

**CHORISTER
HANDBOOK
2022 – 2023**

Founder and Artistic Director:
Frances Chiasson

Music Director of Okanagan Youth Choir:
Taylor Bone

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www.okananganchildrenschoir.ca
www.okanaganyouthchoir.ca

WELCOME

Dear Parents and Choristers,

Welcome to the 2022/2023 Season for the Okanagan Children's Choir and Okanagan Youth Choir. We are really looking forward to this year of music making with you all.

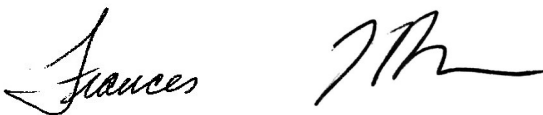
Our Schedule of Events for each choir will continue to evolve over the coming weeks, but we are looking forward to an exciting year of singing together, including exciting collaborations with other musicians in our city and beyond. In particular, we're looking forward to the possibility of our choirs participating in choral festivals this year. We're hopefully that the Kelowna Kiwanis Choral Festival will return this year, giving both of our choirs the opportunity to receive feedback from choral experts. And in April, the Cantando music festival is set to take place in Kelowna. This festival has been around for decades, but has never been hosted here. The festival will consist of high school choirs from across western Canada for two days of singing together and learning from mentor conductors and clinicians in a non-competitive festival. We look forward to our OYC singers having the opportunity to be involved.

OYC (formerly OCC Youth) has a new name! We are now under the name "Okanagan Youth Choir" and will include singers in grades 8 through young adult. We have been working with a graphic designer to create a new OYC logo and will acquire new t-shirts, etc. for our singers to wear. OCC and OYC singers will both have the opportunity to order choir hoodies this fall.

As you already know, being part of any group requires dedication and perseverance, but this is especially true when part of a choir. Your voice and your presence in the choir matters greatly. We will work to build a community of singers whose individuality and gifts are celebrated. Each of our voices is unique, just as each of us are unique. Working towards a safe, inclusive learning environment full of connection with each other is our goal. The last few years have been challenging, lonely, and void of connection in the ways we once knew. We are excited to rebuild connection in our organization while creating beauty in the form of music together.

If you have questions or concerns throughout the year, please get in touch. We look forward to seeing you in September.

Kind regards,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Frances' and the signature on the right is 'Taylor'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frances & Taylor

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS—OCC

- Wed Sept 14**—First day of choir for the 2022/23 season
Wed Sept 28—Bring a Friend to Choir night
TBA Oct—Possible performance with Glenmore Elementary School
Wed Nov 2—*Metamorphosis*, an informal performance for friends and families, 5:30-6:00pm, Central Okanagan United Church (COUC)
Dec TBC—Possible Senior's Home Performance
Wed Dec 14—last rehearsal before Christmas Break
Wed Dec 14—OCC/OYC Holiday Concert, 6pm, COUC
Wed Jan 11, 2023—first rehearsal after Christmas Break
Wed Jan 18—Bring a Friend to Choir night
Feb TBA—Day Retreat
Mar 22 & 29—Spring Break
Apr TBA—Kelowna Kiwanis Festival
May 13—Dress Rehearsal, 10:30am, COUC
May 13—OCC/OYC Spaghetti Lunch, 12pm, COUC
May 13—Spring OCC/OYC Youth Concert, 2:00pm, COUC

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS—OYC

- Wed Sept 14**—First day of choir for the 2022/2023 season
Wed Dec 14—last rehearsal before Christmas Break
Wed Dec 14—OCC/OYC Holiday Concert, 6pm, COUC
Wed Jan 11, 2023—first rehearsal after Christmas Break
Wed Jan 18—Bring a Friend to Choir night
Feb TBA—Day Retreat
Friday Mar 10 — After school rehearsal and evening Concert with West Vancouver Honour Choirs
Mar 22 & 29—Spring Break
Apr 23-25—Cantando Music Festival, Kelowna or Possible mini-tour
May 13—Dress Rehearsal, 10:30am, COUC
May 13—OCC/OYC Spaghetti Lunch, 12pm, COUC
May 13—Spring OCC/OYC Youth Concert, 2:00pm, COUC

Updates to these schedules will be sent out by email and updated on the OCC/OYC Website.

OCC/OYC STAFF LIST

Artistic Director: Frances Chiasson

Music Director of Okanagan Youth Choir: Taylor Bone

Pianists: Frances Chiasson and Taylor Bone

CONTACT INFORMATION

Website: www.okanaganchildrenschoir.ca

OCC Email: director@okanaganchildrenschoir.ca

OYC Email: director@okanaganyouthchoir.ca

Phone: 250-869-6817

Rehearsal Location:

Central Okanagan United Church

821 Bernard Ave,

Kelowna, BC

V1Y 6P6

Choir correspondence address:

1498 Alta Vista Road

Kelowna, BC

V1Y 6L1

MISSION/VISION

The Okanagan Children's Choir and Okanagan Youth Choir provide young people in the Okanagan Valley with exceptional choral music education and performance experiences, as a means of fostering creativity, personal expression, and social growth.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the Okanagan Children's Choir and Okanagan Youth Choir includes high quality music from a wide variety of musical traditions and periods, in a variety of languages and styles. Music is chosen because of its educational value and is not intended to infringe or impose on personal belief systems. Therefore, all choristers must be willing to sing all repertoire, even if it challenges his/her personal belief system. There is a great deal for students to learn through exposure to the works of great composers. The curriculum includes some music by the great classical composers, plus music from folk, musical theatre, gospel, spiritual, jazz traditions, to name just a few. Singing newly commissioned works is an exciting and very worthwhile process, so in time, we hope that commissioning new

works will also be included in our curriculum. And we will sing in a wide variety of settings.

Important musical concepts are taught through the repertoire—melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre, dynamics, form, style, and performance practice. Musical skills, including singing posture, breathing and tone production, theory and sight reading, listening and analysis, are also part of the curriculum.

REHEARSAL TIMES

OCC meets on Wednesday afternoons from 4:00-6:00 pm, at Central Okanagan United Church, 721 Bernard Ave, Kelowna. Rehearsals for the 2022/23 season will begin on Wednesday, September 14th, 2022. From time to time, a workshop or performance on a weekend may be added to the schedule. Notice will be provided.

OYC meets on Wednesday afternoons from 5:00-7:00 pm, at Central Okanagan United Church, 721 Bernard Ave., Kelowna. Rehearsals for the 2022/23 season will begin on Wednesday, September 14th, 2022. From time to time, a workshop or performance on a weekend may be added to the schedule. Notice will be provided.

F E E S

Fees for the 2022/2023 Season:

It is OCC/OYC policy that no singer should be denied access to participating in our choirs for financial reasons, so if these fees cause financial hardship for you, please see Financial Assistance section on Page 6-7.

- Non-refundable Registration fee: \$40
- Refundable Music Deposit – \$100, see note below
- Tuition (for first chorister in family):
 - In one instalment (Sept) of \$380
 - Or in 2 instalments (Sept & Jan) of \$205 each
 - Or in 8 equal instalments—post-dated cheques, Sept through April of \$51.25 each
- Tuition for subsequent choristers in the same family
 - In one instalment (Sept) of \$335
 - Or in 2 instalments (Sept & Jan) of \$180 each
 - Or in 8 equal instalments—post-dated cheques, Sept through April of \$45 each

The non-refundable registration fee (\$40) is due in full at the time of

registration. Tuition fees (or first payments) are payable by the first rehearsal in September. Fees may be paid in cash, cheque, or e-transfer to Okanagan Children's Choir (and post dated cheques, if payments are in more than one instalment). If paying by e-transfer, please include the chorister's name in the reference and send to Okanagan Children's Choir via director@okanaganchildrenchoir.ca or 250-869-6817. A security question is not required for the deposit.

Singers joining OCC or OYC after January 1, 2023 will be charged a pro-rated portion of the tuition fees.

If paying in 8 equal payments: please note that these are not 'monthly' payments that are pro-rated for holidays or days missed. They are a full year's tuition divided into 8 equal payments for your convenience.

There are no refunds for missed rehearsals.

Mid-season withdrawals: there will be no refunds for withdrawals mid-term (Term 1: Sept-Dec. Term 2: Jan-May). Families will be charged until the end of the current term of membership, even if paying in 8 equal payments. Families are requested to give as much notice before withdrawal as possible.

REFUNDABLE MUSIC / UNIFORM DEPOSIT

A \$100 deposit for music is due by the first rehearsal in September. Ideally this will be a post dated cheque for June 1, 2023. This cheque will only be cashed if music is not returned or is damaged. If all music is returned in satisfactory condition at the end of the year, the deposit cheque will be returned by June 30, 2023. If music is damaged or missing, a minimum of \$5 per title and \$20 per missing bag will be deducted from this deposit.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

It is OCC/OYC policy that no singer should be denied access to participating in the choir for financial reasons. As such, a limited amount of need-based financial assistance is available to qualified families. If you would like to be considered for financial assistance, please request and complete a Financial Assistance Form, available from the Artistic Director. Qualification is determined based upon financial need or special circumstances as documented in your

application. Incomplete applications will not be considered. All information provided will be kept confidential.

If your personal financial circumstances change and this alters your ability to pay tuition fees in a timely manner, please contact the Artistic Director (250-869-6817) to discuss your situation.

REHEARSAL DRESS

There is no specific required dress for rehearsals, although we do ask that our choristers avoid clothing that may be distracting to themselves and others (e.g. costumes, hats, etc), as well as any clothing that is discriminatory in any way.

PERFORMANCE UNIFORMS

OCC and OYC will provide each chorister with a choir t-shirt, to be worn for some activities/performances.

OCC

Choir provides:

- coloured t-shirt (blue or green)
- black long sleeved choir shirt
- a coloured stole.

You provide:

- smart black pants or skirt
- black socks or tights
- black shoes

OYC

Choir provides:

- choir t-shirt
- uniform pieces (scarf or tie)

You provide:

- full black on black outfit
- black shoes

If you have trouble providing any of these items, please contact the Music Director or Artistic Director as soon as possible. Please carefully follow washing instructions for the choir shirts and pieces, so that they keep suitable appearance for performances throughout the year.

CHOIR NECKLACES / BRACELETS

Upon entry into OCC/OYC, each chorister will receive a choir necklace or bracelet with one coloured bead, to be worn during performances. An extra coloured bead will be added at the completion of each year of choir membership. Additional beads may be awarded to choristers for particular achievements during membership. Necklaces/bracelets are to be either carefully stored by the chorister or left with the Artistic Director or Music Director for safe keeping.

CONCERT APPEARANCE

Choristers are required to appear in a neat and tidy manner for all performances, with long hair tied back so that faces are clearly visible to the audience. If there are concerns about a chorister's appearance for performance, please refer to the Artistic Director or Music Director for assistance.

RE - AUDITIONS

Periodically, the Artistic Director or Music Director may request to hear choristers sing individually to check on how they are progressing vocally and to make recommendations for placement/parts within the choir. This will be arranged at a time convenient to the chorister's family and the Artistic Director or Music Director.

NEWSLETTERS

Good communication between choir families and OCC/OYC is important for the smooth running of our program. Throughout the year, newsletters with important information about upcoming events are sent out to families by email. If another format is more convenient for you, please inform us of this on your registration form.

A detailed rehearsal/performance schedule will be given out at the beginning of the season. Although we try to avoid making changes to this schedule, sometimes changes are unavoidable. OCC/OYC will endeavour to provide as much notice as possible for any changes. Please keep your own calendars regularly updated to minimize conflicts with choir events. Up to date information will be posted on the choir website (www.okanaganchildrenchoir.ca or www.okanaganyouthchoir.ca).

WEBPAGE

For up to date information about the choir, please visit the OCC webpage at www.okanaganchildrenchoir.ca or www.okanaganyouthchoir.ca. You can also 'Like' us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter or Instagram!

To access the Chorister Section on the website, go to www.okanaganchildrenchoir.ca, click on the Chorister link and then enter the password letmesing. This will give you access to anything that the Directors post for choristers. As well, you will find a digital copies of the 2022/23 Chorister Handbook and Registration Form.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all rehearsals and concerts is mandatory, because a choir depends on every member for its success. The only acceptable excuses for absence are illness, occasional educational school trips, school concerts and religious holidays. Failure to comply with this obligation will affect a chorister's participation in the choir.

If a chorister has any illness (especially with Covid-19 symptoms), they are requested to remain at home. If feeling up to it, joining the rehearsal by Zoom is encouraged. Requesting a Zoom link needs to be done at least 30 min in advance of the rehearsal, so that we can set up the required equipment.

If a scheduling conflict with a rehearsal or concert arises, please inform the Music Director **in writing** as soon as possible. Please do not only give this information verbally at rehearsal, as rehearsals are busy times and details may be forgotten.

If a chorister must be absent because of illness, please email, text or phone the director as soon as possible on the rehearsal day. It is important for the director to know who will be absent before the rehearsal begins. Contact information is on the front cover of this handbook.

If a chorister misses more than three rehearsals, the chorister and chorister's parents/guardian should meet with the Music Director to discuss any issues affecting attendance and the necessary commitment required to be in the choir. Any chorister who misses the last rehearsal before a performance may not be permitted to sing at the concert, given the importance of this final rehearsal.

CARE OF MUSIC

Each chorister will receive an OCC music bag and/or folder and a set of numbered music. Each chorister is expected to maintain that number throughout the year, with its corresponding music. Music should always be kept in the music bag or folder, and must be brought to each rehearsal. Two soft leaded pencils with erasers should also be kept in the bag/folder. Music is to only be marked with pencil.

Music is very costly and difficult (sometimes impossible) to replace. A music refundable music deposit of \$100.00 is required (post dated cheque or cash/e-transfer). Please see information about this

deposit on page 6 of this Handbook.

DEPARTMENT

Choristers enrolled in OCC or OYC are required to behave in a respectful and focused manner during all rehearsals and performances. If there are concerns about a chorister's behaviour, the Artistic Director or Music Director will contact the parents/guardians or meet with the chorister to discuss and correct.

CELL PHONE POLICY

All chorister cell phones must be off and put away during rehearsals. If the presence of phones becomes a repeated concern, choristers will be asked to check them into a receptacle at the start of rehearsal.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents play a vital and important role in the success of choristers and of the organization.

Parents are welcome to attend rehearsals, observing from the back of the room. However, parents may not come and go from a rehearsal and all cell phones must be on silent. Once you are in the rehearsal room, it is important for you to remain there. This helps to avoid distraction. As this is an observation time, parents who wish to chat are asked to do so outside the rehearsal room. Rehearsals are inappropriate for siblings unless they are old enough to silently do homework while waiting. Parent supervision is required if siblings are under the age of 8.

Periodically, parent volunteers may be required at rehearsals or other events in order to assist with special tasks (e.g. to provide snacks and juice during breaks, music distribution, uniform fitting/distribution, collecting and collating music, organising fundraising events, ushering/ticket sales at concerts, etc.). If you are available to assist with any of tasks, please let us know and we will contact you when the need arises.

DRINKS AND SNACKS

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, we have not had any snacks or drinks as part of our rehearsals for the past season. We hope that we can reinstate group break time in the coming months. Once we do, know that our choristers seem to be endlessly hungry and thirsty

in rehearsals! Donations of healthy snacks and 1 litre real juice cartons are greatly appreciated. Please drop them off at any rehearsal.

REHEARSAL ROUTINES

All choristers are asked to be prompt for the start of rehearsals (10 minutes early is great!). Choristers are expected to be in their seats and ready to sing when the rehearsal begins.

CONCERT ROUTINES

Specific information regarding concert routines will be provided for each upcoming performance.

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

Central Okanagan United Church is located at 721 Bernard Ave, Kelowna, V1Y 6P6 (corner of Richter and Bernard). There is parking in the church parking lot (lane is accessed from northbound on Richter) or along Bernard Avenue (time limited). Please enter the church building via the parking lot door.

TICKETS

Where possible, we will provide opportunities for families to hear the choir sing without having to pay. However, at times, ticketed events will be required and you will be informed of the costs. As we are a not for profit organization, ticket sales help support the program and help keep the fees reasonable.

PRIVACY POLICY

Okanagan Children's Choir and Okanagan Youth Choir will not give your personal information to any other groups or individuals, without your permission. We will produce an annual membership list, so that member families may easily be in contact with one another to arrange rides, etc. However, if there is contact information that you do not want to appear on that list, please indicate this on your registration form. This information will be provided for the personal use of choir families and is not to be distributed. If your contact information changes during the year, please email or phone the Artistic Director or Music Director as soon as possible with the updated information (director@okanaganchildrenchoir.ca, director@okanaganyouthchoir.ca or 250-869-6817).

PHOTO PERMISSION

If you grant permission for OCC/OYC to use photo/video images of your child in publicity materials and on our website, please sign the appropriate note on the data form.

COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMS

The success of OCC and OYC is partially dependent on the support of school music teachers throughout Kelowna and the surrounding area. As well, we aim to foster and encourage the development of leadership skills in our choristers amongst their peers. Therefore, it choristers in OCC and OYC are strongly encouraged to also be members of their school choirs, whenever possible and where they exist.

FUNDRAISING

Yearly choir fees cover the 'core' component of the OCC and OYC (weekly rehearsals). If we wish to do more, we must raise funds. Therefore, periodically throughout the year, opportunities will arise for choristers and their families to participate in fundraising activities. It is our intent that these activities will not be onerous, and although voluntary, we hope that all will choose to participate. This is a chance for our choristers and their families to get to know each other better and to work for the good of the program that we all will enjoy.

Okanagan Children's Choir

Okanagan Youth Choir

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