



Organization of
American States

OAS CHOIR MANUAL

MARCH 2012

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HISTORY

The OAS Choir was founded as an initiative of OAS Staff members and contractors in November 2009. The ensemble is composed mainly of OAS personnel, with a few outside guests. Since its creation, the choir has performed mainly for OAS personnel, and at OAS-related events. It is expected that as the choir gets larger and stronger, open performances at different locations will start to take place.

ADMINISTRATION

The OAS Choir's affairs are managed by a committee selected yearly by the choir's members at an annual general meeting in September. Section leaders for each of the choir's sections (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) are also selected at the meeting.

The committee has eight members: the president, the secretary, the treasurer/librarian, the four section leaders and the music director (ex-officio member).

PHILOSOPHY

The OAS Choir combines the benefits of a relaxed and fun activity among work colleagues with a passionate drive for musical excellence. Therefore, participation in the choir involves a serious commitment of time and energy.

The choir is very fortunate to have the volunteer services of an experienced music director, Mr. Mariano Vales. Members have agreed upon a common goal of constantly raising the musical bar of the ensemble (more than 80% receive regular individual voice tutoring). The choir reflects the international character of the OAS through its diverse group of singers and through its repertoire, which includes music from its member countries, with a focus towards high quality contemporary arrangements of folk/pop music.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to OAS Staff members, contractors and friends and does not require previous musical knowledge. Prospective members should write a note or E-mail expressing their interest to any committee member. Before applying for membership, interested individuals should observe a rehearsal, read the OAS Choir Manual (available on the website and face book page) and agree with its philosophy. The manual will be updated on a regular basis and members are expected to be familiar with its contents.

The prospective member should submit an application form (also available on the website and face book page) to the Music Director, who will schedule an audition to determine the applicant's music proficiency and section placement. If the audition determines that the applicant is not ready to join the choir right away due to vocal technique or musicality issues, a second audition will be scheduled for a later time, the application process will be put on hold, and supplementary learning will be recommended. Nevertheless, the applicant whose process is on hold may be admitted to rehearsals on a probationary status, until the application process is formally completed.

Even after being admitted, members will be regularly monitored to ensure their technique, musicality, and repertoire knowledge are up the group's standards.

Once admitted, a member will be required to pay a nominal fee (currently \$15) to cover the purchase of copyrighted music and other supplies.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals take place Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:00PM to 2:00PM in the Fitness Room, LD-120, of the General Secretariat Building (GSB) at 1889 F St. NW, Washington DC.

Members are asked to show up 5 minutes early so rehearsals can start on time.

Eating is not permitted during rehearsal. Conversations should be limited to rehearsal activities and other discussions should cease when the Director is talking or working with a group. Members should always bring the required music with them, and something to write

with. It is important to make notes to facilitate the learning process and avoid the repetition of errors.

Practice cannot be limited to the two weekly rehearsal hours; it has to be complemented with a considerable amount of individual work. Members will receive a sound clip (usually a MIDI file) as an aide in rehearsing a piece. It is expected that choristers will be able to sing on their own any part that has already been rehearsed, and whose corresponding score and sound clip have been distributed.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at rehearsals is important to making sustained progress on the songs we are learning. We have a very limited amount of time to work together as a group and we want to maximize our productivity.

Only job and health-related issues will be accepted as valid excuses for absences and tardiness. Choristers should notify the Secretary in advance if they will miss a session or be late, if at all possible. Otherwise, the chorister should notify the Secretary as soon as possible afterwards. Three unexcused absences and ten unexcused late arrivals will result in membership withdrawal. A consistent pattern of excused absences/tardiness may also result in membership withdrawal. Members should discuss any special situations, such as an extended mission, with the Music Director in advance. Absentees should make sure they get a rehearsal report from a fellow member before their return.

Absences from concerts or dress rehearsals will not be tolerated, unless properly excused.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

First and foremost, pay attention to instructions and signals from the Music Director.

Enter and leave the concert platform or stage holding the music folder at waist height in the hand furthest from the audience. Face the audience upon reaching your seat or standing position placement. Wait for cues to sit or stand and open the music folder. Hold the folder up so you can see the Music Director. Close the music folder as soon as the last piece is

finished. Wait for pre-arranged cues to bow together as a group. Some points to keep in mind:

- Do not straggle when entering/exiting
- Stand/sit up straight and maintain a pleasant expression
- Avoid noises (Standing, sitting, chatting, turning pages, cell phones, etc.)
- Avoid acknowledging audience members
- Watch the conductor throughout performance

CONCERT ATTIRE

WOMEN

- Black skirt or slacks (definite black)
- Black blouse (definite black) - short sleeves for summer and long sleeves for winter
- Black shoes and black stockings
- No perfume or jewelry, except wedding rings and watches

MEN

- Long-sleeved white shirt. A definite white is required, no "off-whites" or creams
- Dark grey suit, no tie
- Black belt, black shoes, black socks
- No perfume or jewelry, except wedding rings and watches

DIRECTORY

Music Director: Mariano Vales

Vocal Coach: Laura Stuart

2011-2012 COMMITTEE

President: Cecilia Martins

Secretary: Lucrecia Zea-Yonker

Treasurer/Librarian: Lynn Swenson

Soprano Section Leader: Luz María Peña

Alto Section Leader: Cecilia Martins

Tenor Section Leader: Daniel Gonzalez

Bass Section Leader: Andrés Navia

SOPRANO I

Munarritz, Rosa

Peña, Luz María

Ortiz, Ana María

SOPRANO II

Contreras, Pamela

Cope, Ana Virginia

Cruzado, Mariella

Demarco, María

Ramírez, Lorena Cristina

Zea-Yonker, Lucrecia

CONTRALTO I

Luján, María Juliana

Marín, Carolina

Swenson, Lynn

Tavares, Marta

CONTRALTO II

Bozicovich, Karen

Lalinde, Carolina

Guzmán, Moira

Farías, Carolina

Martins, Cecilia

Paz Soldán, María José

TENOR I

Huenneke, Martin

Thaler, Pablo

TENOR II

González, Daniel

Sagredo, Javier

BASS I

Macher, Carlos

Navia, Andrés

BASS II

Irusta, Pablo