

San Francisco Girls Chorus

2017-2018 Handbook



Lisa Bielawa, Artistic Director



Lisa Bielawa, Artistic Director, is a composer-vocalist and 2009 Rome Prize winner in Musical Composition. She moved to New York two weeks after receiving her B.A. in Literature in 1990 from Yale University, and began touring as the vocalist with the Philip Glass Ensemble in 1992. In 1997 she co-founded the MATA Festival, which celebrates the work of young composers. She has toured and recorded with the renowned early music groups Pomerium and TENET, performed with Paul McCartney at Carnegie Hall, toured with Laurie Anderson and Lou Reed, and appeared on Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion*. Bielawa was the choirmaster for the touring production of Philip Glass and Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach* from 2012-2015, and assisted Paul Simon with the development of his Broadway musical *Capeman*. Her music is frequently performed throughout the US and Europe, with recent and upcoming highlights including two world premieres at the 2016 NY PHIL BIENNIAL and performances with the Orlando Philharmonic and at the Kennedy Center. Her current project *Vireo* is a new episodic opera which has recently been released by KCET-TV in LA for free, on-demand streaming.

Valérie Sainte-Agathe, Music Director and Principal Conductor



Valérie Sainte-Agathe, Music Director and Principal Conductor has prepared and conducted the SF Girls Chorus since 2013—including performances with renowned artists such as Jon Nakamatsu, Deborah Voigt, Gustavo Dudamel, The New Century Chamber Orchestra, Kronos Quartet, Philip Glass, and Aaron J. Kernis. In June 2016, she conducted the SF Girls Chorus alongside The Knights Orchestra and Brooklyn Youth Chorus for the New York Philharmonic Biennial Festival at Lincoln Center. She collaborated again with The Knights for the SHIFT Festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington in April. Ms. Sainte-Agathe served as Music Director for the Young Singers program of the Montpellier National Symphony and Opera in France from 1998-2011. In this capacity, she trained young singers for opera and symphony concerts and productions. She participated in eight recordings with the Montpellier National Orchestra and The Radio France Festival. She is a recipient of Victoires de la Musique, (the equivalent of a French Grammy award). She is two-time recipient of the Orphée d'or award - for Honneger *Jeanne au Bucher* and Vincent d'Indy *l'Étranger*. Ms. Sainte-Agathe studied at the Montpellier Conservatory in Piano performance. She received her bachelor's degree in conducting and a Master in Management from Université Paul Valéry in Montpellier.

San Francisco Girls Chorus

The mission of the San Francisco Girls Chorus is to create outstanding performances featuring the unique and compelling sound of young women's voices through an exemplary music education program.

Welcome to the San Francisco Girls Chorus and The Chorus School. This handbook is an effort to provide information that will help to make your year at SFGC successful. Please take the time to read through it. If questions arise during the year that are not answered here, please contact the SFGC office.

About the Chorus

The San Francisco Girls Chorus, Chorus School, and Prep Chorus provide accessible, comprehensive music education and performance programs that serve Bay Area girls, ages 4 to 18, from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. The curriculum provides girls and young women an in-depth, graduated program so that they may acquire excellent musical skills necessary to perform on a high artistic level. It is believed that the discipline and concentration learned by each student-artist in rehearsal and performance will instill in her the values necessary to succeed in music and in life.



San Francisco Girls Chorus

Stunning vocal range, flexibility, drama, and power are among the hallmarks of the 37-year-old San Francisco Girls Chorus, which is recognized as one of the world's most widely known and respected vocal ensembles for youth. Under the direction of curator Lisa Bielawa and conductor Valérie Sainte-Agathe, the premier ensemble of the SF Girls Chorus, Chorissima, has achieved an incomparable sound that underscores the unique clarity and force of impeccably trained treble voices fused with expressiveness and drama. The Chorus has been awarded the music industry's highest honors including five GRAMMY Awards and recognition from ASCAP, Chorus America, and others. The Chorus has produced award-winning concerts, recordings and tours, empowered young women in music and other fields, enhanced and expanded the field of music for treble voices, and set the international standard for the highest level of performance and education.

The Chorus School offers a program designed to take young girls from their first introduction to the art of choral singing through a full course of choral/vocal instruction. The comprehensive music education includes the study and development of choral artistry, vocal technique, music theory, sight singing, and music history. Choristers acquire excellent music skills that instill a lifelong love of music. The School's graduated curriculum is divided into four levels of achievement. Choristers follow a carefully structured sequence of training stages, designed specifically to increase technical skills, stamina, and discipline in accordance with the chorister's age and physical development. Each singer's progress is evaluated four times each year in the middle of each semester and at the end of each term in January and May. Singers can spend one, two, or up to three years in any given level.

Prep Chorus is designed to provide young choristers ages four through seven the opportunity to develop their voices and musicianship in an exciting age-appropriate atmosphere. Students are introduced to unison choral music and beginning vocal technique. Repertoire selection encompasses a wide variety of genres, including classical, folk, sacred, secular, and multicultural. Following the methodology of educator Zoltan Kodály, folk music, games, and dances foster the enjoyment of developing musical skills, including reading, writing, improvising, interpreting, and describing music.

Contact Information

San Francisco Girls Chorus
44 Page Street, Suite 200
San Francisco, CA 94102

Office Phone: 415-863-1752
Fax: 415-934-0302

www.sfgirlschorus.org

Office Hours: 10am-6pm, Monday-Friday

San Francisco Girls Chorus Faculty and Staff

Lisa Bielawa <i>Artistic Director</i>	x309	lbielawa@sfgirlschorus.org
Valerie Sainte-Agathe <i>Chorissima Director</i> <i>Music Director and Principal Conductor</i>	x302	vsainte-agathe@sfgirlschorus.org
Lee Steward <i>Level I Director</i> <i>Camp Director</i>	x327	lsteward@sfgirlschorus.org
Katrina Turman <i>Level II Director</i>	x325	kturman@sfgirlschorus.org
Lucik Aprahamian <i>Level III Director</i>	x312	laprahamian@sfgirlschorus.org
Anne Hege <i>Level IV Director</i>	x310	ahege@sfgirlschorus.org
Bobby Chastain <i>Interim Level IV Director</i>	x310	bchastain@sfgirlschorus.org
Susan Blinderman <i>Theory Instructor and Accompanist– Level IV</i>		sblinderman@sfgirlschorus.org
Renée Witon <i>Theory Instructor–Levels I – III, Level IV Grads</i>	x328	rwiton@sfgirlschorus.org

Justin Montigne <i>Director of Voice Studies</i> <i>Faculty Advisor</i>		jmontigne@sfgirlschorus.org
Andrew Bradford <i>Executive Director</i>	x305	abradford@sfgirlschorus.org
Virginia Peden <i>Dean of Choristers</i>	x321	vpeden@sfgirlschorus.org
Elaine Robertson <i>Director of Production and Artistic Administration</i>	x317	erobertson@sfgirlschorus.org
Hilda Schmelling <i>Chorus School Administrator</i>	x301	erobertson@sfgirlschorus.org
Samantha Rowell <i>Director of Development and Communications</i>	x306	development@sfgirlschorus.org
Barbara Lundy <i>Development Manager</i>	x322	blundy@sfgirlschorus.org
Michael Grade <i>Director of Finance & Operations</i>	x308	mgrade@sfgirlschorus.org
Sheila Waldron <i>Finance Associate</i>	x307	swaldron@sfgirlschorus.org

A change to your contact information?

Update your information on Charms!

Reporting an absence?

Levels I-III: Call or email your Director and Chorus School Administrator

Level IV: Call or email your Director and Director of Production

Reporting a Chorissima absence?

Email Director of Production at erobertson@sfgirlschorus.org

Rehearsal Sites

SAN FRANCISCO REHEARSAL SITE

Kanbar Performing Arts Center
44 Page Street, San Francisco, CA 94102
(between Gough and Franklin Streets)

Site Reminders:

There is no security presence at Kanbar until 30 minutes before rehearsal. Please do not arrive for regular rehearsal earlier than 3:30 p.m. Please do not ever double park your car, make a U-turn, or block traffic on Page Street. Do not ever allow your chorister to jaywalk.

From the East Bay:

1. Take the Bay Bridge toward SF
2. Exit at 9th Street towards Civic Center/Golden Gate Bridge
3. Turn left on Harrison Street
4. Make an immediate right on 9th Street
5. Turn left onto Market Street
6. Immediately after Van Ness Avenue, bear right on Page St

From the Peninsula:

1. Take 101 North toward SF
2. Take the 9th Street exit
3. Bear left on 9th Street
4. Turn left onto Market Street
5. Immediately after Van Ness Avenue, bear right on Page Street

From Marin:

1. Take the Golden Gate Bridge toward SF
2. Follow signs to Lombard Street
3. Follow Lombard to Van Ness Avenue
4. Turn right onto Van Ness Avenue
5. Turn right onto Market Street
6. Bear right on Page Street

Public Transit:

1. Take BART to Civic Center Station
2. Exit BART area and enter MUNI area (without exiting station)
3. Take any outbound MUNI train one stop to Van Ness Station
4. Exit station and walk one block west on Market Street
5. Turn right onto Page Street

EAST BAY REHEARSAL SITE

Crowden Music Center
1475 Rose Street, Berkeley

Site Reminders:

SFGC choristers may not enter Crowden or the grounds surrounding Crowden before 3:30 p.m. Please also note that no SFGC staff will be onsite before 3:30 p.m. Please do not make a U-turn or 3-point turn between Crowden and the neighboring school on Rose Street. Please do not ever block traffic on Rose Street and do not ever allow your child to jaywalk.

From San Francisco:

1. Take the Bay Bridge and exit onto I-80 East toward Oakland.
2. Exit onto University Ave
3. Turn left at Sacramento St. and go to the third stoplight at Rose St.
4. Turn left onto Rose St. The school is on the corner of Rose and Sacramento.

From Marin (via the Richmond Bridge)::

1. Cross Richmond Bridge from San Quentin.
2. Merge onto Interstate 80.
3. Exit at Gilman and turn left at the end of the ramp.
4. Turn left at Hopkins St.
5. Make an immediate right onto Sacramento.
6. The school will be on the right, on the corner of Rose and Sacramento.

From Oakland / San Jose:

1. Take Highway 880 North to Highway 580 West/Interstate 80 East toward Sacramento/San Rafael.
2. Exit onto University Ave
3. Turn left at Sacramento St. and go to the third stoplight at Rose St.
4. The school will be on the left, on the corner of Rose and Sacramento.

From Orinda / Walnut Creek / Lafayette:

1. Take Route 24 west through the tunnel.
2. Exit into Berkeley on Tunnel Road.
3. Continue straight across Claremont Avenue to Sacramento St.
4. Turn right at Sacramento St, and go to the third stoplight after University
5. The school will be on the left, on the corner of Rose and Sacramento.

Public Transit:

1. Take the Richmond line to the North Berkeley stop.
2. Exit the station on the northeast side along Sacramento Street.
3. Walk left three blocks to Rose St.
4. The school is on the northwest corner of Rose and Sacramento St.

General Information

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICIES FOR REGULAR REHEARSAL

Please use the SFGC "Arrival and Departure Form" to determine what type of SFGC ID card your chorister should receive.

ARRIVAL

1. All choristers should be dropped off at the main entrance to the Kanbar Center or the main entrance to Crowden Music Center.
2. If you park and walk your chorister to Chorus, please use the main entrance.
3. Do not jaywalk across the street or drop your chorister off across the street unless she is prepared to use the crosswalk.

DEPARTURE

CHORISTERS ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT:

1. Parents can find parking in the surrounding neighborhoods and walk to pick up their choristers. Please DO NOT double park and leave your car.
2. Use the main entrance designated for your location.
3. Meet your chorister at her rehearsal room. Exit through the main entrance.
4. If a chorister who is not regularly designated to leave on her own needs to leave alone for special circumstances, please contact the Chorus School Administrator or the Dean of Choristers before rehearsal.

CHORISTERS WHO HAVE PERMISSION TO LEAVE ON THEIR OWN:

1. All choristers exit through the main entrance to the building. Each chorister is required to show her designated SFGC ID card upon leaving the building for any reason.
2. If you give your chorister permission to leave on her own, you will be granting that permission for the entire year, unless
3. Your chorister may also wait inside the building. You may arrange for your chorister to wait for you wherever you would like her to. However, please be aware that it is your responsibility to make these arrangements.

SFGC staff will be present until 6:15 pm after every rehearsal in case a chorister needs to wait for a very late ride. Choristers still present after 6:15 pm may wait for their parents with the building guard; however, the SFGC staff may no longer be present.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Consistent attendance at regular & dress rehearsals, performances, voice & theory classes, and sectionals is required to maintain membership in the San Francisco Girls Chorus and The Chorus School. Regular attendance supports consistency in learning and progress as a singer, and helps choristers develop

the focus, practice habits, professionalism, and commitment necessary to success in the musical realm, as well as most other future endeavors.

Chorissima

Members of Chorissima are allowed to miss a maximum of 2 non-required rehearsals for "personal" reasons and a maximum of 2 rehearsals for illness per year. Dress rehearsals are required and other rehearsals may also be designated as required. If a Chorissima member does not attend a dress rehearsal or other required rehearsal, she may not perform in the concert for which that rehearsal prepares.

If a Chorissima member is going to be absent for "personal" reasons, she must ask permission via email at least two weeks in advance of the absence. Permission will not be granted for missing rehearsals the week of a concert. If a Chorissima member is ill, either she or a parent should email or text the Production Director (Elaine Robertson) no later than 3:30 p.m. that day.

If a Chorissima member is tardy to rehearsal more than 6 times for any reason, she must meet with the Music Director to resolve this issue in order to remain in SFGC.

Chorus School

Each level has a number of allowed regular rehearsal absences per year:

Level IV- 4 non-required rehearsals or 12 hours, total

Level III- 5

Level II- 6

Level I- 7

All absences (e.g. sickness, vacation, school trips/events) contribute toward this total. Remember to always communicate any absences to your chorister's Director before 3:30pm on the rehearsal day. If the absence is planned, it is better to communicate it further ahead of time. It is a chorister's responsibility to track her absence rate, although the Dean will contact you mid-year to let you know if you are nearing the limit. **Respect for attendance does influence promotion.**

If a chorister does not participate in a dress rehearsal, she may not be allowed to sing at the concert for which it prepares. All performances are mandatory. High-level performance experience is an essential component of SFGC programming. Groups work hard all semester to prepare for Davies and the Spring Concert, specifically. For this reason, missing Davies or the Spring Concert is grounds for dismissal from SFGC.

SUMMER SESSION

Levels II, III, IV and Chorissima each have a mandatory daytime summer session in San Francisco in the month of July. Summer session is a critical time in the formation of a new group and a new sound, during which each level incorporates new singers, determines voice parts for the coming year, learns foundational rehearsal and choral skills necessary for success in the year to come, and forms relationships and bonds in preparation for the year ahead. Please see calendar for specific dates. Summer Session takes place at the Kanbar Center in San Francisco.

SUMMER MUSIC CAMP

SFGC holds an annual summer sleep-away music camp for 6-10 days each summer at Rio Lindo Academy in Healdsburg. Please see calendar for specific dates. Camp is required for Level III, IV, and Chorissima and is highly encouraged for Level II.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES EXEMPTIONS

The Chorus understands that every family experiences different circumstances, which can change and evolve and affect a chorister's ability to adhere to SFGC standards. If circumstances beyond your immediate control affect your chorister's ability to attend mandatory Summer Session, Summer Music Camp, or any other required rehearsals or events, please contact the Dean of Choristers to apply for Special Circumstances exemption. Special Circumstances will be reviewed and ultimately decided upon by the Dean of Choristers and the Music Director. The Chorus reserves the right to deny exemption applications.

Examples of Special Circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Court-appointed custody agreements
- Death or illness in the family
- A chorister's middle school or high school graduation

Please be aware that exemption from mandatory activities may mean that a chorister will need to do extra work to keep up with her level expectations.

CARPOOLING

SFGC is not involved in organizing carpools for choristers. Many families organize carpools as a way to save time and get to know other Chorus families. If you choose to organize a carpool, we offer the following as suggestions:

ORGANIZING YOUR CARPOOL

1. An electronic roster will be emailed at the beginning of the chorus year. Please use the roster to look up other choristers by school, by city, and by level.
2. Keep in mind that you can carpool with Chorus members in other Levels.
3. Talk to other parents who are in carpools that function well and run smoothly. Find out how they organize their carpools and get helpful tips from them.
4. Be sure everyone in the carpool is aware of any changes made due to off-site

rehearsals, chorister illness, etc.

5. If your chorister is not going home in her regular carpool, tell her before she comes to Chorus.

6. Please make clear plans regarding the regular and/or non-regular members of your carpool.

7. If all carpool members have an SFGC ID card indicating that they may leave the building on their own, they may wait together for their carpool outside. If any of the members of the carpool have an SFGC ID card that does NOT permit them to leave on their own, the ENTIRE carpool must wait inside with these members. Choristers will NOT be allowed outside under any circumstances without the appropriate ID.

8. It is always your responsibility to know your carpool. SFGC is not responsible for carpooling logistics.

COMMUNICATION

It is expected that Chorus School and Chorissima families check their email at least once a day. All SFGC correspondence related to program administration will have a subject line that begins with SFGC:.

Chorus School Monthly Memos, sent at the start of each month, outline general information necessary for a fluid and functional experience for the next month. Monthly Memos are sent by email along with an updated calendar. Please look at them carefully.

Other emails, sent by the Director of Production, Chorus School Administrator, Level Directors, or the Dean of Choristers provide more specific essential and timely information for the chorister and family, for example: costume requirements, exact call and pickup times, as well as other special instructions necessary to make a successful event for choristers, parents, and audiences.

It is the responsibility of chorister and parent to know the information in all memos. If you need a printed copy of a memo, do not hesitate to ask the Chorus School Administrator.

CHARMS

Charms is the database software SFGC uses to track enrollment, provide an online calendar, and is a place to access forms and memos online. Each chorister has a Charms user ID, which is their initials followed by the active numbers in their birthdate (ex: SFGC111978). New choristers: information on how to access Charms will be provided to you upon enrollment. If you need help logging in to Charms, please contact the Chorus School Administrator.

Live Calendar

Each Calendar entry in Charms also includes information about where and when an event takes place, along with other specifics (click on event to access).

Handouts & Files

All memos and forms are uploaded to "Handouts & Files" year-round.

Personal Information Updates

You can always update personal information by clicking "Update Info" in your Hub. Please always ensure that your information is correct so that you can receive mail, be reached in an emergency, and be included on rosters.

CHORISTER EVALUATION AND PROMOTION

Chorister growth and development are evaluated in rehearsals and performances. Written evaluations are sent home containing information pertinent to the chorister and parent: progress reports after fall and spring semesters, and repertoire/sight-singing evaluations during the fall and spring semesters. Parent-Director conferences, a chance to connect with your chorister's Director about your chorister's progress, happen early in the Spring.

Advancement within the program is based on many factors, from individual chorister achievement to physiological readiness. Promotions from one level to the next take place at the end of each spring semester. Choristers spend one, two or three years in each level as they advance through the Chorus School program. Readiness for advancement is competency- and curriculum-based, not based on age or grade level. The Chorus School faculty determines promotions with much thought and deliberation, as every individual decision involves and affects the development and growth of each chorister, the level she leaves, and the level to which she is promoted.

After a member of Chorissima has turned 16 years old and has been singing in Chorissima for at least 2 years, she is eligible to Laureate. Chorissima members may choose to Laureate at the end of the season when they reach these criteria, or may choose to remain in Chorissima until the end of high school and Laureate then. Level IV members who graduate from the Chorus School may return as "Graduate Members" if they do not audition or are not selected for Chorissima.

VOLUNTEERING

Parent volunteers are an integral part of SFGC. Primary opportunities to volunteer are concert and off-site rehearsal chaperoning, and families are encouraged to participate as chaperones. The Chorus School Administrator sends emails with chaperoning opportunities for your Level. Other volunteer opportunities include the Parent Auxiliary Committee and production volunteers to help with production-related duties backstage at performances. If you are interested in learning more about the Parent Auxiliary Committee, please email Development Manager Barbar Lundy (blundy@sfgirlschorus.org).

Please keep in mind the following for volunteering at a rehearsal or perfor-

mance:

1. You are there to be a resource for all of the choristers, not just your chorister.
2. When scheduled to chaperone, you must plan to be present for the entire time. You are welcome to bring a book to read or work to do, but please be aware and ready to help at all times.
3. When chaperoning a concert, you will need to stay with the group with which you are helping. You will not necessarily get to sit in the audience.
4. Please plan alternate arrangements for your other children when scheduled.
5. Chaperones may need to stay with choristers whose pick-up arrangements are running late. SFGC can only guarantee chorister oversight 15 minutes after pick-up time.

HOSTING CHORISTERS FROM ABROAD

Chorissima travels all around the country and the world singing in grand cathedrals, festivals, world-famous monuments and other historically and culturally significant locations. SFGC often relies on the families of sister choruses around the world to host our choristers in homestays. Homestays are an incredibly positive experience, providing unparalleled insight into local traditions and lifestyle, bridging cultural gaps and connecting singers through their shared craft and artistry, and planting the seeds for lifelong friendships and musical exchange and/or collaboration with high-level ensembles internationally.

SFGC families may be called upon to host touring ensembles, space and schedule allowing. Hosts are asked to accommodate at least 2 choristers at a time and provide certain services, depending on the schedule and financial circumstance of the touring ensemble. Please consider hosting travelling musicians at some point during your time here at the SFGC.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

SFGC increasingly collaborates with professional artists and ensembles, and participates in production with SF Opera and SF Symphony. In an effort to expose them to high-level performance and musical events, Chorus School choristers may sometimes be invited to participate. Flexibility and accommodation is key to ensure a rewarding and successful experience when participating in Special Projects. Participating in Special Projects can yield unparalleled rewards and these projects are an opportunity for highly-skilled and motivated choristers to expand their musical experience and pursue their love of singing.

In almost all cases, involvement in Special Projects is a commitment in addition to regular rehearsals and performances. Choristers participating in Special Projects should consider their ability to fulfill the expectations of their level before volunteering for additional responsibility.

Wardrobe

DRESS CODE

The following is the standard dress code that applies to ALL choristers in every level of the Chorus when they are not in their rehearsal or performance uniforms. Choristers who do not follow these guidelines may be dismissed from rehearsal.

For regular weekly rehearsals in San Francisco and East Bay:

- Shirts, t-shirts, sweaters, and blouses must be at or below the waistline.
- Pants, jeans, and skirts should meet the waistline and not be ripped or torn.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.

For off-site rehearsals

- Chorus School Level I: Regular rehearsal guidelines apply to off-site rehearsals.

Chorus School Levels II-IV: Rehearsal uniform must be worn for all off-site rehearsals (see below).

Chorissima: black top with sleeves, black trousers, black cardigan, sweater, or jacket as approved by Director of Production..

- Shirts must be at or below the waistline.
- Shirts must be tucked in.
- Pants should meet the waistline with no decorations, tears, or holes. No leggings.
- Closed-toed shoes must be worn at all times.

PERFORMANCE COSTUME

SFGC choristers receive a performance costume that is to be worn for all performances unless otherwise indicated. This does not include her shoes or her tights. Each singer is fitted for her correct size by the Wardrobe Coordinator during a scheduled fitting appointment at the beginning of each Chorus year.

Costumes are given to each chorister on hangers inside of a garment bag labeled with the chorister's name, level, location, costume numbers and care requirements. At the end of the performance year, costumes should be returned in the same garment bag. Shoes, tights, polo shirts, black pants and sweatshirts are purchased by the chorister's family and are not returned to SFGC.

Level I: Velvet jumper, pink shirt, ballet-pink tights, and black slippers

Tights: Capezio "ballet pink" tights 1825C, 1915C, N14C, N24C

Shoes: Capezio "Daisy" black ballet slippers with straps

Available at any dance store or online @capeziostore.com

Level II: Velvet jumper, white shirt, ballet-pink tights, and black slippers

Tights: Capezio "ballet pink" tights 1825C, 1915C, N14C, N24C

Shoes: Capezio "Daisy" black ballet slippers with straps

Available at any dance store or online @capeziostore.com

Level III: Black velvet skirt, red knit top, ballet-pink tights, and black slippers

Tights: Capezio "ballet pink" tights 1825C, 1915C, N14C, N24C

Shoes: Capezio "Daisy" black ballet slippers with straps

Available at any dance store or online @capeziostore.com

Level IV: Black knit skirt, black velvet bell-sleeve top, no tights, black character shoes with a 1.5" heel

Shoes: Capezio Jr. Footlight black leather character shoe, 550X, 551 or Bloch Brand Broadway Lo character shoe, #S0379L.

Available at any dance store or online @capeziostore.com

Chorissima: Black dress, no tights, black character shoes with 1.5" heel

Shoes: Capezio Jr. Footlight black leather character shoe, 550X, 551 or Bloch Brand Broadway Lo character shoe, #S0379L.

Available at any dance store or online @capeziostore.com

Please have soles covered in rubber to help minimize noise during concerts!

PERFORMANCE APPEARANCE

Dress requirements are outlined for each Chorus School performance in monthly memos. Choristers may not perform with the group if they are not in **complete** designated costume. The Chorus is not responsible for a performer's costume or appearance: she should arrive completely prepared to all events. Arriving prepared for performances shows success in terms of personal responsibility and focus- especially with younger choristers. No make up, jewelry, or nail polish may be worn during a performance. Hair must be pulled back from face, secured with bobby pins or neutral-colored hair ties. If a chorister cannot take out earrings, she should come prepared with bandaids or stickers to cover them.

COSTUME CARE

Necessary cleaning or repairs should be brought to the Chorus School Administrator's attention immediately. Please check your costume after each wearing

so that it will be ready for the next performance. Costumes are the property of SFGC and are on loan to each chorister. A deposit for costume rental is paid when a chorister first enters SFGC. The deposit will be refunded at the end of the chorister's membership in SFGC when the costume is returned in good condition alongside their Exit form. If the costume is damaged beyond repair, an assessment will be made to cover the cost of replacement. Costumes should be cleaned before being returned. SFGC Costumes **MUST** be altered by our Wardrobe Mistress. Do not alter costumes yourself or you risk losing your costume deposit.

CHORUS SCHOOL REHEARSAL UNIFORM

Rehearsal uniforms apply only to Levels II, III & IV of the Chorus School. They are to be worn for all offsite rehearsals and other designated times (check memos for dress requirements). The rehearsal uniform should be worn with closed-toe shoes, black shoes preferred. Please remember the dress code when pairing shoes with your rehearsal uniform -- the shoes should not be dirty or ripped!

All rehearsal uniform items are available for purchase through Land's End, whether at locations like SEARS or online at their uniform site, www.landsend.com/school. (School # 900163569)

Level II, III, and IV choristers must purchase the following items:

SFGC Logo Red Polo shirt

SFGC Logo Grey sweatshirt

Black flat-front twill pants (slacks, not necessarily from Land's End- no black jeans, sweatpants, leggings or corduroys)

Chorus School choristers should not wear any jacket or sweater other than their chorus sweatshirt when wearing the rehearsal uniform.

Chorissima will wear a black shirt with sleeves, black trousers, and a black cardigan, jacket, or sweater.

WARDROBE EXCHANGE

Families generously donate their gently used rehearsal uniforms, shoes, and extra tights to the SFGC Wardrobe Exchange for use by any family that has trouble accumulating the necessary performance and rehearsal costume items. The Wardrobe Exchange only works if families contribute and if used with respect. Please feel free to contact the Chorus School Administrator with any Wardrobe Exchange needs.

Rules & Procedures

CONDUCT

When participating in Chorus rehearsals and performances and when representing SFGC in any way, choristers are expected to behave as role models and responsible ambassadors. This includes courtesy to and consideration of public or Chorus personnel involved in an event including directors, chorus staff, managers, section leaders, chaperones, and audience members.

The Chorus policies listed below apply to all choristers. Every chorister is expected to:

- Work with her best effort, focus and concentration at all times.

- Be punctual, strictly observing rehearsal, call, and pickup times.
- Be mentally, vocally and aurally conscious and sensitive to progress in rehearsal and performance, responding to director's signals and instructions.
- Be supportive of all efforts of fellow choristers.
- Understand and comply with all requirements for attendance stated in the Handbook.
- Notify the director by email or phone call in the event of tardiness or absence.
- Bring music folder with all music and music theory materials to every rehearsal.
- Bring pencil to rehearsal for theory and marking music.
- Complete memory and theory assignments given by directors and instructors to the best of her ability and in a timely manner.
- Attempt to master sight-singing skills and theory objectives at each level.
- Take proper care of all music and costume parts issued and return them in good condition at the end of the term.
- Protect health and voice: do not sing with sore throat or hoarseness but participate in rehearsal mentally, listening and memorizing.
- Protect health and voice: drink extra water and eat nutritious food on rehearsal and performance days.
- Understand that there is no use of cell phones or other electronic equipment in any rehearsal or performance area.
- Follow the SFGC Code of Civility & Community at all times.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

Possession or use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs of any nature is not permitted and is considered grounds for immediate dismissal. Smoking is not permitted in the Chorus building at any time by California law. It is illegal for students under 21 years of age to purchase cigarettes. Smoking is one of the most detrimental activities for vocal health and SFGC will take situations in which choristers are caught smoking very seriously.

BULLYING

The Girls Chorus provides a safe learning environment for all choristers so that they may grow to be knowledgeable and proficient in this art. Negative and disrespectful behaviors adversely affect musical work and atmosphere, will not be allowed, and are grounds for dismissal. Bullying is generally characterized by aggressive or intentionally harmful behavior, repeatedly carried out over time.

Please let the Dean of Choristers or your chorister's Director know immediately if you observe bullying in our community. The Dean will investigate and address disciplinary matters such as these on a case by case basis and asks that choristers and families involved be open to putting in the work it takes for choristers to continue participating in the program happily and safely.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO AT PERFORMANCES

Video and audio recording and taking photographs at Chorus performances and bookings is not allowed. It is distracting to the audience and the performers. At the discretion of SFGC and when the circumstances and location permit it, SFGC may professionally record or photograph performances and make them available for purchase.

CELL PHONES & OTHER ELECTRONICS

The Chorus believes that cell phone use during rehearsal, performance, or break time has social and neurological cost. Cell phones and other electronic devices (e.g. computers, iPods, etc) may not be used during rehearsal or at performances. If a chorister uses her cell phone during rehearsal, it may be confiscated.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE/EXIT PROCEDURE

Choristers have the option of taking one Leave of Absence from the Chorus School for up to one year (school cycle) with guaranteed re-entry. Choristers returning from Leave must complete a Re-Entry Assessment made up of a singing portion and a theory portion to ensure they are being readmitted into an appropriate Level. Choristers are not guaranteed to return to the Level that they left. Choristers who left just after being promoted are not guaranteed reentry into the Level to which they were promoted. Choristers are not guaranteed to return to a Level that is age-appropriate for them if their musical level has dropped during their time away from Chorus.

All choristers who take a Leave of Absence must return in the Camp/Fall semester. There are no mid-year returns. Re-Entry Assessments will be scheduled in the early summer, at the same time as auditions (mid-June).

Choristers returning from Leave in Levels II, III & IV are not exempted from mandatory Summer Session (Day Camp) and Summer Music Camp attendance. Choristers must attend both to start again in the Fall.

Choristers who take a Leave of Absence any time between 10/1 and the end of a given year must return for Camp/Fall semester of the next school year to be guaranteed re-entry. Choristers who take Leave between the end of a school year and 9/30 may return Camp/Fall of the next year.

Choristers who take Leave will not be refunded their costume & music deposit, even though they must return their costumes and music. SFGC holds on to their deposit during their Leave. Only when a chorister Exits is their costume deposit returned. If form, costume and music are not returned within one month of Leave start date, any tuition refund & deposit will be forfeited and acknowledged as a donation to the Scholarship Fund. A chorister who wants to return from Leave who did not return their form, costume and music will have to submit a new costume deposit upon re-entry.

EXIT

When a chorister decides to discontinue her participation in Chorus or if she chooses not to return when her Leave period is over, she will need to officially Exit from the Chorus. Once the Exit form is returned, her costume & music deposit will be refunded or donated, and she will no longer be able to re-enter the Chorus School without a formal audition. Any chorister who does not return the form within one month of receipt forfeits her costume & music deposit to the scholarship fund.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: My chorister is sick and can't attend rehearsal. Who do I contact?

A: Contact your chorister's Director through phone or email. If your chorister is in Chorissima, contact Director of Production at erobertson@sfgirlschorus.org.

Q: Can my chorister make up rehearsals that she has missed?

A: Families should make every effort to ensure choristers attend rehearsals consistently. There is no way to make up what is covered in a chorister's regular rehearsal. However, Level I, II, and III choristers may "make up" a rehearsal by attending the corresponding rehearsal in San Francisco or the East Bay; i.e., a San Francisco chorister who misses a rehearsal in SF on Tuesday may attend the rehearsal in Berkeley on the following Wednesday, or vice versa.

Q: My chorister's spring break does not line up with the SFGC spring break. What do I do?

A: It is impossible for the SFGC to schedule breaks that work for every chorister. If you have a vacation already planned, please contact your chorister's director to let them know of the absences. They will count toward your chorister's absence total.

Q: When do I find out if my chorister has been promoted?

A: Promotion notices are emailed the day after the Chorus School year is over.

Q: I don't know what time my chorister has to arrive for her concert.

A: CHARMS! Check the latest memo, calendar, and the Charms Calendar before contacting the Chorus. If you still can't find the answer after checking all three of these, please contact the Chorus School Administrator or Director of Production.

Q: I want to know if the Chorus has received my tuition check/Financial Aid forms/payment.

A: Please contact Finance Director Mike Grade (mgrade@sfgirlschorus.org).

Q: My chorister may be promoted to a Level where she needs to attend Camp and/or Summer Session. What if we have other plans?

A: The only exceptions to summer camp attendance requirements for Levels II, III & IV are "Special Circumstances." Please see the "Special Circumstances" section of this Handbook, page 9.

San Francisco Girls Chorus

Code of Civility and Community

The San Francisco Girls Chorus acknowledges that respect for self and others is the foundation of excellence in music education. Whether we are choristers, chorister family members, faculty, or staff, we have a right to be in a safe, supportive environment. In efforts to maintain our commitment to high standards of academic and ethical integrity, we will work to foster the following:

Awareness

We believe it is important to recognize how others view and relate to the SFGC community and recognize that we are part of a larger community. As such, it is our responsibility to represent the organization with a sense of dignity and professionalism.

Respect

We believe that a person's views, ideas, and behavior best reflect the goals of the organization when the dignity of each individual is respected and when members of the community are considerate of the feelings, circumstances, and individuality of others.

Responsibility

We value the importance of taking responsibility for our own choices and actions.

Collegiality

We value an environment that facilitates collegial relationships, encourages mutual understanding among diverse individuals, and leads to addressing issues and differences in an atmosphere of mutual respect and civility.

Cooperation

We believe in the importance of working together with other choristers, chorister family members, faculty and staff in a spirit of cooperation toward our common goal of providing girls and young women with the skills, self-discipline and confidence to succeed in the music profession and in life.

Diversity

We respect the diverse backgrounds of all members of our community and welcome the opportunity for interpersonal and group interactions.

Dialogue

We value, encourage, and facilitate free exchange of diverse ideas and points of view along with free speech and expression. However, we discourage uncivil speech or expression that infringes upon the ability of others to express themselves.

CURRICULUM

The Chorus School program aims to create skilled musicians and singers through a curriculum balanced in vocal technique, music theory, aural and choral skills. Included in this curriculum are objectives in these four categories for each Level. Promotion through the Levels and graduation from the Chorus School are at the discretion of the Level director, with the objectives set forth used as guidelines for what should be mastered in each Level. Mastery of all of them does not guarantee promotion, nor does promotion necessarily reflect mastery of all the objectives, as a curriculum is not one-size-fits-all and each child is unique. Choristers should generally expect to spend one, two or three years in each level of the Chorus School in order to fully master all of the objectives set forth.

LEVEL I

In Level I, choristers are expected to, among other things, master the basics of vocal technique through developing the use of both their head and chest voice, demonstrating the ability to match pitch and sing in tune consistently, and maintaining correct singing posture. They also work to master the basics of music reading and aural skills, including reading all the notes on the treble staff, and a beginning knowledge of solfege, intervals, and rhythmic patterns. Level I choristers are also expected to develop an appropriate attention span, work together with other choristers, and demonstrate an appropriate level of social and emotional maturity.

LEVEL II

In Level II, choristers build on the skills developed in Level I. Level II choristers continue to develop their vocal technique through gained knowledge of the parts of the vocal mechanism, an understanding of resonance and breathing, and an increased knowledge of vowel formation and IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet). Additionally, they tackle more complicated music theory and aural skills, including the beginning understanding of key signatures and solfege in those keys, a knowledge of major and minor intervals, simple time signatures and rhythms, and major triads. In order to be socially, emotionally, and intellectually ready for the next step, Level II choristers must demonstrate an increased attention span in rehearsal, confidence singing 2-part music, ease singing in foreign languages, and the ability to memorize 25 to 30 minutes of music a semester, among other elements of commitment and focus.

LEVEL III

Level III choristers delve deeper into the topics above, as the cumulative work of the Chorus School continues. In terms of vocal technique, Level III choristers are expected to be able to describe the physiological process of singing with

basic terminology and understand how vowels and consonants are correctly produced. They also are expected to be able to sing with resonant tone, and be able to begin to critique the vocal production, performance, and posture of their peers. Level III choristers continue to build on their music theory and aural skills through increasingly intense music theory study. They work to master all key signatures, both major and minor, and understand the functions of different scale degrees in those keys, as well as the construction and function of triads and scales. They also are expected to increase their ability to sight read in two to three parts, using solfege, in any major key, and to be able to understand altered solfege syllables. This goes hand in hand with mastery of increasingly difficult rhythms and meters. Additionally, Level III choristers are expected to demonstrate an increased level of focus, maturity, and preparedness, memorizing up to 40 minutes of music a semester, and demonstrating an increased level of commitment to the art of choral singing.

LEVEL IV

Level IV is the culmination of the Chorus School. As such, choristers are expected to not only master many concepts in all areas of the curriculum, but to demonstrate their mastery through testing and evaluation. All Level IV choristers receive small-group and individual vocal instruction and, as a result, are expected to demonstrate a high level of vocal mastery. Additionally, Level IV choristers must pass a Qualifying Exam in both music theory and sight singing in order to be considered for graduation from the Chorus School. Music theory elements of this exam include construction and identification of all commonly-used scales, intervals, triads, seventh chords, and inversions. It also includes demonstration of a knowledge of cadences, simple forms, and bass clef. Aural Skills elements of this exam include sight singing in 3 to 4 parts, in a major or minor key, with diatonic steps, skips and accidentals. As graduates from the Chorus School are expected to be representatives of a comprehensive choral music education, Level IV choristers are expected to demonstrate the highest level of commitment in the Chorus School through attendance and independent study. They are also expected to comport themselves with dignity and grace through rehearsal and concert situations and to represent the Chorus School throughout the community. Level IV choristers are increasingly invited to participate in professional-level opportunities, and enthusiasm for and dedication to these opportunities is part of full participation in Level IV.

SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMMING

Mindfulness

In efforts to provide comprehensive music education programming, we aim to integrate opportunities for the development of Mindfulness skills at SFGC. Current research supports that the practice of Mindfulness can aid in the develop-

ment of executive functioning, including working memory and focus, as well as facilitate stress reduction. Working with choristers to develop a deeper sense of both outer and inner awareness can help support them in working towards becoming successful, professional musicians as well as becoming more confident, competent and resourceful individuals. The integration of Mindfulness in our training aligns with the existing SFGC mission of providing "the skills, self-discipline and confidence to succeed in music and in life."

Leadership Training

Section leaders are chosen yearly and serve as an integral part of Level IV and Chorissima group work. SFGC values the importance of providing opportunities for support and skill development for these leaders throughout the year.

Cadenza

SFGC offers musical workshops and learning opportunities in conjunction to vocal training. The umbrella term for this supplementary musical programming is called Cadenza. Choristers looking to round out their education and strive for complete musicianship can opt to participate in conducting classes, AP Music Theory, Soloist Intensive, and Composition Workshops as they are offered.