



Singer Handbook
2010-2011 Season

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PURPOSE AND GOALS

The Danville Girls Chorus (DGC) is incorporated as a non-profit, independent music education organization. DGC offers a complete program of choral music education through a variety of learning experiences and performance opportunities. Singers are taught the basics of vocal production and learn the fundamentals of musicianship and note-reading. They are exposed to a variety of musical styles ranging from classical and folk tunes to contemporary and pop music. Participation in this program develops a sense of responsibility, confidence and self-esteem in the singers. Our aim is to instill sensitivity to beauty, the arts and musicianship. The result is the enhancement of individual skills, and lasting friendships and relationships among the group members.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Kenneth Abrams has been the Artistic Director of the Danville Girls Chorus since 1992. Mr. Abrams received his Master's Degree in choral conducting from the University of Illinois and his undergraduate degree in vocal performance from California State University, Hayward. He directs the Concert and Honor Choirs, and supervises the beginning level choirs. In addition to working with DGC, he has been the choral director for San Ramon Valley High School for twenty-five years. His program there is noted as one of the best choral programs in Northern California. Mr. Abrams has been named Teacher of the Year by many organizations including the San Ramon Valley Unified School District and the Danville Chamber of Commerce. He is currently the president of the California Chapter of the American Choral Director's Association (ACDA).

2010-11 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Artistic Director	Ken Abrams
President	Terri Cable
Vice President	Jane Allen
Treasurer	Suzanne Helle
Secretary	Gretchen Schmahl
Membership	Michelle Fieldman
Uniforms	Kathy Shear
Publicity	Tina Perault
Hospitality	Elizabeth Patton

GENERAL INFORMATION

Rehearsal Schedule

The DGC season runs from September through the beginning of June. (Girls in Concert Choir must attend a mandatory one-week music camp in August.) The season is divided into semesters, Fall (September-December) and Winter/Spring (January-June). Holidays and breaks coincide with the San Ramon Valley Unified School District calendar.

Rehearsals are WEDNESDAYS at Charlotte Wood Middle School, 600 El Capitan, Danville.

The Preparatory, Intermediate, Apprentice and Concert Choirs rehearse from 4:30-6:30 PM.

The Honor Choir rehearses from 6:30 - 7:00 PM.

In addition to regular rehearsals, three SINGER SATURDAYS are held during the year at San Ramon Valley High School. Singer Saturdays provide the directors with an opportunity to assign solos and to instruct the girls in choreography for the upcoming concert. These are important rehearsals and it is expected that each girl will attend. Missing Singer Saturday counts as an absence and if a singer already has absences, the additional absence may result in her not being able to perform in the upcoming concert.

Performance Uniform

Students must wear the DGC uniform in compliance with the following guidelines or they will not be allowed to perform. There are two types of uniforms, one for the Preparatory, Intermediate and Apprentice Choirs and another for the Concert and Honor Choirs. A uniform chairperson is in charge of the selection of a Board-approved uniform. Hair should be clean and combed back into a ponytail or braid. Neatly trimmed bangs do not need to be gelled back, as long as eyes are not covered. Makeup cannot be worn by Preparatory or Intermediate girls, and must be worn discreetly by girls in the advanced choirs. Jewelry, accessories, watches, earrings or any coloring in the hair are not permitted. In addition to the formal dress uniform, all members of the Concert and Honor Choirs must own red and blue DGC t-shirts for other performances.

UNIFORM CHECK: These are scheduled in October to allow families plenty of time to purchase a uniform and make sure it is fitted properly. At the uniform check, choir representatives will ascertain compliance with the uniform policy. Girls are expected to properly wear all components of the DGC uniform.

USED UNIFORM PROGRAM: When uniforms have been in place in the organization for more than a season, information on purchasing used uniforms can be obtained at parent meetings or by calling the choir line or by e-mailing danville_girls_chorus@hotmail.com. If the current style will be carried forward, a Used Uniform Sale will take place in September.

Public Performances

Although public performances are an important and necessary component of DGC, they are not the primary goal of the organization. The primary goal is for singers to learn the basics of singing and musical concepts and to become comfortable with both. All singers participate in three concerts each year: Winter, Spring, and the June Pops Concert. Singers in the Concert and Honor Choirs also participate in performances with other ensembles, at festivals and for a variety of community and civic organizations.

Auditions

The DGC Staff conducts auditions in order to meet prospective singers and evaluate continuing singers. Auditions are necessary for placing singers in the choir level appropriate for their age and level of experience. Auditions are held in June for new singers and for continuing Intermediate and Apprentice singers. Preparatory singers are evaluated during rehearsal and do not attend June Auditions.

Parental Involvement

As is true with all volunteer organizations, the success of DGC depends on parental involvement. Parents must sign up for one job assignment during the season (i.e. ticket sales, concert set-up/take-down, chaperoning at a concert, helping with our See's Candy fundraiser, etc.). A \$50 fee will be charged to any family that does not fulfill their job assignment. Parents are also responsible for the following:

- Ensure that your singer arrives at rehearsals and performances before the call time.
- **On time is late!**
- Provide or arrange for transportation to and from all rehearsals and events.
- Purchase and maintain the required DGC uniform.
- Inquire about assignments and ask for flyers handed out in class.
- Listen to your singer practice at home.
- Give your singer encouragement, but be realistic in expectations of her accomplishments.

CHOIR OBJECTIVES

PREPARATORY CHOIR Ms. Angela Borba, Director

The Preparatory Choir lays the foundation for successful progress and development as a singer in DGC. Girls must be in at least the 3rd grade to join and have the ability to accurately match pitch. The typical grade level is 3rd to 5th grade, with little or no prior training. The emphasis for this chorus is on proper use of the vocal instrument through games, folksongs and rhythmic activities. Frequent performances are not a component of this class. The Preparatory Choir meets one day a week for two hours. Students generally take this course for one to two years before advancing to another level.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a joy for singing
- Learn the fundamentals of vocal production & choral singing
- Develop good intonation
- Very basic music terminology & symbols
- Body rhythms, clapping & movement
- Elements of solfege (a system of sight-reading music) and note reading
- Gain the ability to sing a solo line on pitch
- Basics of performing techniques & concert etiquette
- Proper behavior and participation skills for rehearsals/performances
- Folksongs and partner-songs as a basis of literature

INTERMEDIATE CHOIR Mr. Frank Ryken, Director

Girls enrolled in this choir must have mastered the skills outlined for the Preparatory Choir. The Intermediate Choir continues with the basics in the girls' musical development. Girls in this choir are typically in grades 4th to 6th. The Intermediate Choir meets for two hours one day a week. Like the Preparatory Choir, there is not an emphasis on frequent performances. Students take this course for one to two years before advancing to another level.

OBJECTIVES

- Continue with the fundamentals of vocal production and choral singing
- Demonstrate good posture and breath control
- Continued development of good intonation
- Continued music terminology and symbols
- Solfege and note reading in the development of sight singing
- Basics of performing techniques and concert etiquette
- Proper behavior & participation skills for rehearsals/performances
- Continued singing of partner-songs and folksongs
- Introduction of two-part literature
- Demonstrate the ability to sing a given vocal line against another part

APPRENTICE CHOIR Mrs. Jennifer Brown, Director

The Apprentice Choir lays the foundation for successful progress and development as a singer in DGC. This group does not require any prior musical training, but girls must have the ability to match pitch accurately and have a strong desire to excel in the program. The typical grade level is 5th to 7th. The emphasis for this choir is to prepare singers for placement in the Concert Choir. Frequent performances are not a component of this choir. The Apprentice Choir meets one day a week for two hours. Girls generally are in this choir for one year only.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a joy for singing
- Learn the fundamentals of vocal production & choral singing
- Develop good intonation, posture and breath control
- Music terminology and symbols
- Elements of solfege (a system of sight-reading music) and note reading
- Gain the ability to sing a solo line on pitch
- Basics of performing techniques and concert etiquette
- Focus on music preparation outside of the rehearsal
- Proper behavior and participation skills for rehearsals/performances
- Unison, partner-songs and 2-3 part harmony as a basis of literature
- Demonstrate the ability to sing a given vocal line against another part

CONCERT CHOIR Mr. Ken Abrams, Director

Members of the Concert Choir must have the basic principles and objectives covered in the earlier choirs. Musical training will proceed at a faster pace and in the more complex context of technically demanding music. The typical grade level is 6th to 8th, with 2-4 years of musical training. The Concert Choir performs at community events, participates in a 4-day tour each spring, and must attend a mandatory week of summer music camp prior to the start of each new season. The group meets for two hours once a week.

OBJECTIVES

- Continue with more challenging music theory
- Continued use of two-part repertoire
- More experience in public performance
- Focus on music preparation outside of the rehearsal
- Continued study in the principles of good singing and vocal production
- Receive vocal coaching in a class setting as well as individually
- Begin development of solo singing
- Develop consistent use of the vocal mechanism
- Memorize 45-60 minutes of music
- Use of solfege for sight singing
- Demonstrate the ability to hold one's part against one contrary part

HONOR CHOIR Mr. Ken Abrams, Director

This is a select group of singers chosen from the Concert Choir through a separate, internal audition. This choir meets for an extra half hour each week after the regularly scheduled rehearsal and learns additional music of its own. **Attendance is required at all functions!**

EXPECTATIONS OF SINGERS

Behavior

- Show respect for instructors, staff, parents and fellow singers.
- Be courteous to fellow singers at all times.
- Represent DGC in a polite and professional manner.
- No talking, use of cell phones or disruptive behavior in class.
- Actively listen to directions.

Preparation

- Prepare music and rehearse at home.
- Bring music, name tag, and a pencil to each rehearsal.
- Keep music in a notebook and make marks in pencil only.
- YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR LOST OR DAMAGED MUSIC.

Commitment

- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Strive for standards of excellence in your singing and musical studies.
- Attend all DGC performances.
- Wear the DGC uniform to DGC performances and events only.
- Be a role model for other singers.

Attendance

- Consistent attendance is essential for a quality music program.
- MORE THAN TWO ABSENCES PER CONCERT SEASON WILL RESULT IN A SINGER NOT BEING ALLOWED TO PERFORM AT THE NEXT CONCERT. TWO TARDIES WILL BE COUNTED AS ONE ABSENCE. BE ON TIME -- BE EARLY!
- Girls MUST attend the mandatory rehearsal in order to perform at the concert. The rehearsal immediately prior to a concert is the Mandatory Rehearsal.
- In case of absence during weekly rehearsals, please leave a message on the choir line (837-2624) or send an e-mail (danville_girls_chorus@hotmail.com) before 3:00 pm. Leaving a message does not excuse an absence, but it is a courtesy that we appreciate as we worry about your daughter's whereabouts during rehearsal. If we do not hear from you, you will get a call from a staff member to ascertain your daughter's whereabouts.
- In case of emergency during a choir rehearsal, performance, or any other DGC activity, singers will remain with DGC staff until a parent, guardian, or other designated adult picks them up or gives specific instructions to the staff.

Punctuality

- STUDENTS MUST BE PROMPT -- TARDIES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE! REHEARSAL STARTS AT 4:30. Singers need to arrive PRIOR to the start of rehearsal to ensure that they are in their seats by the start time. Students who arrive late cause disruption to the entire group. BEING ON TIME IS MORE THAN A COURTESY, IT IS AN EXPECTATION.
- Two tardies = One absence
- The chorus is not responsible for singers until fifteen minutes prior to scheduled rehearsal time, and fifteen minutes after the end of rehearsal.

On time is late!

Promotion

- Staff members collectively make decisions regarding a singer's promotion.
- Evaluations are based on musical talent, aptitude, achievement, and vocal maturity.
- Attendance, theory, and emotional maturity will be considered.
- Promotion is also based on the space available in the next group and the vocal needs of each section within that choir level. Refer to the objectives mentioned earlier in the handbook for each choir level.
- Promotions take place at the end of the season in June.
- Progress reports will be sent twice a year, in January (they will be given to the singers at rehearsal) and in June (mailed).
- Concerns about promotion should be directed to the Board of Directors via the choir line or DGC e-mail.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Membership Dues

- Tuition costs cover rental of rehearsal space, rental of concert venue space, staff salaries, insurance, purchase of music, office supplies and other related business expenses.
- Tuition is payable on a semester schedule or by special arrangements with the President and Treasurer.
- Tuition is non-refundable.
- Tuition is due on the 1st Wed. of the semester and becomes past due on the 10th of the month. A \$10 late fee will be assessed on past due tuition. There is a \$20 fee for returned checks.
- **PAYMENT IN ARREARS CAN RESULT IN THE SINGER BEING DISMISSED FROM THE PROGRAM.** Limited financial aid is available for hardship situations. Please contact the Treasurer or President if financial difficulties present themselves.

2010-2011 Tuition Rates

Preparatory Choir	\$250 due 9/1/10	\$250 due 1/5/11
Intermediate Choir	\$275 due 9/1/10	\$275 due 1/5/11
Apprentice Choir	\$275 due 9/1/10	\$275 due 1/5/11
Concert Choir	\$295 due 8/5/10*	\$295 due 1/5/11
Honor Choir	\$25 due 9/1/10	\$320 due 1/5/11

*(Concert Choir pre-registration during Concert Camp – alternate registration on 9/1/10)

DISCOUNTS: If more than one singer in a given family is a member of DGC, a Family Discount of 20% will be applied to EACH SUBSEQUENT child's tuition (discount applied to the LOWER tuition).

Financial Assistance

The Choir has limited funds available for partial financial aid awards. Financial assistance is awarded on the basis of family income in combination with availability of DGC funds. Because finances are a private issue, please be assured that only the Board President and Treasurer will be involved in the financial discussions. If financial difficulties should present themselves, please speak with either the President or the Treasurer to work out a satisfactory payment plan. The Board does not wish for anyone to feel the need to drop from the program due to finances.

Tax Deductions

DGC is a non-profit organization. Please save your receipts for all your donations as they are tax-deductible. Any cash gifts you make above your tuition costs are fully tax deductible. Donors will receive a thank you letter for tax filing purposes with DGC's federal tax ID. With permission, donor names will appear in our concert programs under our different giving categories. In addition, many employers have matching funds programs. We deeply appreciate any help you can offer in support of our non-profit organization.

MISCELLANEOUS

DGC E-mail Address: danville_girls_chorus@hotmail.com

E-mail is the preferred method of contact with the DGC Board. Messages may be sent via the above e-mail address. Newsletters, information about upcoming events and changes to the schedule will be sent to membership through this account. Please notify us if your e-mail address changes during the season. Please add this e-mail address to your online address book in order to minimize the chance of having e-mails marked as spam or junk mail.

DGC Business Phone Number : (925) 837-2624

Messages may be left at this number regarding attendance, tuition, schedules, future events or general questions. Your call will be returned in a timely fashion.

Parent Meetings

It is expected that one parent/representative will attend parent meetings. These meetings are essential to provide communication and information regarding planning, events, scheduling, fundraisers, etc. They are scheduled as needed. Please check the calendar and newsletters for dates and times.

Newsletter

Newsletters and announcements are sent to our membership via e-mail. Please notify us if your e-mail address changes during the season. We earnestly request that you read and print out this information. It is meant to keep you up-to-date with the latest calendar changes and upcoming events and is published three times a year in November, February and May.

Roster

In the fall, a DGC roster will be given to the girls to take home after rehearsal. The roster includes the singer's name, choir, school, parents' names, and phone numbers. Please notify us if your address or telephone number changes during the season. **THE MEMBERSHIP ROSTER IS FOR OFFICIAL DANVILLE GIRLS CHORUS USE. PLEASE DO NOT USE THIS ROSTER TO SOLICIT BUSINESS OF OUR MEMBERS. TO DO SO CONSTITUTES MISAPPROPRIATION OF CORPORATE PROPERTY.**

Transportation

Getting singers to and from rehearsals, performances and other events is the sole responsibility of parents/guardians. Carpools may be arranged by checking the chorus roster and calling parents who live in a nearby area.

Summer Music Camp -- August 1-5, 2011

Summer Music Camp is required of all singers in the Concert Choir. Music Camp gives the music staff an opportunity to build musical and vocal skills, to teach new music, and to provide the individual and small group attention that girls may need for performing. If your daughter is in the INTERMEDIATE or the APPRENTICE CHOIR, there is a possibility that she may be promoted in June to the Concert Choir. For this reason, we ask that you please make your summer vacation plans carefully. All Concert Choir singers **MUST** attend Summer Music Camp or the promotion will not take place.

DVDs and Photography

DGC is pleased to offer each family one complimentary DVD of each concert performance (additional DVDs will be available for purchase). DVDs will be distributed to the singers at rehearsal approximately 4-6 weeks after each concert. June DVDs are handed out during Summer Music Camp. You will receive an e-mail, notifying you in advance of each distribution date. We have found that using a professional videographer allows our families to sit back and enjoy the performances. We have also discovered that safety hazards, such as those created by the use of tripods, have greatly improved. **PLEASE DO NOT VIDEOTAPE OR USE FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY DURING THE PERFORMANCES!** The directors find this to be distracting to the singers, and we want them to sound their best. A short photo opportunity will be arranged following each choir's performance at the December and June Concerts.

Fundraising

The 2010 See's Candy Fundraiser begins in October. Orders will be collected and the goal is for candy to be distributed the rehearsal prior to Thanksgiving. Parents are encouraged to participate in this fundraiser by promoting the sale to family and friends. This is our only fundraiser. For safety reasons, please do not allow your daughter to sell door-to-door. Monies earned from candy sales by the Concert Choir singers are credited toward the cost of their Spring Tour.

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF DGC!