

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

What is Madison Youth Choirs?

In June 2003, the Madison Children's Choir and the Madison Boychoir merged to become **Madison Youth Choirs**, a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the development and enjoyment of choral music in young people. Madison Youth Choirs offers 11 choirs, 5 for boys and 6 for girls between the ages of 8 and 18.

How do I know if singers are eligible to join?

Our program includes choirs at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels, and we do our best to find a place for every young person between the ages of 8 and 18 who likes to sing. No previous vocal training or choral singing experience is required to join. At our vocal placement audition for new singers, we look for a love of singing, an ability to match pitch, and a willingness to work hard and try new things. MYC intends that membership will be open to boys and girls regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, financial need, or geographic location, and membership will not be denied for these reasons.

Singers ages 8-10 are eligible for our introductory choir program. No audition is necessary to join. These meet weekly for one semester to help singers learn music reading skills, basic vocal technique, and rehearsal skills. They do not perform at a formal concert, but sing frequently during rehearsal and hold an informal performance for family/friends at the end of the semester. Singers that successfully complete an introductory choir semester are usually recommended to join Choraliers (girls) or Purcell (boys) the next semester without an audition.

What happens at the audition?

No audition is required for enrollment in the Introductory Choirs. For the 9 performing choirs, the audition is a time for our artistic staff to meet prospective choristers and see where they are in their vocal development. Singers do not need to bring a prepared piece to the audition. Auditions are tailored to the age and experience level of the chorister. It may include some basic vocalizing to determine range, singing a familiar song (such as "Happy Birthday" or "Are you Sleeping?"), and aural-skills testing (for example, listening to simple musical patterns and singing them back or listening to a chord and singing back the various notes that make up that chord).

Why do boys and girls sing in separate choirs?

Boys and girls have different learning styles and social needs, and MYC believes that we can best serve boys and girls if they work separately. Vocally, this works better because boys go through a more dramatic voice change than girls, and therefore have more need to re-learn their instrument once they begin puberty, which leads to differences in how material is taught and learned. Socially, both boys and girls feel more psychologically and emotionally safe in same-gendered groups, particularly in early adolescence. Worldwide, only 7% of "serious" singers are male, and within the United States, children's choirs typically comprise 85% girls. By keeping them separate, we hope to continue to encourage both boys and girls to sing, while providing equal opportunities to learn and perform challenging choral music.

What kind of families participate in the choir?

Our families come from diverse religious, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds. As many as 40% of our members live outside of Madison, and some live outside of Dane County. Some of our choristers are home schooled or attend private schools; others attend public school. Our members tend to be well-rounded individuals who also play on sports teams, practice musical instruments, and engage in a variety of hobbies and extracurricular activities. The one thing all MYC families have in common is a commitment to their children's musical education.

Is this a religious organization?

MYC is not affiliated with any religion, and we welcome members of any religious background or no religious background. We rehearse and perform at churches and religious camps based on their convenience of location, affordability, and suitability of our needs.

What is expected from parents?

To get the most out of the MYC experience, a chorister should be present at as many rehearsals as possible. Parents need to ensure that their child can get to and from rehearsal on time each week. Many families arrange carpools, and we facilitate this by distributing member rosters and helping to connect people with other MYC families in their neighborhood. Parents also volunteer to help with retreats, serve on the Parent Council, help with our fundraisers, concerts, and other MYC functions. Our parents are an extremely supportive group who share their time and talents in a variety of ways.

When and where do you rehearse?

Choir	Membership	Rehearsal Location	Rehearsal Days/Times
Purcell (beginning)	Boys, grades 3-6	St. Luke's Lutheran	Mondays 5:30-7:00pm
Britten (advanced)	Boys, grades 5-8	St. Luke's Lutheran	Mondays, 6:00-8:00pm
Holst (advanced)	Boys grades 6-8	St. Luke's Lutheran	Mondays, 7:45-8:30pm
Ragazzi (advanced)	Boys, voice change-grade 12	St. Luke's Lutheran	Sundays, 5:15-7:15pm
Choraliers (beginning)	Girls, grades 3-5	St. Luke's Lutheran	Sundays, 4:00-5:30pm
Con Gioia (intermediate)	Girls, grades 5-7	St. Luke's Lutheran	Sundays, 6:15-8:00pm
Capriccio (advanced)	Girls, grades 7-9	St. Luke's Lutheran	Sundays, 5:45-7:45pm
Cantilena (advanced)	Girls, grades 9-12	St. Luke's Lutheran	Sundays, 6:30-8:45pm
Cantabile (most advanced)	Girls, grades 9-12	St. Luke's Lutheran	Sundays, 6:30-9:00pm
Colla Voce (introductory)	Girls ages 8-10	St. Luke's Lutheran	Sundays, 4-5pm
Tallis (introductory)	Boys ages 8-10	St. Luke's Lutheran	Sundays, 5:15-6:15pm

Once I'm a member of a choir, how do I move to the next choir?

Singers enrolled in Introductory Choirs can move up to Purcell (for boys) or Choraliers (for girls) with a recommendation from their Introductory Choir conductor. Those enrolled in performing choirs must audition to move up to the next choir. Auditions for returning singers are held once a year in late May/early June. Singers that meet the grade/age requirements to move to the next choir in the sequence are eligible to audition. Singers often sing in a choir for several years before moving. Specific criteria are used to place singers; more information is available before auditions occur.

What is the cost of membership in the choir?

Our choirs' membership costs vary depending on level and commitment. They range in price from \$150-\$700/year. Scholarships are available. Please call for more information.

Do you provide financial assistance?

Yes! It is our mission to never turn away a potential singer because of financial need. Families may request assistance by submitting a financial aid form at the beginning of the year, which is reviewed by the Board of Directors. Families may request assistance with tuition, retreats, and tours, and payment plans are also available by contacting the Executive Director. All families are expected to participate fully in fundraising efforts.

How can I get more information?

The MYC administrative staff can be reached at (608) 238-SING. We'd be happy to answer your questions!