bitz, Chairman – 989-948-7537
Kris Collier, Vice-Chairman – 989-307-9435
Position Open, Finance Officer –
Position Open, Secretary –
Mark Miser, Member at Large – 517-402-3215
Steven Easterling, Director (non-voting) 810-624-5385

Rehearsal/Performance Schedule
Fall Session 2021

September 13 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
September 20 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
September 27 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
October 4 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
October 11 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
October 18 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
October 25 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
November 1 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
November 8 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
November 15 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
November 22 Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:00 pm
December Concert and Outreach performance still being scheduled!