

Choral

2019-20 Frequently Asked Questions

SOUNDS

Who are we?

ChoralSounds Northwest (CSN) is a community chorus based in Burien, one of five ensembles of Northwest Associated Arts (NWAA), a non-profit organization dedicated to providing choral and artistic experiences to members of all ages and abilities from grade three through adulthood, providing an environment for personal growth, professional performances, and community spirit. If you are looking for a place to sing that will challenge you while providing you with fun and fellowship, CSN might just be the chorus for you.

CSN, an auditioned mixed-voice community chorus of approximately 60 singers, welcomes singers of all ages from high school to retirement. Members are encouraged to audition for solo and small ensemble opportunities throughout the year, including in our Mainstage Holiday and Spring Concert, our annual Cabaret, and for our two smaller auditioned ensembles:

VocalSounds Northwest

VocalSounds Northwest (VSN) is a smaller mixed-voice auditioned group of 16 to 24 singers designed for more experienced singers who are committed to more advanced repertoire associated with a chamber ensemble.

Smamblettes

Smamblettes is an all-women ensemble that sings fun and interesting repertoire that takes advantage of the library of music arranged for women's voices.

Where does CSN perform?

CSN's Holiday & Spring concerts are held at the Highline Performing Arts Center (401 S 152nd St, Burien) and on the Eastside at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church (4228 Factoria Blvd SE, Bellevue). Masterworks is performed at Glendale Lutheran Church (13455 2nd Avenue SW, Burien). When CSN has the opportunity to perform at other venues, details will be published in the rehearsal and performance calendar which is distributed at the beginning of each term.

Do members need to have trained voices and the ability to sight-read music?

Some of our singers are excellent sight-readers while many others learn by ear. The ability to read music is desired but not required. Some chorus members have no previous experience and some have extensive musical training. Other members are somewhere in between.

Practice tracks are provided for chorus members to practice on their own in between Tuesday rehearsals.

When are rehearsals?

The full chorus rehearses Tuesday nights, 7:00 - 9:15 pm in the sanctuary of Glendale Lutheran, starting in early September. Additionally, there is usually 1-2 all-day Saturday rehearsal/retreats during the preparation cycle for each concert. Singers are typically required to be at the theater for technical and dress rehearsals several evenings the week before each show opens.

VocalSounds Northwest (VSN) and Smamblettes will typically rehearse before or after the full-chorus rehearsal time on Tuesdays.

Detailed schedules are published in the rehearsal and performance calendar which is distributed at the beginning of each term.

During each rehearsal there is a brief break for refreshments and announcements. Chorus sections take turns setting up, breaking down, and furnishing refreshments each week.

What types of music does CSN sing?

CSN performs an eclectic variety of music, including sacred literature, secular choral pieces, spirituals, world music and show tunes.

The focus of the chorus is on developing choral technique and presenting polished and engaging performances.

How often does CSN perform?

The typical season features two mainstage concerts at the Highline Performing Arts Center: a holiday concert in mid-December and a spring concert in mid-May. Additionally, NWAA holds a Cabaret/auction fundraiser in mid-February. The Cabaret is normally the Saturday night nearest Valentine's Day and features sit-down dinner, silent auction, and live entertainment provided by the singers of NWAA. Occasionally, an additional concert will be scheduled, with additional repertoire (such as "Masterworks" concerts that occur in June every other year).

What do we wear?

For performance, we wear "concert black": men wear dress shirts, black slacks, shoes, and socks; women wear black slacks/skirts with black tops or dresses, black or nude stockings, and black close-toed shoes. Skirt length is below the knee or longer, and sleeves are 3/4 length to full-length. Jewelry should be minimal. Cabaret attire will vary, depending upon the theme (but it's sure to be something fun!). For rehearsals, come as you are!

Who supports CSN?

Member dues, governmental and corporate grants, and individual fundraising helps to cover the administrative expenses and cost of producing concerts.

What are the costs?

Annual membership dues are as follows:

CSN: \$250

VSN: \$150

Smamblettes: \$50

Members fill out dues payment form with their name, the dues they are paying, and method of payment. For those auditioning for VSN or Smamblettes, payment of small-ensemble fees is due upon placement in the ensemble.

For those who may need it, NWAA offers full and partial scholarships. We ask that every singer pay whatever they can afford in dues, but we never want anyone excluded due to the cost of membership. If you need help with your dues, contact Paul Bauer, General Manager, privately (he will handle this request confidentially). When you fill out your dues payment form, there is also the option of contributing toward the scholarship fund for those who are able, and want to help ensure that every voice will be heard!

How do I get answers to my questions?

Our website

The Northwest Associated Arts website (www.nwassociatedarts.org) is a great resource. Look there first to find the answers to most questions. In addition, a members-only area of the site is accessible through the "contact us" page, which current information about schedules, a membership roster, copies of newsletters, downloadable rehearsal tracks, etc. Login information for this private area of the site is distributed to members.

Our General Manager

Our General Manager, Paul Bauer is available to answer questions, collect dues, sell concert tickets, etc. He can be reached any time at nwaapaul@gmail.com.

Your section leader

Each section has a leader who is happy to answer any questions about rehearsals and music. Contact information for each section leader is found in the choir directory which is distributed in early October. Your section leader will also communicate with you frequently about schedule information, volunteer opportunities, etc.

The NWAA Board

Members are always welcome to come to Northwest Associated Arts Board meetings, or to contact the Board with questions at nwaa_president@hotmail.com.

What are my responsibilities?

CSN continues to grow and flourish through the commitment and dedication of its members and friends. We are a friendly, active, inclusive community. To get the most out of your experience and to contribute to the well-being of the group, we ask the following of our members:

Be on time

Having everyone in place and ready to rehearse promptly at the scheduled start time makes a big difference.

Come to rehearsals consistently

Our development as an ensemble and the morale of our organization depend upon the timely and regular attendance of all members. Choir members with four absences per term may be asked to meet with the Artistic Director to demonstrate their knowledge of the music in order to perform in the concert. Attendance at all performances in a term is expected; exceptions must be approved by the Artistic Director. Leaves of absence may be granted at the discretion of the Artistic Director. Should a member miss a term, they will need to meet with the Artistic Director to renew their membership.

Care for your music

Put your music into a black binder or choir folder. Be sure to bring a pencil to mark your music with notes from the Director, or to indicate areas needing further practice. Some of our members prefer to use an iPad or tablet along with a music-reader app like ForScore in rehearsal and/or performance. Your section leader will be able to give you more information. Digital copies of the hardcopy sheet music will be made available on the password-protected website, and an additional "how-to" tablet information sheet is also available.

Practice at home

Most of our members find they need to spend independent time rehearsing their music in between rehearsals. Practice tracks are made available for download from the password-protected choir website. The rehearsal schedule will give specifics on which pieces will be practiced at each rehearsal.

No scents please

We have members who are very allergic or sensitive to any kind of scent. We ask that you refrain from using perfume/cologne or strongly-scented personal products when coming to rehearsal or during a performance.

Get involved

We are a non-profit, volunteer-run organization. There are numerous ways to participate, such as hanging concert posters, setting up for refreshment time, procuring or donating items for the annual auction, or serving on the NWAA Board, to name a few. Many hands make light work!

Promote performances

Spread the good word about CSN through social media, email, and word of mouth; sell tickets to your friends and family!

Keep your information current

If you move, change email address or phone number, decide to leave the chorus, or change your name, please email Paul Bauer, General Manager at nwaapaul@gmail.com so that we can keep our records accurate.

Check your email regularly

Most of our communication with our singers, apart from that at rehearsal, is conducted via regular emails. If you are not receiving our emails, please double check your spam/junk folder. Please let Paul or your section leader know if you are not getting our emails.

Sounds great! How do I join?

Auditions are scheduled by appointment by emailing info@nwassociatedarts.org or calling 206.246.6040.

Excerpts of prepared pieces (with or without accompaniment) are welcome, but not required. The audition will be in a private session with the Artistic Director, who will check the singer's vocal range for placing each voice in the appropriate section of the choir.

Auditions are typically scheduled at the start of each term (e.g., early September or early January). In order to keep the necessary balance between sections, there may be times that particular voice part(s) (soprano/alto/tenor/bass) are specifically recruited.

Social Media

Facebook: @nwassociatedarts

Instagram: northwestassociatedarts

Twitter: @NWAACHoirs

Private CSN members-only group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CSNMembers/>