



Towne Singers

Policies and Procedures

Revised August 2008

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TOWNE SINGERS MISSION STATEMENT

The TOWNE SINGERS is a community chorus open to anyone who likes to sing and who agrees to comply with the bylaws, policies, and procedures of the Towne Singers' organization. The group is open to people of all ages and backgrounds.

The mission of the Towne Singers choral group is to give its members an enjoyable platform for musical expression and growth through singing. In support of this mission, we sing a wide variety of music: classical, patriotic, Broadway, spiritual, popular, jazz, folk ---- music with appeal to audiences of all ages and tastes.

The chorus plans, prepares and performs two concerts a year ---- Spring and Holiday. Our goal is to bring quality concerts to the community. To do this we rely on our members to:

- Be faithful in attendance of and preparation for rehearsals
- Support the concert productions by selling tickets and ads
- Promote the chorus through various fund raising efforts
- Recruit new singers
- Perform various tasks in managing a chorus

The Towne Singers is a non-profit organization.

GENERAL POLICIES

MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Admission: Towne Singers accepts new members twice a year (in January and September) when the choir starts preparation for that season's concert. To smooth new singers' introduction into the choir, there will be a new members orientation meeting prior to the first rehearsal of the season. Prospective members are always welcome to visit a Towne Singers' rehearsal.

Section Balance: Although we strive to be an inclusive group, it is necessary to have vocal balance. Towne Singers reserves the right to limit certain sections to achieve the balance for the best choral sound. The balance objectives may be cause for placing prospective singers on a waiting list.

Returning Members: Former members may return at the beginning of any season (in January or September).

Choir Size: The number of singers impacts what Towne Singers can perform in terms of:

- Music selections
- Concert venues with risers adequate for all singers, and Conductor visibility
- Performances other than regular concerts
- Transportation arrangements for the group

Although there is no formal policy on maximum membership, we are physically limited by the capacity of our risers and/or venue. Overall size limitations may be cause for placing prospective singers on a waiting list.

Musical Criteria: Towne Singers was formed to provide a place for people to sing and to have fun. However, it is also recognized that for every concert or performance, our goal is to strive for the best quality in musical entertainment. Although the ability to accurately read music is not required, it is desired. Singing members are expected to strive for the following modest musical criteria:

- Sing in tune
- Sing with proper rhythm
- Use proper volume dynamics
- Blend with other choral voices
- Follow the musical direction of the conductor

The conductor will have all new members perform a 'pitch-matching' exercise to ensure that the singer is in the correct section. The conductor also retains the right to test any member for:

- Seating placement
- Section placement
- Voice quality (to detect any singing difficulties, and to provide guidance)

ATTENDANCE AND CONCERT PARTICIPATION POLICY

The attendance policy for members' eligibility to sing in concert is as follows:

Spring Season: The 22 scheduled rehearsals consist of 20 Monday-night rehearsals and 2 Saturday (sectional) rehearsals. Singers may miss no more than 5 of out the 22 total.

Holiday Season: The 15 scheduled rehearsals consist of 13 Monday-night rehearsals and 2 Saturday (sectional) rehearsals. Singers may miss no more than 4 of out the 15 total.

Certain rehearsals are mandatory. They are:

- the technical rehearsal(s) prior to the concert
- the dress rehearsal

Ad hoc "sectionals" organized by a Section Leader are encouraged, but do not count as make-ups for missed regular rehearsals.

Attendance at a Towne Singers retreat (if scheduled) is optional, but attendance can be used to offset a missed rehearsal.

If a choir member is unable or ineligible to perform in a concert, he/she may still participate in rehearsals. However, for the final month of rehearsals prior to the concert, the Conductor may exercise the option of excluding those that are not going to perform in the concert.

The attendance policy may be waived on a case-by-case basis by the Conductor to accommodate exceptional circumstances, but only if the waiver provides an overall benefit to the choir and the concert. In such cases, the Conductor shall confirm the readiness of the choir member to sing in concert by performing a "readiness test".

Tardiness: It is disruptive to the entire choir for singers to be late. Towne Singers expects all members to be on time (considered to be the downbeat). For those occasions when work or family duties cause members to be tardy, the singer is asked to inform (telephone or email) his/her section leader. If a singer is consistently tardy with no notice to the section leader, a fourth unnotified tardy will be considered a missed rehearsal.

CHAMBER GROUP

The Chamber Group is a subset of the Towne Singers, and is established to:

- Perform at smaller venues not suitable for the entire choir
- Perform pieces that were written for smaller groups
- Perform pieces of a difficulty level that cannot be accommodated by the choir as a whole
- Act as the “outreach” arm of the Towne Singers

The Chamber Group size is nominally 20-24 singers.

The Chamber Group is auditioned from the general membership of the Towne Singers at the beginning of each season. The selection criteria for the Chamber Group are established by the Conductor.

If a mid-season vacancy occurs in the group, the Conductor may appoint a replacement from those that had previously auditioned for the season (new auditions are not required).

Chamber Group members are expected to be available for special fund-raising and/or outreach concerts. Certain performances may involve only a subset of the Chamber (e.g. quartets or octets).

DUES & FEES POLICY

Membership Dues: All members of the choir shall pay dues. The only exceptions are the paid staff (the Conductor, Accompanist, and any paid singers).

Dues for Towne Singers membership is currently \$28/month

\$112 total for the 4-month Holiday season

\$168 total for the 6-month Spring season

Members may pay the entire season amount in one payment at the beginning of each rehearsal season, or may pay monthly. Monthly payments should be made at the beginning of each calendar month. Dues may be paid in the following ways:

Online via the Towne Singers website

Via check mailed to the Towne Singers P.O. Box

Via cash or check collected at rehearsal in specially-marked container

Music Fee: An additional fee to cover the cost of sheet music (including shipping/handling) shall be collected at the start of each concert season. The fee also includes the cost of any rehearsal media (e.g. part CDs). This amount will vary from concert to concert, and is due when the music packets are distributed.

Payment Deadlines: Dues & fees must be paid for a member to remain in good standing. Singers who do not have paid-up dues/fees will not be permitted to perform at the concert. The deadline for payment in full is one full week before the concert.

Scholarship Fund

Towne Singers maintains a scholarship program for those choir members having a financial hardship that impacts ability to pay membership dues. Scholarships do not cover music fees.

Each applicant must submit his/her scholarship request in writing (a form is available, see Appendix) to the scholarship committee at the beginning of each concert season.

Scholarship requests are submitted to the scholarship committee that is made up of three board members appointed by the President.

The board of directors shall determine the number of scholarships that will be granted each season.

The scholarship committee shall grant these scholarships based on the financial need of the applicant.

The names of the scholarship applicants and recipients are kept confidential.

TICKET SALES

Pricing

Current concert ticket pricing for individuals is as follows:

\$20 at the door

\$15 in advance

\$10 kids under 12

Children under 3 are admitted free

There is also a group ticket policy (for groups from organizations other than the Towne Singers). If 10 or more tickets are purchased by an organization, the price per ticket will be \$13.00. Members are encouraged to contact other music, civic or religious groups to facilitate group sales.

The above pricing is based on performances at Lanterman Auditorium in LaCanada Flintridge. A different pricing structure may be established for other venues.

Complimentary Tickets

Complimentary tickets will be provided to members of the press with the expectation of obtaining a review.

Complimentary tickets will be provided to purchasers of Advertising. However, as a guideline, the value of the complimentary tickets shall not exceed 20% of the purchased value of the advertisement based on the lowest price of an adult ticket.

The purpose of this policy is to give guidance to the distribution of complimentary tickets. It is also to ensure that the value of the gift does not exceed the value of the return. Value can and will be measured in economic and non-economic terms.

Required Purchases by Members

At this time, Towne Singers does not require members to buy a minimum number of tickets. The Board may change this policy as necessary. If a member does not sell many tickets, s/he is expected to contribute to the choir in other ways, including fundraising, direct monetary contribution, selling ads, time donation.

CONCERT POLICY

Music Selection

The Artistic/Production Committee works well in advance to design an overall concert plan along with the musical selections. Suggestions for concert themes and individual pieces are actively solicited from the membership. Final approval is voted on by the Board.

Auditions

Singers are encouraged to audition for concert performances. There is a published audition date for each concert given in the beginning weeks of the rehearsal schedule to allow sufficient preparation time. Selected pieces must be in keeping with the concert's theme. A member may audition as a soloist and as a member of a group.

Soloists: Singers may not perform solo works in two successive concerts. They may perform as part of a small group or ensemble in successive concerts.

Small Groups/Ensembles: Singers may be included in more than one small group for a concert performance.

All singers selected for solos, small groups and incidental solos in choral works should be chosen from the regular membership, except if the nature of the work requires expertise beyond that available from the membership.

Outside Performances

All invitations for Towne Singers to perform outside the spring and holiday concert schedule will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and will be voted on by the Board. In general, the choir is open to outreach programs. And the choir is available for engagements that can be fundraising opportunities.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Everyone is encouraged to individually strive for the best quality sound for every performance. In order to develop each singer's talent to its ultimate potential, the Towne Singers are working together to improve vocal abilities by offering the following to all singers:

Sight-reading classes offered at the start of each season

Production of vocal parts on CDs

Recommendations for private or group voice lessons

Sectionals held by the Conductor

Additional sectionals held by Section Leaders

Musical techniques given by the choral conductor

Tape recording oneself is recommended for tracking progress. Section leaders are available for advice.

APPENDIX

TOWNE SINGERS
SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION
HOLIDAY SEASON 2008

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Number of Years in Towne Singers _____

Reason for Request _____

Please indicate extent of scholarship needed: Full _____ Partial _____

All information strictly confidential