

Oratorio Society of Minnesota Members' Guide 2019-2020

Membership

To fully appreciate what OSM stands for, members should be familiar with our mission statement: *The Oratorio Society of Minnesota challenges and delights its audiences and singers through dynamic and diverse choral music performed with skill and passion. Its civic engagement and educational programs foster lifelong choral singing.*

Membership means commitment to the rehearsal and performance schedule. Please mark your calendars accordingly. Schedule changes are sometimes necessary; these are announced at rehearsals and in e-mails. Some singers may be unable to follow through on their commitment due to illness, a family issue, unforeseen travel, or a work conflict. Please inform the OSM Chorus Manager of such situations promptly at oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com. Don't just disappear! Singers who repeatedly drop out without giving notice will need to obtain the Artistic Director's consent in order to return to the group.

Membership also means sharing your gifts whenever possible. Members share their musical talents, but you may have additional abilities to share with the group. As a non-profit organization, OSM depends on the volunteer support and skills of its members. The more singers (and family members) we have participating in volunteer tasks, the stronger the group will be. Joining a committee, or signing up to help with specific tasks is encouraged and greatly appreciated. It is also an excellent way to become acquainted with other members. Singers are also encouraged to connect with OSM and with each other on Facebook.

Periodically, you will be asked to complete an (anonymous) online survey. Your feedback is important. Surveys are an important way to gather information about how we're doing. Please make an effort to complete these surveys. OSM's board of directors takes this feedback into consideration when making or changing policies and procedures.

OSM membership also means working in a collegial manner. Please be aware that a singer may be dismissed from the organization if their conduct is deemed by the board of directors to be detrimental to OSM.

Members are expected to continue their musical development and may be assessed periodically by OSM's Artistic Director. Please be aware that a singer's participation may be suspended at the Artistic Director's discretion if their vocal condition or level of musicianship compromises the artistic quality of OSM performances; they may re-audition after the problems have been addressed.

You are encouraged to register in the membership area at www.oratorio.org, where you can provide your contact information and concert participation status, and access rehearsal and procedural information, the member photo directory, home practice resources, your ticket sales record, etc. You can now also put yourself on the official roster for a particular in the member area—but please remember to take yourself off if you have to drop out, or you might wind up owing for tickets!

We sing our best when we have a full audience, and OSM depends on ticket revenue to help with operating expenses. Consequently, OSM membership also means promoting the concerts with your friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, and casual acquaintances, and a commitment to selling a certain number of tickets per season. You will want to read the following section carefully.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT TICKET SALES UPDATE:

OSM has made the decision to use online-only advance sales this year (no printed tickets sold at rehearsal). As you know, OSM is a mostly volunteer-supported organization. We rely on volunteers for a variety of tasks in the production and distribution of printed materials, and are currently understaffed in this area. Also, by not producing printed tickets we save on paper and production costs and can adopt more environmentally friendly practices.

The online fee will be a fixed \$3 in addition to the ticket price. Face value of the tickets will be \$40, \$30, \$20 for the November 2019 concert. The member discount will be \$5 per ticket. Patrons purchasing without a discount code will pay \$43, \$33, \$23 per ticket online. Members with discount code will pay \$38, \$28, \$18 per ticket online.

In order to track member sales it is important that you and your patrons answer the checkout question at the end of the ticket purchase process "Please enter the name (if applicable) of the Oratorio Society member who referred you. Please enter your name if you are a member of OSM."

OSM Ticket Sale Commitment 2019-2020

In lieu of paying dues, each member must sell 5 tickets per concert or 10 tickets during the 2019-2020 concert season. The OSM concert season includes the November and May concerts. You may, for example, sell 7 tickets for the fall concert and 3 tickets for the spring concert. The February Choral Even-song service at St. Mark's is not a ticketed event.

If an OSM member sings in only one concert during the season he/she must sell a minimum of 5 tickets. Members are encouraged to sell more tickets if possible as OSM relies on ticket sales to meet our annual budget. OSM's goal is to fill as many seats in the performance hall as possible.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Ticket Sales Commitment:

1. If I am part of a couple who sings in OSM, must both of us meet the ticket sales quota?
—Yes. Each OSM member is responsible for meeting his/her ticket sales quota.
2. What happens if an OSM member does not meet the ticket sales quota at the end of the season?
—During the course of the year the number of tickets each member sells is tracked and recorded. Members are able to log into the OSM website and check how many tickets they've sold. A member may not begin the new concert season without fulfilling his/her ticket sales commitment. If, for example, a member who sang two concerts sold only 8 tickets in the 2019-2020 concert season, he/she would write a check to OSM for \$50 (assuming the cost of an OSM member discount ticket was \$25/ticket in the 2019-2020 season). To remain in good standing, members with a ticket sales shortfall must pay their bill before the new season begins. This would not be considered a tax-deductible donation.
3. If I sell 15 tickets in a season, will I receive credit the following season?
—No. But OSM truly appreciates your effort in selling extra tickets!
4. If I make a generous contribution to OSM do I still have to sell tickets?
—Contributions are greatly appreciated. They help us achieve innovative and ambitious musical goals. But in the spirit of fairness and consistency, the ticket sales requirement applies to all OSM members.
5. If I sell preferred tickets, does this mean I can sell fewer tickets?
—The ticket quota remains the same.

6. What if one of my guests did not purchase tickets through me but is attending the concert because of my invitation, will I still receive credit for their purchase?

—Yes. Contact OSM’s Ticket Sales Manager, Kim Petersen, kimvolker@gmail.com, to receive credit.

If you experience financial difficulty and are unable to meet the ticket sales requirement, we encourage you to contact OSM Chorus Manager Melinda Maurey at oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com or OSM Treasurer Mark Gustafson at gusty@comcast.net.

2019-2020 Music Scores Policy

Music scores are generally purchased through OSM and distributed at rehearsal; however, if you have waited until after the score-ordering deadline to add your name to the roster, there may be a shortage and you might have to buy your score elsewhere. All purchased music must be paid for at the time it is distributed, so please bring your checkbook with you to the first rehearsal, or, if paying by cash, please try to have the correct amount because change may not be readily available.

Practice at Home

Members are expected to work on music between rehearsals — fixing notes, difficult rhythms, texts, phrasing, dynamics, articulation, etc. Should you miss a rehearsal, please ask someone in your section for markings you may have missed. Despite busy schedules, dedicated members seem to spend at least a couple of hours per week on this, in addition to regular vocalizing. You will learn better if you spend a little time each day, rather than wait until Sunday night to do your homework. If you can sit down at the piano at home to work on your part, that’s great! Since this is not an option for all singers, the use of such home practice aids as midi files, Cyberbass, or mp3s is encouraged. These are generally available through the Member Area of the OSM website. If you have any questions about musical notation or other issues, please alert us by e-mail (see below) so we can help find a solution.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held each Monday evening from 7:15–9:30 pm at Macalester Plymouth United Church, 1658 Lincoln Ave., St. Paul, MN. The rehearsal time may be extended to 9:45 in the weeks immediately preceding a performance, to allow for additional refinements.

Rehearsals are the core of our experience in the Oratorio Society—they provide the essential time needed to prepare for the upcoming concert. Rehearsals begin promptly at the time specified, which means that members need to be in their seats, preferably warmed up and ready to sing at that time. It’s a good idea to be at the rehearsal location about 10-15 minutes ahead of time — to find a parking spot, get inside, take off your coat, pick up handouts, visit, and so forth. It really makes life a lot easier for everyone to build in that extra 15 minutes. There is a break about halfway through the rehearsal, which is a good time to socialize, check your cell phones, visit the venue plumbing, etc. There will be other opportunities to socialize as well. We occasionally plan gatherings for the break or after rehearsal. Sign-up sheets will be circulated for those who would like to provide treats. If you need to go out to your car for something during break, **make sure the doors for re-entry are unlocked.**

Materials: Come prepared. Always bring a pencil with you to rehearsal to mark your music.

You may bring a water (only) bottle into the sanctuary if it has a secure top to prevent spills, and in case there’s an “oops!” it is your responsibility to clean it up. No other beverages or food of any kind are

permitted in the sanctuary. If you need to move your chair or any other furniture, it is your responsibility to return it to the same place before you leave the building. And please, for the love of mercy, take all your stuff with you when you go so there are no worries about how to retrieve your purse or backpack!

OSM is a fragrance-free zone. Please do not use any colognes, personal care products or laundry products that may affect the allergies of others, although you are encouraged to be clean and fresh with unscented products. And please, no onion, garlic, tobacco, alcohol, or other strong odors on breath. Mints are usually available, as well as cough drops.

Please have the courtesy to listen attentively and refrain from unnecessary talking or interrupting during rehearsal and announcement time. If you need to remind your neighbor to be courteous so you can hear the conductor or other speakers, please try to do so diplomatically.

During rehearsals, please turn off your cell phone, or put it on vibrate. If you have an urgent matter to attend to, please be courteous and use the hall to make/take a call or send/receive text messages.

Members who attend a rehearsal and are not able to fully participate because of mild illness, usually sit apart from the rest of the chorus to prevent germs from spreading, but they can listen and take notes attentively. However, if you are suffering from a percussive cough, stentorian nose-blowing, or other distracting condition, please stay home and ask a buddy for rehearsal notes!

Attendance

Please remember to check yourself in on the attendance sheets every week so you will not be counted absent when you are actually present. It is important to take care of this as it could affect your eligibility to perform in concerts.

Announcements

There is a very short time during each rehearsal for important announcements; other items of information may be communicated through the OSM website, by e-mail, or printed handout. We can't afford to spend a lot of rehearsal time getting into discussions or reports. If you have a pressing matter that affects the entire group, please e-mail it to oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com at least one day before rehearsal. If you wish to share flyers or invitations for musical events, you may place them on the edge of the platform in front—but please remember to take them with you after rehearsal!

If you have more complicated issues that require discussion, please communicate them directly to a board member or e-mail to OSM at oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com.

***OSM Board of Directors**

Briar Duffy, briarmd@gmail.com

Mark Gustafson, gusty@comcast.net

Peter Heege, peter.heege@theuptake.org

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*As new members join the board of directors in the 2019-2020 season, their contact information will be shared with the chorus.

Concert attire and accessories

The purpose of OSM's dress code is to keep the audience focused on the music and minimize distractions. **THANK YOU FOR MAKING OUR GROUP LOOK PROFESSIONAL & CONSISTENT WITH OSM'S ATTIRE GUIDELINES!**

Black Folders: Members provide their own black (matte finish) folder for music, and must take it to dress rehearsals and concerts. Folders can be purchased through OSM if you wish; information will be available in September.

Please be aware that for specific-themed concerts, there may be exceptions to the dress code below:

Men wear black tuxedos, white dress shirt with white studs or buttons, black bow tie, black cummerbund, and black socks and black shoes. The dress shirt should not have a collar type that flips up at the ends. The shoes can be dress or casual but should not be tennis or athletic type. The bow tie should not be distractingly large.

Women may wear the dress style OR skirt & top OR dress pants & top of their choice within the following guidelines, which were developed to address FAQs. Please remember: our goal is to keep the concertgoers' attention on the music and our faces, not the attire.

FABRIC & STYLE IN GENERAL

- Black, matte-finish fabric, please. Generally, this rules out shiny satin or silk, as well as lace. Short-napped velvet is allowed. If wearing skirt or dress pants + top (rather than a dress), please try to match the fabric type and shade of black as much as possible.
- Sheer fabric must be fully lined, including sleeves.
- Please no ruffles or sparkles that catch the light!

NECKLINE

- Any simple neckline is acceptable. Collars are acceptable, but please no turtlenecks or mock turtlenecks—and no ruffles, please.
- Please avoid showing of cleavage! The lowest point of neckline should not show cleavage while in singing position or while seated. Please check in the mirror.
- Shoulders must be covered.

SLEEVES

- Long sleeves are required; no sheer, lace or balloon-shaped sleeves. Black simple long-sleeved jacket (no sheer or ruffled sleeves) is allowed if you have a short-sleeved or sleeveless dress or blouse.
- Wrist finish may be elastic, plain hemmed, buttoned, or cuffed.

SKIRT OR PANTS

- Skirt or dress pants may be full or narrow. Palazzo-style pants are allowed.

Please note: dress pants are not black jeans, activewear, cropped pants, leggings, or jeggings. They must be full-length dress pants. Please, no ruffles or uneven hems.

- Length: a long skirt or pants is very important. Hemline normally would touch top of your shoe at the front. If top of your ankle shows, the hemline is too short and should be lengthened. **Be sure to wear your concert shoes when setting the length of your dress or pants. Hemline length is commented on by audience members! Also be sure length is not so long that it threatens to trip you on stairs, etc. Experiment with your concert shoes on.
- Back slit in skirt is fine, but please, no higher than back of knee.

WAIST

- Waist may be gathered, loose, belted, empire...
- Guidelines for belt if worn: black matte, no shiny belts. If buckle is included, make it black-

SHOES AND HOSE

- Black matte or patent low-heeled shoes (2" or lower), please. No boots or ballet slippers, please. Be sure you test your shoe height while wearing your apparel to attain the proper skirt or pants length, i.e. no shorter than ankle length. Remember to choose shoes that provide support, room and comfort. Your feet will thank you later.
- Black hose, please, with skirt or pants—knee-high hose is fine. Hose is required--no bare legs.

JEWELRY

- Jewelry is optional. If you choose to wear jewelry, please follow the guidelines:
- Earrings: small earrings, gold or silver. If wearing hoop or dangle earrings, please keep them 1" or less in length.
- Necklace: plain gold or silver chain necklace without pendant. Please keep size of chain link to 1/2" or less.
- Rings: please leave your large, sparkly costume rings at home!

For ready-made dress/pants resources (or to view style examples), see <http://www.stageaccents.com>. Great styles are: Dress - Maltese Long Sleeve #8601, Geneva Long Sleeve #8665. Palazzo pants - Glory Palazzo #4629 (straight-legged trousers are fine), Skirt - Glory #4634, Jacket (if wearing short-sleeved or sleeveless top) - Glory #4624. *Please note ship times, which in some cases can be 4-6 weeks.*

E-mail Policy

All communications distributed on behalf of the Oratorio Society of Minnesota to OSM membership through its e-mail are primarily used for OSM purposes, such as to share information or for emergency

notifications. Many people wish to promote concerts or other endeavors; although we can't advertise everything for everyone, we will send out announcements that the board considers suitable. OSM does not sell or lend its member e-mail list to any business or organization.

Anyone wishing to send a message to the OSM membership should submit the message to oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com for approval and processing. Requests should preferably be submitted a few days prior to the desired distribution date. Please be aware that your message may be edited if deemed appropriate.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns about OSM issues, you are encouraged to send them in to oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com and they will be forwarded to the appropriate staff, board member, or other volunteer.

It is important to make sure you can receive official OSM communications, which will be sent from oratorio.society.mn@gmail.com. If you have not been receiving OSM emails, you might check your spam folder and also verify that we have your correct contact information.

Cancellations

The Oratorio Society will cancel performances only if the venue itself closes. Please keep yourself informed of weather-related closings at WCCO-TV or radio and watch your e-mail for an announcement from OSM. In the unlikely event a concert must be canceled, it is the OSM member's responsibility to inform your ticket customers, so please keep their contact information handy! In the case of weekly rehearsals at MPUC, these will be canceled only if the Artistic Director decides to cancel and you will be informed by e-mail.

Performance and Staging Guidelines

The following guidelines have been developed over the years by Oratorio Society chorus members. Suggestions are always welcome.

Preparation and On-Stage Etiquette

- Please make every effort to smell clean and fresh, because we will be in close quarters! A shower and shampoo within 24 hours prior to both dress rehearsal and concert would be appropriate, as well as unscented deodorant and clean clothes.
- No perfume, cologne, heavy hairspray, or after-shave. Some singers have serious allergies!!
- No onion, garlic, cigarette, cigar, pipe, alcohol, or other strong odors on breath.
- No devices with ringers, alarms, notifications etc. allowed on stage.
- Have sections of the music you are not singing **clipped or bound together** so you are not turning pages during passages of music being performed by soloists and/or the orchestra alone.
- Carry music in whichever hand the conductor specifies, down at side, going on and off stage. The conductor will let us know whether singers are to come onstage in an organized or informal fashion.
- Be prepared to clear a path for conductor, soloists, and musicians if necessary.

- Bring your music up when the conductor puts a foot on the podium as the concert begins & starting the second half of the concert.
- Be sure to watch the conductor as much as possible. This may sound like an unnecessary reminder, but it's amazing how singers show the tops of their heads to the audience.
- Look pleasant (or show appropriate emotion), relax, enjoy the music and concert experience.
- Please turn pages inconspicuously and well ahead of choral entrances.
- Stand or sit quietly. Avoid talking or making direct eye contact with members of the audience while performing. Expressive movement during singing can enhance one's experience of the music; be aware, however, that too much movement may be distracting.
- During any long periods of time when you are not singing, hold your music at "resting" in position, but a little lower than when you're singing. (Ex: while conductor or other speaker is addressing the audience; during solos and instrumental interludes)
- Please do not follow along in your score during solos or instrumental interludes. Stay engaged with the music, but keep your head up. These pages should have already been clipped together. The audience wants to see your face; not the top of your head.
- Put your music down to your left side when the conductor steps off the podium at the end of the first half and the end of the concert, or if there is choral movement from one part of the stage to another.
- Please do not clap for anyone on-stage, since you are part of the performance. However, a relaxed stance and a smile are encouraged.
- We will begin to exit the stage when the applause has subsided, or as the conductor specifies. Leaders should begin to exit immediately at that point. Be sure to go all the way out of the back stage area as quickly as possible to avoid a traffic pileup. Please do not stop to talk until the entire chorus has exited the stage - keep the lines moving.
- Encore - these vary so pay attention to the conductor to see when/if the chorus exits, or remains on stage.