



Choral Program Handbook

2024/2025
Season



Welcome!

Hello and welcome to choral music at the Confederation Centre of the Arts! You are joining a program with a long history of excellence in the art of choral singing. I hope that you will find great joy, meaningful connection, and musical fulfillment through participation in the Centre's ensembles. Our aim is that the learning and growth you experience as a musician and a member of this community will help fuel a lifelong love of singing and music-making.

Please read this handbook carefully and thoroughly. This is to ensure the smooth operation of the Choral Program, continue building our musical community, and foster the highest quality musical experience for all participants. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or other members of the Arts Education leadership as listed in the directory at the front of this handbook.

I'm looking forward to making beautiful music together!

Sincerely,



Nick MacDonald (he/him) | (il/lui)
Director of Choral Music | Directeur de Musique Chorale
Confederation Centre of the Arts | Centre des arts de la Confédération
nmacdonald@confederationcentre.com
902 628 6144



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Land Acknowledgement

The Centre acknowledges that the land on which it operates is the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We acknowledge with respect the history, spirituality, and culture of the Mi'kmaq people—who have lived here for over 15,000 years.



CHORAL REHEARSAL LOCATION:

Choir Room
The Mackenzie Theatre ("The Mack")
128 Great George Street 2nd Floor
Charlottetown, PE C1A 4K6



CONCERT PERFORMANCE LOCATION:

Memorial Hall
Confederation Centre of the Arts
145 Richmond St
Charlottetown, PE C1A 1J1

Accessibility

The Mack Choir Room is accessible via the stairwell adjacent to the lobby. We acknowledge that this temporary rehearsal space may not be accessible for everyone - please contact us directly if you have any questions or concerns. We are looking forward to having fully accessible choral rehearsal space in the newly renovated Centre building.

Contact Information

Director of Choral Music

Nick MacDonald

nmacdonald@confederationcentre.com

902-628-6144

Arts Education Department

Francesca Perez, Director, Arts Education & Heritage

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902-629-1178

Dawn Ward-Dames, Education and Outreach Coordinator

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Security Desk (located inside the Queen Street entrance of the Confederation Centre)

Office: 902-628-6130

Cell: 902-626-7883

Human Resources Director and Chair of Health and Safety Committee

John Mooy

jmooy@confederationcentre.com

Cell: 902-679-7878

Arts Education Mission and Vision

Confederation Centre's Arts Education programs offer a wealth of resources and options to students and are developed by recognized professionals with pedagogical training.

The Centre has offered opportunities to participate in the creation of various forms of art since it opened its doors in 1964. Our current programs offer a professional, artistic, fun, and safe approach to high-quality training to students of all ages, levels, and aspirations.

We ensure that proper, healthy technique is taught in our programs, which are focused on creating a positive learning process rather than an end-product. This approach has informed our education programs since their inception and is what continues to make them stand out.

We provide a unique opportunity on PEI for students of all ages and abilities to benefit from a level of excellence expected of a national arts institution, with many highly qualified teachers with diverse, specialized skill sets for students of all levels.

Students can expect a student-centred approach to learning proper technique in the artistic discipline of their choice. Many of our students have gone on to professional careers in dance or theatre, but all have enjoyed the lifelong rewards of safe and healthy dancing, singing and acting.

The full student experience is supported by world-class theatre professionals, outstanding facilities, extensive creative resources, and collaborative experiences with other departments.

Choral Program Mission and Vision

Choral music possesses a truly magical ability to connect and inspire people. Along with teaching valuable and fulfilling musical skills, the art of choral singing offers countless benefits to our mental and physical health. It helps us better connect with our own stories and understand how they intersect with others'. It inspires us to be the best we can be for each other and our world. And it lets us simply share in the sheer joy of music making!

Emphasis is placed on the pursuit of excellent musical technique, expression, and ensemble; engagement with a diverse selection of repertoire that is interesting, challenging, fun, and thematically meaningful for both performers and audience; and the development of a welcoming and inclusive space in which to work together.

General Program Information

The Choral Music Program consists of three ensembles: the **Junior Youth Chorus** for ages 8-10, the **Intermediate Youth Chorus** for ages 10-18, and the **Confederation Singers** for ages 18 and up. Each ensemble presents a series of annual concerts along with additional performance opportunities and creative collaborations. Previous musical experience is certainly an asset, but is not required. Anyone who can match pitch with their voice and is interested in collective singing is invited to explore the Centre's choral opportunities!

We strive to build capable and compassionate choral musicians whose skills carry over to enrich many other aspects of their lives. Any curious but undecided singers are invited to book a trial voice check and/or attend the first rehearsal of the season to see if singing at the Centre is a good fit for them.

Youth Chorus: Age Range and Placement

Placement of singers in the Junior or Intermediate divisions of the Youth Chorus will be at the discretion of the Choral Director.

Junior Youth Chorus: Ages 8-10

Singers younger than 8 years old will be assessed on an individual basis to determine readiness to join the Junior Youth Chorus. Criteria for this assessment will involve the areas of physical vocal development, social/emotional/cognitive development, and musical experience/skill.

Intermediate Youth Chorus: Ages 10-18

Singers at or near the age of 10 will be assessed on an individual basis to determine readiness to join the Intermediate Youth Chorus. Criteria for this assessment will involve the areas of physical vocal development, social/emotional/cognitive development, and musical experience/skill.

Individual 10-15 minute voice checks take place before the start of each season to assess musicianship skills, determine voice part and ensemble placement, and help meet the needs of each chorister as part of the ensemble.

Registration and Uniform Fees

- **Confederation Singers: \$120**
- **Confederation Youth Chorus: \$150**

Registration for all ensembles is open at least once per year, with regular Fall registration taking place during the months of August and September.

Choristers are responsible for acquiring appropriate concert attire (see pages 13-14). Youth Chorus caregivers are responsible for purchasing Youth Chorus uniform shirts from the Centre's webstore. The cost is approximately \$35. Please contact the Choral Director to try on sample shirts for size.

Regular Rehearsal Schedule

Confederation Singers rehearsals take place on Mondays 7:00-9:00pm except for holidays that fall on Mondays which may be rescheduled to Wednesday of the same week.

Intermediate Youth Chorus rehearsals take place on Tuesdays 6:00-7:30pm.

Junior Youth Chorus rehearsals take place on Thursdays 6:00-7:00pm.

2024-2025 Choral Season Important Dates

Administrative	Holidays/Closures	Rehearsals	Dress Rehearsals/Performances
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<i>Monday, September 9</i>	Confed Singers First Rehearsal	Mack Choir Room, 7:00 -- 9:00 pm
<i>Tuesday, September 12</i>	Intermediate Chorus First Rehearsal	Mack Choir Room, 6:00 – 7:30 pm
<i>Thursday, September 12</i>	Junior Chorus First Rehearsal	Mack Choir Room, 6:00 – 7:00 pm
<i>Wednesday, Sep 25</i>	*Junior Chorus Wed. Rehearsal*	Mack Choir Room, 6:00 – 7:00 pm
<i>Monday, September 30</i>	Last Day of Choral Registration	Last Day for Refunds
<i>Monday, September 30</i>	Truth and Reconciliation Day	NO REHEARSAL
<i>Wednesday, October 2</i>	*Confed Singers Wed. Rehearsal*	Mack Choir Room, 7:00 -- 9:00 pm
<i>Monday, October 14</i>	Thanksgiving	NO REHEARSAL
<i>Wednesday, October 16</i>	*Confed Singers Wed. Rehearsal*	Mack Choir Room, 7:00 -- 9:00 pm
<i>Wednesday, October 30</i>	*Junior Chorus Wed. Rehearsal*	Mack Choir Room, 6:00 – 7:00 pm
<i>Thursday, October 31</i>	Halloween	NO REHEARSAL
<i>Monday, November 11</i>	Remembrance Day	NO REHEARSAL
<i>Wednesday, Nov 13</i>	*Confed Singers Wed. Rehearsal*	Mack Choir Room, 7:00 -- 9:00 pm
<i>Tuesday, December 10</i>	Youth Chorus Dress Rehearsal	Mack Choir Room, 6:00 – 7:30 pm
<i>Thursday, December 12</i>	Youth Chorus Dress Rehearsal	Mack Choir Room, 6:00 – 7:00 pm
<i>Saturday, December 14</i>	Youth Chorus Concert	Memorial Hall, 9:00 – 1:00 pm
<i>Monday, December 16</i>	Confed Singers Dress Rehearsal	Mack Choir Room, 7:00 -- 9:00 pm
<i>Tuesday, December 17</i>	Youth Chorus Open House	Mack Choir Room, 6:00 – 7:30 pm Families Welcome to Attend!
<i>Friday, December 20</i>	Confed Singers Concert	Memorial Hall 4:00 -- 9:00 pm
<i>Sat, Dec 21 – Sun, Jan 5</i>	Holiday Break	NO REHEARSAL
<i>Monday, January 6</i>	Confed Singers Rehearsals Resume	Mack Choir Room, 7:00 -- 9:00 pm
<i>Tuesday, January 7</i>	Intermediate Rehearsals Resume	Mack Choir Room, 6:00 -- 7:30 pm
<i>Thursday, January 9</i>	Junior Rehearsals Resume	Mack Choir Room, 6:00 -- 7:00 pm
<i>Monday, February 17</i>	Islander Day	NO REHEARSAL
<i>Wed, February 19</i>	*Confed Singers Wed. Rehearsal*	Mack Choir Room, 7:00 – 9:00 pm
<i>Mon, Mar 17–Fri, Mar 21</i>	Winter Break	OPEN – rehearsals ongoing
<i>Monday, April 7</i>	Confed Singers Dress Rehearsal	Mack Choir Room, 7:00 – 9:00 pm
<i>Saturday, April 12</i>	Confed Singers Concert	Memorial Hall 4:00 -- 9:00 pm
<i>Monday, April 14</i>	Confed Singers Final Celebration and Open House	Mack Choir Room, 7:00 – 9:00 pm Families Welcome to Attend!
<i>Monday, April 21</i>	Easter Monday	OPEN – rehearsals ongoing
<i>Tuesday, April 29</i>	Youth Chorus Dress Rehearsal	Mack Choir Room 6:00 – 7:30 pm
<i>Thursday, May 1</i>	Youth Chorus Dress Rehearsal	Mack Choir Room 6:00 – 7:00 pm
<i>Saturday, May 3</i>	Youth Chorus Concert	Memorial Hall, 9:00 – 1:00 pm
<i>Tuesday, May 6</i>	Youth Chorus Final Celebration and Open House	Mack Choir Room 6:00 – 7:30 pm Families Welcome to Attend!

Code of Conduct

All choristers, their families, and leadership are expected to ***always treat each other with respect and kindness***. Discrimination, harassment, or abuse of any kind – verbal, physical, or otherwise – will not be tolerated, and may result in exclusion from the program. This is consistent with the respectful workplace and harassment policies at the Confederation Centre of the Arts, which are upheld for employees and all participants in education programs.

Choir members are expected to come prepared to do their best to contribute to the musical and interpersonal community of the chorus. Earnest effort, interest in learning, and an openness to trying new things will be essential to fostering the most fun and satisfying choral experience for everyone.

In the interest of maintaining a safe space, all activities (warm-ups, exercises, rehearsal techniques, etc.) should be considered invitations to participate with the goal of learning and growing together as choral musicians. While learning and growth can be challenging at times, no participant should ever feel required to do anything that makes them feel unsafe. **Should a concern of this kind arise, please contact the Choral Director or the Director of Arts Education and Heritage.**

Communication

Email is the primary mode of communication and will come from either artseducation@confederationcentre.com or nmacdonald@confederationcentre.com

You will receive important information via email, so please ensure you have provided us with an up-to-date email address that is regularly checked. We are happy to include multiple email addresses per family if you would like your correspondence sent to numerous recipients.

Please be sure that artseducation@confederationcentre.com and nmacdonald@confederationcentre.com **are on your safe sender list** to avoid emails accidentally going to your junk mail folder and that you have the phone numbers for Arts Education (902.628.6134) and the Choral Director (902.628.6144) saved to your phone contacts. Please plan to read all incoming communications in a timely manner and respond as promptly as possible when necessary.

Information may also be handed out in person at rehearsals or posted to online communication platforms.

Attendance & Commitment

All dress rehearsals, sound checks, and performances are considered mandatory. It's important to block these dates in your calendar at the start of the season and communicate any conflicts that may arise with us.

If you or your child are aware of any upcoming absences, please email to let us know in advance. If there is an illness or other unexpected circumstance, let us know as soon as possible so we can note the reason for the absence.

If any chorister is absent from or late to two or more rehearsals without notice, the Choral Director will reach out to check in about how best to improve communication and/or attendance moving forward.

Medical Information and Support Needs

It is important to notify our Arts Education administration staff about you/your child's existing medical conditions, learning disabilities, behavioral support, accommodation needs or any support systems that are in place at the time of registration and throughout the season. The more information we know before class time, the better prepared we will be to serve the needs of all participants. All information about our choristers is confidential.

Please note that, while we strive to be as welcoming as possible to learners of every kind, we do not have full-time Educational Assistants, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, or similar professionals on staff. As such, Confederation Centre of the Arts retains the right to refuse registration for a chorister if insufficient resources are available to ensure that the chorister, the Choral Director, and other members of the ensemble can have a positive and appropriately supported experience.

Cancellations and Storm Closures

The Choral Program reserves the right to cancel classes due to weather conditions or instructor illness. Please be advised that, in the event of school closure due to stormy weather, choral rehearsals are not necessarily cancelled. An email will be sent on school days by 1:00 pm or you can call 902-628-6134 to confirm the status of rehearsals. Even if rehearsal is going ahead as scheduled, always prioritize your safety when deciding whether to travel in inclement weather. Rehearsals canceled due to inclement weather will not be rescheduled or refunded.

Rehearsal Procedure and Supplies

Arrival

We encourage choristers to arrive 10-15 minutes before rehearsal and all choristers should aim to arrive no later than 5 minutes before the start of rehearsal. This will allow plenty of time for singers to gather any materials they may need (pencil, water bottle, sheet music in its folder or binder, etc.), check in with peers, get to their seats, and settle in before rehearsal begins.

Rehearsal Schedule and Etiquette

Rehearsals generally begin with 10-15 minutes of warm-ups, with the goal of focusing the attention of the ensemble, building collective energy, preparing the body and mind for singing, and practicing key musical skills and concepts that will benefit the choir as we work on repertoire together.

Following the warm-up sequence, the Choral Director will lead the ensemble in rehearsing concert repertoire, interspersed with other activities intended to help maintain the focus and energy of the group and to facilitate the most joyful, skilled, and fulfilling music-making experience possible.

Singers are encouraged to share any questions or thoughts that may come up about the musical material, rehearsal process, or other matters. During the rehearsal, singers may raise their hand and will be called on at the discretion of the Choral Director. The Choral Director will also endeavor to provide time for questions and discussion at logical transition points as distinct from periods occupied by ongoing ensemble work.

Washrooms

Washrooms are located in the back of the audience section on the main floor of the Mack Theatre.

Youth Chorus Washroom Policy: Please be sure to take care of any washroom needs before rehearsal begins, and plan to spend the entire rehearsal time with the group. If unexpected needs do arise during rehearsal, please inform the Choral Director. If an individual washroom break is indeed necessary, only one singer will be permitted to leave the group at any given time.

Seating

Seating and riser placement will be assigned at the discretion of the Choral Director, with consideration of accessibility needs.

What to Bring to Rehearsal

We ask that choristers come to rehearsal prepared with a bottle of water and a pencil, along with any assigned scores or other printed material in a folder or binder.

Please leave additional belongings such as coats and bags in designated areas separate from the rehearsal seating area. If certain items are required due to accessibility, sensory, or other needs, please inform the Choral Director.

Accommodations

Singers and caregivers are welcome to share information regarding physical, medical, sensory, or other supplies or accommodations they may need during rehearsal so that we can best support engaged participation and avoid misinterpretation of these items/actions as distractions or disruptions.

Food and Drink

We encourage choristers to bring a water bottle to rehearsal in the interest of maintaining hydration for a healthy voice. Food and chewing gum are not permitted in rehearsal for reasons of safety and musical expression. Please contact the Choral Director with any health, sensory, or other questions related to food and drink in rehearsal.

Sheet Music

Please take good care of all sheet music, being careful not to bend, fold, or rip the pages. If three-hole punching sheet music for use in a binder, please check first that any holes will not obscure the printed music. Any marks made in the music must be in pencil and must be kept neat, legible, and easy to erase. Be sure to return all sheet music at the end of each concert cycle for proper filing and storage.

Music Folders

Confederation Singers: Please be sure to have a black three-ring binder or choral folder for use in rehearsal, individual practice, and performance, and bring it every time the chorus meets.

Youth Chorus: Sheet music and lyric sheets in a folder will be provided to singers when necessary. If you would like to take these materials home to practice, see the Choral Director to sign them out and please be sure to bring them back to every rehearsal. Materials may also be sent to families via email.

Please note that Youth Chorus concerts are performed memorized, so a folder and sheet music will not be necessary for performance.

Concert Attire

A uniform appearance allows the audience and ensemble to focus on music and expression without being visually distracted. All attire should be in good condition with minimal wear and tear.

Youth Chorus Concert Attire/Uniform



Tops: Blue polo-style Youth Chorus shirt. These are available to order in a variety of sizes from the Centre's webstore for approx. \$35. Please contact the Choral Director for sizing, pricing, and ordering.

Bottoms: Back dress pants (no shorts) or skirts knee length or longer; black dress shoes; black socks/stockings. No patterns, symbols, or images.

Confederation Singers Concert Attire



Concert black: Black shirts or blouses with $\frac{3}{4}$ -length or long sleeves and collars or modest necklines (no t-shirts or tuxedos; jackets and ties not required); black dress pants/trousers; black knee-length or longer skirts or dresses; black socks/stockings; black closed-toe dress shoes.

Variations and embellishments may be added or adjusted according to the season or concert theme.

Thank you!

We appreciate you taking the time to review our Choral Program Handbook.

Looking forward to a great season!

Sincerely,



Nick MacDonald (he/him) | (il/lui)
Director of Choral Music | Directeur de Musique Chorale
Confederation Centre of the Arts | Centre des arts de la Confédération
nmacdonald@confederationcentre.com
902 628 6144

Chorister and Caregiver Acknowledgement

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the policies outlined in this Choral Music Handbook. You agree to comply with the policies contained in this handbook and to read and understand any revisions to it and be bound by them. You understand that this handbook is intended only as a general reference and is not intended to cover every situation that may arise during your/your child's participation in the Choral Program. This Choral Music Handbook is not a full statement of Confederation Centre's policy. Any questions about its contents can be discussed with the Director of Arts Education and Heritage.

Printed Name of Youth Chorister (if applicable)

Date

Printed Name of Adult Chorister or Parent/Legal Guardian of Youth Chorister

Signature of Adult Chorister / Parent or Legal Guardian of Youth Chorister