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VOICES ROCK! CANADA

Member Handbook

Season 8



VRC MEMBER HANDBOOK - JANUARY 2023

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Voices Rock Canada Land Acknowledgment

Voices Rock Canada is proud to be part of a rich history of music, art and education in this province. We acknowledge the land we are gathering on is the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat First Nations.

We respect the rights, legacy, history, culture and traditions of all First Peoples of Canada. We are uninvited guests to this land and through treaties, we acknowledge that we are allowed to stay here, provided we respect the land, water and share the resources.

Voices Rock Canada embraces the land, water, creatures and humans that are still home to many Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island; we are sincerely grateful to be able to live, work, walk, dance and sing within these communities.

Choirs And Schedules

VR KIDS: Choirs for youth grades 4-12
VR ENSEMBLE: Choirs for adults (age 18+)
VR MEDICINE: Choirs for women physicians
VR PRIME: Choirs for seniors & retirees

Choir Schedules

VR PRIME – Mondays – 11:30 AM-12:45 PM
VR KIDS – Mondays 6:15-7:45 PM
VR MEDICINE (MONDAYS) – Mondays 8:00-9:30 PM
VR ENSEMBLE – Tuesdays 7:45-9:15 PM
VR MEDICINE (OTTAWA) – Wednesdays 8:00-9:30 PM
VR MEDICINE (WEDNESDAYS) – Wednesdays 8:00-9:30 PM
VR MEDICINE (ONLINE) – Thursdays 8:00-9:30 PM

Rehearsal Spaces

VR KIDS, VR ENSEMBLE, VR MEDICINE (TORONTO),
Leaside United Church, 822 Millwood Rd, Toronto

VR PRIME
Applewood United Church, 2067 Stanfield Rd, Mississauga

VR MEDICINE (OTTAWA)
Emmanuel United Church, 691 Smyth Rd, Ottawa

VR MEDICINE (ONLINE) - Online through Zoom

VRC Personal Illness Policy

VRC is committed to following all personal illness policies set out by the Canadian government as well as our rehearsal and performance venues.

- Members are not required to wear masks during rehearsal if they are in good health.
- Should a member be unwell and exhibit symptoms of physical illness (including but not limited to excessive coughing & sneezing, runny nose, fever, etc.), they are asked to self-monitor their illness and stay home from rehearsal or performance until their symptoms lessen or subside.
- Should a member be recovering from a personal illness (major symptoms have subsided), they are asked to wear a mask at rehearsal/performance until they are free of symptoms.
- It is assumed that members will always self-monitor their health and be vigilant in protecting others at rehearsal/performance.

Voices Rock Canada Staff & Directors

VRC Staff

Nancy Silverman, Executive Director
Anthony Bastianon, Artistic Director & Choir Director (Toronto)
Elise Letourneau, Choir Director (Ottawa)
Sef Wood, Assistant Music Director (Toronto)
Troy Huizinga, Production Manager (Ottawa)
Matt Yipchuck, Social Media Manager

VRC Board of Directors

Cheryl Bower, President
Heather Harris, Secretary
Marian Lawson, Treasurer
Dr. Susan Thouin, VR Medicine Liaison

Board Responsibilities

In administering the affairs of VRC, the Board is responsible for ensuring delivery of the above objectives.

- Any new opportunities which arise beyond the established program must be assessed by the Board for strategic fit, resource impact and feasibility.
- The Board of Directors is responsible for the legal and financial governance of Voices Rock Canada.
- The Board of Directors is responsible for upholding the mandate & objectives of VRC (listed below) and works to ensure VRC remains financially sustainable in its operations.

VRC Objectives

The VRC Board of Directors shall administer the affairs of VRC according to the following objectives:

1. An excellent choral experience, combining discipline and fun with professional, structured direction and proper singing techniques.
2. An engaging program of live rehearsals, concerts and events (often with live musicians), learning and performing exciting, original arrangements of contemporary rock & pop repertoire.
3. An environment where members experience the joy of singing in a fulfilled, self-expressive way while being part of a dynamic, inclusive community.

Staff Contact Information

Nancy Silverman - admin@voicesrockcanada.com

Cheryl Bower - info@voicesrockcanada.com

Anthony Bastianon - anthonyb@rogers.com

Elise Letourneau - elise@eliseletourneau.com

VRC Beliefs

We believe strongly in the power of genuine connections to create the most beautiful and authentic sound possible. We believe that a limited number of members in each choir community allows our staff and membership to get to know each other and build trust. Ultimately, singers feel safe, supported and free to find and express their unique voices.

The focus of all choirs at VRC is to perform music at the highest level possible while encouraging a strong and joyful sense of community and fellowship.

The choral goal is to create a strong vocal sound through a mid-size choir. We limit our adult choirs (ENSEMBLE and MEDICINE) to 75 members, children's choirs (KIDS) to 40 members, and seniors (PRIME) to 75 members. These numbers reflect a size that allows for a good balance between strength of sound and clarity of harmony.

Voices Rock Canada holds equity, diversity and inclusion as central values that guide all policies and practices. Voices Rock Canada is committed to promoting the goals of antiracism and nondiscrimination, as well as ensuring access and equity for Toronto's diverse communities.

Voices Rock Canada prohibits discrimination or harassment and protects the right to be free from hate activity based on age, ancestry, citizenship, creed (religion), colour, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender identity, levels of literacy, marital status, place of origin, political association, race, receipt of public assistance, sex, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristic by or within the organization.

Safe Arrival and Dismissal of VRC Kids

Parents are responsible for walking their children to the rehearsal space and making eye contact with VRC staff or volunteers. VRC will not dismiss a child without eye contact with a parent or guardian. Parents are expected to pick their child(ren) up promptly at the end of rehearsal.

Attendance Policy

At this time, VRC does not have a mandatory attendance policy. It is expected that choir members will do their best to attend every rehearsal. It is normal, for various reasons, that a choir member might have to miss a rehearsal.

It is at the discretion of the Artistic Director whether or not a choir member has missed too many rehearsals to participate in upcoming events/concerts. If the AD is concerned with a person's absences, a private conversation will be scheduled to discuss the situation.

VRC supports the notion that the essence of a choral sound is greatly dependent on all choir members rehearsing together. While individual/private practice and review is important, it does not replace attending a rehearsal.

VRC recognizes that everyone's schedule can be vastly different. Also, unexpected events can greatly affect someone's ability to attend all rehearsals. Patience, flexibility, and understanding are an important part of discussions relating to someone's attendance. Each choir member's attendance is considered individually and separately.

Music

Performance repertoire is determined by the Artistic Director/Choir Directors. VRC makes an extended effort to ensure that our selected performance repertoire is respectful and appropriate for our singers and audiences. Our selections are sometimes altered lyrically to uphold VRC inclusivity standards -- this means removing profanity, racism & misogyny. Please be advised that the version of a song performed at VRC may be different from the original version you may find online.

It is expected that choir members learn the music to the best of their ability, and that all music is memorised by performance time. Sheet music and rehearsal tracks are available in the [Members Area of the VRC website](#). VR Medicine and VR Ensemble are responsible for printing their own sheet music in time for rehearsal. VR Prime and VR Kids will be provided with printed music. Please email admin@voicesrockcanada.com if you do not have the password for the Members Area.

Rehearsals

Recording at Rehearsals

Personal recording devices are prohibited during rehearsals or performances. The rehearsal recordings available on the members' pages of the website are only to be used by current VRC members. **These recordings are never to be shared or played for anyone else.**

Rehearsal Attire

REHEARSALS: please wear comfortable clothing/shoes. There is no specific dress code.

PERFORMANCES: each event usually has a unique dress code. Some events require a VRC t-shirt and jeans. Some events have more of a flexible dress code that requires choir members to dress in a certain style or colour palette.

VR KIDS: members receive a t-shirt with their initial registration.

Closed Rehearsals

Generally, rehearsals are closed to anyone who is not a choir member. On occasion, VRC may have a "bring-a-friend" rehearsal in order to promote the choir for upcoming registrations.

Rehearsal Staff

Most rehearsals are led by our Artistic Director/Choir Director, and managed by our Executive Director.

Sections Explained

VRC Ensemble, Medicine, Med-Connect and Prime use the following number system to describe our vocal ranges. We find that it's the best way to outline our vocal arrangements in the pop/rock genre. With C4 = middle C, here is a general range for each vocal section:

- Vocal range "1" (highest): generally, from about A3 to G5
- Vocal range "2": generally, from G3 to E5
- Vocal range "3": generally, from E3 to B4
- Vocal range "4" (lowest): generally, from A2 to E4

Solos

Some of the choral arrangements include solo parts. The AD will audition for these parts at various times throughout the season. A few weeks notice will be given for choir members to prepare for the auditions. The selection of the soloists is at the discretion of the AD, and preference will be given to choir members with exemplary attendance.

- It is expected that soloists can prepare and rehearse their solos on their own with very limited rehearsal time with the AD
- Soloists are encouraged to present their best performance when auditioning. This includes thoughtful preparation of interpretation, memorization, and vocal technique.
- Attendance and reliability are considerations when choosing soloists.

Rehearsal Etiquette

At VRC, we have a strict “no scent” policy, due to the allergies of some of our members.

Due to the proximity of choir members in rehearsals and performances, personal hygiene is extremely important. Please come to rehearsals and performances with clean teeth, fresh breath, wearing deodorant (light scents or scent-free only), and general good hygiene.

Positive encouragement and support are always encouraged! However, please avoid giving corrections or direction to other choir members (regarding music, choral etiquette, performance, how to sing our repertoire/solos, etc). If you have any concerns about another choir member’s participation, please speak with AD. Choral and musical direction should only come from the AD in order to minimize any confusion.

Liability Release / Contact Information

When you register for Voices Rock (via Momenca) you are required to sign a liability release waiver as well as provide your contact information. Please advise our Executive Director immediately should your contact information require updating.

Member Code of Conduct

VRC aims to create a safe and positive environment for all its Members, Choir Directors and VRC staff. In order to do this, we must ensure acceptable standards of behaviour from our Members. You must at all times comply with the following provisions.

All Members should:

- Be punctual to rehearsals and adhere to times and guidelines set by VRC.
- Respond to the leadership of the AD and VRC staff members.
- Be co-operative with both VRC staff staff and fellow choir members
- Uphold an equal-opportunity environment
- Be respectful at all times to all members and staff

All Members should not:

- Engage in any form of negative or bullying behaviour, whether written or verbal, towards others including choir members, the AD, VRC staff, and performance environment/staff or audience
- Engage in any other form of inappropriate behaviours whilst attending rehearsals, events, performances, social gatherings or any other occasions with VRC
- Communicate with their Choir Director or VRC staff inappropriately including but not limited to sending messages or other communications unrelated to choir rehearsals, performances, shows or events, or sharing unwarranted personal or sensitive information
- Place undue personal pressure on choir members, VRC staff, or any individual working with or for VRC, including but not limited to requesting personal support or transport assistance
- otherwise do anything that might bring VRC into disrepute. This includes actions and activities outside of your VRC membership and activities.

“Inappropriate behaviours” will be determined at our discretion, and will include but not be limited to:

- **Harassment:** Harassment includes behaviour and language which is intimidating, humiliating, causes offence or is hostile; which causes stress, anxiety, fear or sickness on the part of the harassed person. We remind everyone that harassment based on age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, or harassment of a sexual nature, is unlawful and could entail legal action or even criminal proceedings.
- **Sexual harassment:** Any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature affecting the dignity of a person which can include unwelcome physical, verbal or nonverbal conduct whereby the behaviour is inappropriate, offensive or distressing for the recipient. Conduct or comments become harassment when they are unwelcome to others or make others feel uncomfortable or threatened, even if intended as a joke.
- **Bullying:** Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining VRC Members Terms and Conditions, the individual’s right to dignity in the rehearsal room/ performance space or social events. Examples of bullying behaviour include: (i) Personal insults and name calling (ii) Persistent unjustified criticism and sarcasm (iii) Public or private humiliation (iv) Aggression including intimidation and threats in general.

Dismissal from Voices Rock Canada

Should a choir member display any of the “inappropriate behaviours” listed above, action will be taken as follows, at the discretion of The Board, or VRC staff and Choir Directors:

- 1) 1st offence: The choir member will receive a verbal warning
- 2) 2nd offence: The choir member will receive a written warning via email
- 3) 3rd offence: The choir member will be dismissed from the choir without refund

VRC has a zero tolerance policy for physical violence. Choir members who display physically violent behaviour during choir rehearsals or events will be dismissed from VRC immediately, without refund.

Addressing Choir Member Concerns

We take member concerns very seriously. Please speak on behalf of yourself, expressing **your own** ideas, concerns, and opinions to our staff. Badgering of the VRC Board, Choir Directors or staff will not be tolerated, under any circumstances. Please note that member concerns will be addressed at the discretion of the VRC Board, Choir Directors and Staff.

To express a concern, please contact VRC Admin at admin@voicesrockcanada.com. Concerns expressed directly to the Board or Choir Directors will not be addressed.

When concerns are expressed, the following action will be taken:

- 1) A formal record of the concern will be documented by VRC administration
- 2) If applicable, relevant parties will be contacted, and matters rectified
- 3) The concerned member will be contacted with the timeline for resolution, and with the resolution that has been found.

Tickets For Upcoming Events

Each event usually has a separate and unique ticketing situation. VRC staff will provide details regarding upcoming events to choir members and have the necessary information to invite guests to be part of our audience.

Vulnerable Sector Screening

VSS is the screening of individuals who intend on working or volunteering with vulnerable people, including children and seniors. Any employee or independent contractor of VRC that works closely with the membership is subject to vulnerable sector screening. These are renewed every year.

Voices Rock Canada Fees

(September to May)

VR MEDICINE - \$825 (\$225 non-refundable deposit)

VR KIDS - \$825 (\$225 non-refundable deposit)

VR ENSEMBLE - \$825 (\$150 non-refundable deposit)

VR PRIME - \$495 (\$225 non-refundable deposit)

Discounts

Discounts may be offered for; 1) returning members from previous seasons, 2) members joining as a family (spouse, sibling, parent/child, etc.), 3) medical residents, 4) “early bird” registrants. These discounts will be advertised as applicable, with ample notice.

Refund Policy

A non-refundable deposit of \$225 (\$150 for VR PRIME MEMBERS) is submitted with all registrations. In some rare cases, the deposit may be refunded (at the sole and absolute discretion of the President). The final decision of the President may not be challenged or assessed once it has been made. Refunds (excluding non-refundable deposit) are available up to 14 days after the start of the choir season (or, half-season for late-joining members). *There are no exceptions to this policy.*

Insurance

Voices Rock Canada is fully insured through Co-operators Insurance, Peter Garthside Team.

Donations to Voices Rock Canada

Voices Rock Canada is a registered Canadian charity, #79800 0097 RR0001. Approximately 85% of our costs are covered by membership fees. We rely on donations, both corporate and personal, and special events to offset our operating costs. A charitable tax receipt is issued for every donation over twenty-five dollars. Visit www.voicesrockcanada.com/donate