

ZAMIR CHORALE OF BOSTON
CHORUS MEMBERS' HANDBOOK (ABBREVIATED)
2009-10 Edition

MISSION STATEMENT

The Zamir Chorale of Boston is a non-profit mixed chorus whose mission is to be the premier performer of Jewish choral music. The Zamir Chorale of Boston:

- Enhances appreciation of Jewish culture and strengthens Jewish identity by heightening awareness of the variety and quality of Jewish music.
- Serves as a world-wide resource for the dissemination of Jewish choral music through concerts, recordings and publications, and by commissioning and premiering new works.
- Provides an opportunity for singers to share their passion for Jewish choral music in an environment that does not conflict with traditional Jewish observance.

THE CHORAL PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

I understand the importance of my role in the Chorale. I am not just "another singer." I understand that the success of the Chorale depends on the talent and dedication of each and every one of its members.

I take seriously my professional commitment as a performer.

I arrive on time to rehearsals and concerts.

I do not leave in the middle of rehearsal except in the case of an emergency.

I arrive at rehearsal with all required sheet music.

I have a pencil with me and mark all instructions in my score.

During rehearsal I make every effort to maintain focus on the music and on the instructions that are being given.

I understand that a transcendent performance involves more than just "knowing the notes." I am committed to an interpretation that conveys the essence of the music at hand. I am committed to ensuring that I am on top of all the details involved in that interpretation.

PREREQUISITES FOR MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Zamir Chorale of Boston is open, by audition only, to qualified singers who have an interest in Jewish and Israeli music. Young men and women under the age of eighteen will be admitted only under exceptional circumstances.

Membership is conferred for an entire season (September through June). Each member, once accepted, is expected to abide by the regulations of the chorus. Those who find the Chorale incompatible with their expectations or schedules should withdraw by the end of September.

Any member who is not meeting the standards of the Chorale will be given a written warning, detailing the areas of deficiency and setting goals for improvement. The musical staff will work with the member to help meet these goals. However, if, after the period set in the letter (usually about six months), sufficient improvement has not been made, the individual's membership in the Chorale will be revoked. Under unusual circumstances, membership may be terminated immediately at any time by the Artistic Director.

New members are evaluated at the end of each of their first two semesters with the Chorale. At the end of the season the musical staff will make a determination as to which of the new members will be invited to continue with the Chorale.

All members will undergo periodic evaluation by the musical staff.

The Zamir Chorale of Boston is a non-discriminatory organization, and welcomes singers of all faiths. Membership in the Chorale is open to qualified singers without regard to religion, creed, race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability.

OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held generally on Tuesday evenings from September through June in the auditorium at the Hebrew College, 160 Herrick Road, Newton Centre. Occasionally rehearsals are held on other days of the week and at other locations. Members should check the schedule of rehearsals carefully at the very beginning of the season to avoid potential conflicts.

Rehearsals begin promptly at 7:15 p.m. and generally end by 10:00. Members should arrive at 7:00 and be in place, ready to sing, at 7:15. A break of approximately 15 minutes is provided.

If bad weather forces cancellation of a rehearsal, the announcement will be made via email and phone tree. The rehearsal will then be rescheduled at a time that is convenient to a majority of the members.

Members are expected to devote their full attention during rehearsals to the music at hand, making all appropriate markings as directed by the conductor. Members are expected to bring all their music and a pencil to every rehearsal. The use of a small recording device can facilitate reviewing repertoire between rehearsals.

Non-members are generally welcome at rehearsals. However, they will be asked to sit quietly in the back of the hall.

Attendance Policy

All members are expected to attend all rehearsals. Upon arrival each member must check in with his/her section leader or other person responsible for taking attendance.

Members who are somewhat ill, able to get out and around but still unable to sing, should plan to attend rehearsal as active observers. After informing their section leader they should sit in the back of the hall and follow the rehearsal at an appropriate distance from the healthy singers.

If unable to attend a rehearsal due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, members must notify their section leaders as soon as possible prior to the rehearsal and explain the absence.

Members who miss a rehearsal are nonetheless responsible for the material covered. Immediately after rehearsal members are expected to contact their section leaders again to find out what was learned in rehearsal and what markings were given. Even so, home study is no substitute for the sense of ensemble that is generated in the rehearsal.

Lateness or early departure will be considered the equivalent of one-half of one absence. As when they are absent, members who arrive late or leave early are expected to inform their section leader, and find out what was learned in rehearsal, what markings were given and what announcements were made.

It is extremely disruptive when members leave rehearsal even for a short period of time. We ask that members remain in rehearsal except for unforeseen emergencies.

Warm-ups are a vital part of rehearsal. They prepare the voice and the intellect and imbue a sense of ensemble musicianship. Therefore, arrival after warm-ups have begun constitutes a late arrival to the rehearsal.

Certain rehearsals are designated as "dress rehearsal" or "tech rehearsal." Any member who misses such a rehearsal is considered unprepared for and cannot sing the subsequent concert.

Anyone with a record of excessive absence or lateness is not adequately prepared to sing in concerts. Any singer with more than one absence in five consecutive rehearsals must demonstrate to the musical staff sufficient preparedness to perform. Recurring patterns of lateness or absence are grounds for dismissal from the Chorale.

Withdrawal from the Chorale

Preparation for a polished sound at concerts is based on a stable roster of singers who have been working together on a regular schedule of rehearsals. Therefore, members are expected to stay with the Chorale for an entire season.

However, occasionally outside crises can make it impossible for a member to devote sufficient time to the chorale.

Any member who withdraws from the Chorale in the middle of a season, or who informs the Artistic Director prior to the first rehearsal of the season that he/she will be unable to perform with the Chorale that season but wishes to return the following year, will be eligible to rejoin the Chorale without re-auditioning at the start of the following season. Members who have been absent for more than one season must re-audition to be admitted back into the Chorale.

Members who have temporarily withdrawn from the Chorale are encouraged to attend as many rehearsals as possible as observers (sitting in the back), so that upon their return to the Chorale they will be familiar with carry-over repertoire.

Membership in the Chorale will not be reinstated in the middle of a season, except under unusual circumstances.

Members who withdraw from the Chorale after receiving a written warning must re-audition in order to rejoin the Chorale.

Buddies

Section leaders will pair each new member with a "buddy" soon after the start of the season. Buddies will meet with new members outside of rehearsal to pass on markings of carryover repertoire, answer any questions the new member may have, and spend a little time getting acquainted. In addition, buddies will check in with new members during breaks in rehearsal to help them integrate socially in the chorus.

Concerts

Preparation for concerts requires some learning and memorization work outside of rehearsal. It is expected that each member will be adequately prepared for every concert. A singer who is not prepared for a concert may be asked not to sing that concert, regardless of his/her attendance record.

While on stage, members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Correct concert attire must be worn. Deportment should be in accordance with directions given by the conductor and the stage manager.

All members are expected to perform in all scheduled full-chorus concerts. (However, new members are generally not required to sing in performances in the first month of their first year, so that they have sufficient time to learn repertoire carried over from previous seasons.) If you anticipate a schedule conflict, you must speak to your section leader immediately. The conductor will assume that every member will sing every concert unless he is notified otherwise. Once a member has committed to perform in a concert s/he will honor that commitment. The sound of the chorus is seriously compromised

when a member backs out at the last minute.

Anyone considered to be remiss about concert attendance will be dismissed from the chorus.

Chamber ensembles

Those singers interested in extra performances within the context of smaller ensembles should notify the conductor that they wish to be so considered. Admission to chamber ensembles is based on musical abilities and evidence of a willingness to make a further commitment of time for extra rehearsals and concerts.

Occasionally Zamir will book a concert for which it is not practical or desirable for the entire chorus to perform. For example, the presenter may have funds to fly only thirty singers, or the presenter's stage is large enough for only sixteen singers. In such cases a selection will be made by the musical staff based on the following criteria (not necessarily prioritized).

- Availability for the concerts and rehearsals of the gig in question
- Knowledge of music (including memorization)
- Ability to hold one's part in mixed ensemble
- Ability to blend and interact well in a small ensemble
- Musicianship: elegant execution of phrasing and all markings
- Stage presence
- Past record of attendance at rehearsals and concerts

Professionalism

Although its members do not get paid to perform, Zamir is a professional organization with a reputation for excellence, receiving fees for concert performances. Thus we require a professional attitude on the part of each and every member of the chorus. You must realize that you are an integral part of the organization. Therefore, take your obligations seriously. In advance of each rehearsal review the music that has been taught so far and preview the repertoire to be learned next. If music has to be memorized, take the time to master it. If a concert is approaching, make sure that you are prepared to perform. Not being prepared for a concert may be considered grounds for dismissal.

Active members are involved in a program of self-improvement. They work on sight-singing skills and Hebrew language skills. They study voice with a teacher or coach.

Financial Obligations

The Zamir Chorale of Boston runs on a tight budget, and each member of Zamir is required to contribute to the financial success of the organization. Each member pays a sum of \$50 in annual dues, payable no later than the end of October. Financial aid and a schedule of delayed payments are available for those who have a hardship. In addition, Zamir members are

expected to sell a minimum of ten tickets to any combination of self-produced events over the course of the season.

Music

Members buy and keep their own music, at prices that are subsidized by the Chorale. The chorus will provide one copy of each score. Lost copies will be replaced at the singer's expense.

Members are required to purchase (on their own) a black loose-leaf notebook or folder in which to hold their music. Zamir recommends this product: <http://www.musicfolder.com/english/usd-store/ebf.html>

Uniform

Members are required to obtain the official concert uniform and maintain it in good condition. A one-time partial subsidy will be provided to new members.

The men's uniform is as follows: black tuxedo, formal white shirt, black cummerbund, black "suede" kippah, black shoes and black socks. You will purchase this outfit on your own.

The women's uniforms have been custom designed for the Zamir Chorale, and should be worn with black (formal, but comfortable) shoes. Singers will purchase the uniform through the chorus. When a singer leaves the chorus, her uniform must be returned in good condition. The departing singer will receive a partial refund for the return of the uniform.

Travel

When the chorus performs outside of the Boston area, every attempt will be made to cover the costs of transportation, lodging and meals. However, when this ideal cannot be met, members will be advised of the estimated individual contribution required in order to make the tour possible.

Fees

The Zamir Chorale of Boston runs on a tight budget. Every member of Zamir contributes an annual sum of \$50 in dues. Members are expected to meet their financial obligations in a timely manner. Reduced fees or a schedule of delayed payments are available for those who have a hardship. Also, Zamir members are expected to sell tickets to self-produced concerts. Discounted prices are available for tickets purchased by Zamir members for their guests.

Additional Obligations

All members are expected to contribute some time and effort during the year to assist in the non-musical aspects of the organization. This can include selling concert tickets, soliciting donations, and/or serving on various committees.

Religious Policies

As a chorus, Zamir does not engage in any activities that would violate traditional Jewish law. Among Zamir members are many different interpretations of Jewish observance. We also welcome members of other faiths. In cases where a conflict may arise based on religious practice, members will be excused from the conflict without prejudice.