

Siskiyou Singers

Spring 2026 Singer Handbook

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Welcome and Leadership

From the Artistic Director

Dear Singer,s

"Vecinos en Harmonia" ("Neighbors in Harmony") our spring concert series will be another new undertaking for us. The concert will feature music from the Spanish speaking world and will be mostly in Spanish. Since we completed a concert mostly in Latin, that should not be a big problem. It will also be exciting that we will be sharing the concert with the Woodburn High School Mariachi Band. "Woodburn was the first high school in Oregon to create a mariachi program. It started 16 years ago, partly as a way to get more Latino students involved in band," according to Nadia Maksimov, their director. "It was also to reflect the culture and to celebrate the culture of Woodburn," she said. "And it has done that."

"It's very unique to have such a group like this in a small little town in Oregon," sophomore Aaron Espinoza said. "Being able to represent our heritage and culture here through our music really does help get our voice out there." [For the entire article from KOIN in Portland, click the link [Woodburn teens spread mariachi love throughout state | KOIN.com](#)]

We will sing a part of the program, Woodburn Mariachi will do a part of the program, and we will also combine our efforts on a few pieces. This will be great fun hosting the group and enjoying their music.

The music of Latin America is marked by exciting rhythms and much passion. Our part of the program will feature music from many areas of Latin America. "Temporal" is a traditional plena from Puerto Rico. The arrangement by Suzzette Ortiz captures the strength of the Puerto Rican people in the face of a worrisome temporal, a hurricane. "Alma Llanera" ("Soul of the plains") by Pedro Gutiérrez is a fast, waltz-like joropo that has been and still is very popular in Venezuela. "Se Equivocó la Paloma" ("The Dove was Wrong") is a setting of an ambiguous poem by Argentinian Rafael Alberti that is an expression of lost love. The setting by Carlos Guastavino captures that sadness and loss.

We will also be performing an English language song that might be familiar, "Conga" by Enrique Garcia and famously performed by Gloria Estefan and the Miami Sound Machine. We will enjoy another familiar piece to many of us who were around in the '60's, "Guantanamera", performed by the Sandpipers.

How to Practice

The reason we are doing so well as a choir is that everyone takes responsibility for learning the music. It might seem that you can hide in the group and follow someone else and it will all be OK. Unfortunately, that means you are singing a little behind the beat and with a little less energy. Your contribution is crucial, whether it seems so or not. Stand in front for a while (or in the audience) and you'll understand.

Here are some suggestions to make your practice more productive:

- During our choir rehearsal, make it a habit to circle the sections that give you difficulty so that you can refer to them during your next week of practice. Saying "I'll just circle the whole thing!" is actually a cop out (yes, I learned that phrase in the 60's). Try to be as exact about your practicing needs as possible. That also saves your time. You can read my weekly Notes to learn those spots that I believe need work, but everyone has their own spots as well! If you ask choir members, they will usually disagree as to which spots in a particular piece are the most difficult.
- The use of Bandlab, an online DAW (look it up), is a far superior way to use rehearsal recordings than the basic recordings I produced in the past and that most choirs still use. Bandlab gives you the opportunity to fine-tune your practice experience. You can listen to your vocal part separately or as a part of various combinations of other parts. You can make any part louder or softer, faster or slower, and you can even select sections to repeat. There are excellent directions for its use on the website. However, using Bandlab is NOT a requirement! Many people in the choir have their own practicing routine. Be sure to use what works for you.
- Be honest with yourself as to whether you actually know a particular section. Set a goal for yourself that, if everyone else in your section were absent, you could carry the part by yourself (probably not quite as loudly). This means a level of practice beyond guesswork. If you use Bandlab, listen to various combinations of parts. Be sure to do this with the music in front of you and a pencil (or stylus if you are a cool techie using a tablet) at hand. Eventually sing while listening to all the parts EXCEPT yours. If you do not use Bandlab, record yourself with your phone or other audio recorder. This is a brutally honest way to check your actual progress!
- Concentrate on the difficult sections. This strategy is time much better spent even though it feels much better to practice the easy sections. Also, the process of actually determining which sections are the difficult ones is helpful in itself.
- When practicing a difficult fast passage, practice slowly first until you are so accomplished with it that you are bored with it and then try it at tempo. Usually that will do the trick. I am not a believer in the "set the metronome forward two ticks" approach. I think it builds in tension. Bandlab has a feature which is perfect for this. Above the tracks, click and drag to select the passage you would like to repeat. When you start within that area of the recording, you will hear that passage ad infinitum. The practice recordings also have slow versions for those pieces that move along.
- **Finally, sing every day--even if it is just in the shower. Your voice will be stronger and, actually, you will be happier!**



Mark Reppert

Siskiyou Singers, Director

From the President of the Board – Mary Van Wesep

Welcome to Siskiyou Singers! You are part of a community choir that has been gracing the Rogue Valley with beautiful music for over forty years. My name is Mary Van Wesep and I am honored to serve as president of Siskiyou Singers for the 2025–2026 season.

Like any non-profit, Siskiyou Singers looks to its members for support. The best way that we, as members, can support our choir is to come to rehearsals PREPARED. The more prepared we are, the more enjoyable the experience. Practice aids such as BandLab and YouTube recordings are available in the Members section on our website (siskiyousingers.org) to assist you in your preparation. Besides being prepared, there are other ways to support our choir.

For instance, a great way to support Siskiyou Singers is to sell concert tickets. By selling tickets to family, friends and colleagues, we actively promote our concerts – enabling us to sing to full houses and cover a portion of the costs of our concerts.

Another source of revenue comes from our annual fund-raising campaign, *Every Singer, Every Year*. Singers have been major contributors to this successful endeavor.

Each of us has a unique set of gifts and talents, in addition to singing, that allows us to be of great help to the choir. Choir jobs include, but are not limited to, music library manager, archives coordinator, grant writer, registration coordinator, database manager, ticket sales manager, house manager, board of directors' member. Some jobs are small and take almost no time; other jobs require several hours per month. Your board members handle a lot of these jobs, but there is always opportunity for you to help.

We have much to be proud of. Siskiyou Singers will continue to enrich the Rogue Valley with interesting and varied music. Our educational outreach program will continue to provide varied musical opportunities to public schools in the Rogue Valley and beyond.

It is an honor to be on this musical journey with you. Now, let's sing!

With a song,

Mary Van Wesep
president@siskiyousingers.org

About the Choir

History

Siskiyou Singers was founded by Jacqueline Dougherty in 1982 as a community choir. The first name of the group was Siskiyou Chamber Singers.

The choir has long since grown beyond the size of a chamber group. Under the musical direction of Dave Marston, who led the choir from 1988 until June of 2009, the group grew to more than 200 singers, with approximately 120 singing in each concert. Mark Reppert was chosen to be the choir's Interim Artistic Director/Conductor for the Fall 2009 term. Because of his outstanding capabilities, Mark was asked to continue on a permanent basis starting January 2010.

Typically, Siskiyou Singers offers two formal programs annually to the community, as well as participating in a holiday program at Paddington Station, "preview" concerts at the Rogue Valley Manor and Mountain Meadows retirement communities, and our school outreach program.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

The Siskiyou Singers seeks to promote and enrich musical culture in the Rogue Valley.

Vision

The Siskiyou Singers is a first-class choral group that performs a wide variety of the world's music and is accessible and affordable to listeners of all ages and interests.

Values

- Excellence – We perform choral music that is recognized as excellent in both performance quality and imaginative programming.
- Approachability – We provide the opportunity to enjoy choral music, either as an audience member or as a singer. We keep ticket prices and membership fees as low as our financial situation allows.
- Hospitality – We provide a welcoming environment for all choir members and encourage choir collegiality and sense of community.
- Diversity – We strive to be inclusive in the types of musical programs we offer, and in our efforts to widen the demographics of our choir membership and our audiences.

- Sustainability – We manage choir operations with a focus on long term choir sustainability. This includes development and execution of plans to address the imperatives of financial sustainability, choir vitality and audience development.
- Transparency – The Board of Directors is proactive in providing choir members with access to current information about board discussions, issues, and actions, as well as choir financial status.

Membership

Membership & Auditions

Membership in Siskiyou Singers is by audition and is granted at the discretion of the artistic director.

Fees

Each member pays a \$35.00 fee per concert term (Fall or Spring). This non-refundable fee goes to help defray the costs of producing the concerts and paying the salaries of our professional musicians.

All fees are due in full by the third rehearsal of each session. If you cannot meet this obligation, you may inquire about a scholarship to cover these fees. A limited number of scholarships are available.

Music

Singers have the option of borrowing or purchasing music. Borrowed music is included in the registration fee and must be returned at the end of the term. You may only mark it with erasable markings – no ink or highlighting. Some singers choose to make copies of their music so that they can use highlighters. You may choose to purchase your music for the season as a package, in which case the music is yours to mark up as you please.

Roster Policy

A roster will be produced and posted on our web site for the use of the Board and singers.

Rosters are the property of the Siskiyou Singers and are not to be used for any personal or business solicitations.

Rehearsals & Participation

Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance is essential to producing the highest quality musical performance. Members are expected to attend every rehearsal and to arrive on time. If you must be late, please enter quietly.

If you need to miss a rehearsal due to illness or another reason, notify your section leader as soon as possible. Absence from more than two rehearsals may require you to demonstrate to the music director that you know your part well enough to continue.

If you plan to be absent for an entire term or longer, please inform the director, president, or your section leader so we can plan appropriately for concerts and order the correct number of scores. While membership continues from term to term, the director reserves the right to re-audition singers after an extended absence.

Know the Music (Personal Preparation)

You are required to learn the music on your own. Only you can determine how much effort or time will be required of you outside of rehearsals to do this. Rehearsals are for working on dynamics, interpretation, blend, and all the nuances that make the difference between a mediocre performance and one that truly sings! Rehearsals are not for learning your part. Practice recordings are available on our website (See below for more info). You may employ any other aids that you require, such as taping rehearsals, as long as fellow singers are not disrupted.

Weekly Communications

Choir communication is primarily managed through weekly emails sent by the Artistic Director and the President of the Board.

Each week, the Artistic Director distributes a musically focused email that provides a synopsis of the previous rehearsal along with guidance on how members should prepare for upcoming rehearsals. These messages are an essential resource to help singers focus their personal practice and stay aligned with the goals of the ensemble. The President also sends weekly updates containing important information about ticket sales, social events, and matters relating to the Board of Directors. Together, these communications ensure that every member remains informed about both the musical and organizational aspects of choir life.

To make certain these messages are delivered reliably, all members should add director@siskiyousingers.org and president@siskiyousingers.org to their contacts. Reading and following these weekly emails is considered an important part of each singer's responsibility to the group.

Members Area of the Website

Siskiyou Singers maintains a Members Area on our website (www.siskiyousingers.org/members). where singers can access rehearsal recordings, practice tools such as BandLab links, concert and rehearsal schedules, section leader contact information, and other important announcements. This section is restricted to current choir members.

To log in, visit the Members link on the website and enter the passphrase **silentnight**. Please do not share this passphrase outside of the choir. If you experience any difficulties accessing the site, reach out to your section leader or a board member for assistance.

Section Leaders & Their Role

Each choir section has a section leader. This person is responsible for arranging sectional rehearsals as needed, taking attendance at rehearsals, and helping to implement seating charts for rehearsal and performance. The section leader is your contact person if you must miss a rehearsal.

He or she is also available to arrange for help if you are having trouble learning the music or have special needs for the performance. The section leader will convey important information to the board through the liaison board member.

Section leaders' contact info can be found at www.siskiyousingers.org/members.

Performances

Ticket Sales

Siskiyou Singers depends on ticket sales and members' fees to help cover the costs of preparing and performing concerts. Choir members are encouraged to help by actively promoting our concerts, posting fliers, and selling tickets to family, friends, and associates. Members are responsible for returning, before the performance, either tickets or money for tickets sold to the person in charge of ticket sales. We all want to perform to full houses. Your participation in building our audience is a critical contribution as a member of the choir.

Soloists and Small Groups

Participation in small groups and solo performances are the music director's choice and may or may not involve a special audition. Soloists are often chosen from choir members, but the director may deviate from this policy as he wishes.

Music Folders

All music must be in black folders for performances. If using a tablet, the tablet must be black or be contained within a black folder.

Concert Dress Guidelines



Our overall look should complement, not distract from, the music and communicate a certain level of seriousness. As you can see from the photo above, Siskiyou Singers has chosen a formal black look. It is professional and unified. That's what we're after.

Everyone is in black from head to toe (including shoes and stockings), with arms fully covered. The exception is a white dress shirt worn with a black suit jacket.

Your concert dress options, regardless of gender, are:

1. The All-Black Look
 - a. Black long-sleeved full-length dress (hem should touch the top [instep] of the foot)
 - b. Black long-sleeved blouse/shirt with a black full-length skirt, or trousers (hems should touch the top [instep] of the foot)
 - c. Black shoes and stockings
 - d. Black vest is optional
 - e. Black bow tie is optional
 2. The Black Suit Look
 - a. Black dress trousers (hem should touch the top [instep] of the foot)
 - b. White or black dress shirt
 - c. Black suit jacket
 - d. Black bow tie
 - e. Black shoes and stockings
 - f. Black vest is optional
- Plain black fabrics (not sparkly) are essential for a professional and unified look. Jewelry is OK if it is minimal and in keeping with this same goal.
 - Dress/Skirt/Slacks length and Sleeve length are extremely important to our overall appearance.
 - Black dress slacks/trousers should be just that; no jeans, leggings, yoga pants, or other casual pants. Use common sense.

- If you have any questions or concerns about your concert dress, please speak with your section leader at least three weeks prior to the concert. He or she will assist you in any way possible.

Consideration for Other Singers (Etiquette)

- Please don't wear scented products. Other singers may have sensitivities, and we are working in close quarters.
- Turn off cell phones during rehearsals. Do not bring such phones on-stage during performances.
- Listen to the conductor during rehearsals. Avoid conversations with your fellow singers.
- Enjoy your time with us. We pride ourselves on being a friendly group. Camaraderie is encouraged before and after rehearsals and during the break.

Organization and Governance

Board of Directors

Siskiyou Singers is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization governed by a board of directors. Membership on the board is granted by nomination and vote of the existing board. This is a working board, composed of volunteers. The board is responsible for the financial sustainability of the choir. Board members handle all basic functions of the organization, including registration, fund-raising, publicity, concert planning and preparation, program advertising, music distribution, and print materials for the concert.

Board Member	Title / Duties
Mary Van Wesep	President of the Board
Scott L. Nelson	Recording Secretary
Steve Thomas	Past President
Laura Barlow	Treasurer
Mary Bergstrom	Banker
Bonnie Walker	Member At-Large
Sean Connolly	Member At-Large

Board Member	Title / Duties
Carol Lambie	Member At-Large
Howie Seay	Member At-Large
Jasmin Conley	Member At-Large
Michele Kyle	Member At-Large
Sean Connolly	Member At-Large

Committees

Development Committee

- Laura Barlow, Chair
- Scott Nelson
- Howie Seay
- Mary Van Wesep

Expenses and Reimbursements

All reimbursable expenditures on behalf of the Siskiyou Singers must be pre-approved by the treasurer or president. Distribution of complimentary ("comp") tickets is also not allowed without pre-approval.

Thank You

Our sincere thanks to each and every choir member, Mark, accompanist Mikiko Petrucelli, our board of directors, committee members, and volunteers. Your full participation and support of Siskiyou Singers is appreciated. Working together, as a family, we truly make this a wonderful community of singers and friends.