



MILLENNIAL
CHOIRS & ORCHESTRAS

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

2015-16 SEASON

ORANGE COUNTY MILLENNIAL CHOIRS & ORCHESTRAS (CALIFORNIA)
EAST VALLEY MILLENNIAL CHOIRS & ORCHESTRAS (ARIZONA)
UTAH VALLEY MILLENNIAL CHOIRS & ORCHESTRAS (UTAH)
DALLAS MILLENNIAL CHOIRS & ORCHESTRAS (TEXAS)
TREASURE VALLEY MILLENNIAL CHOIRS & ORCHESTRAS (IDAHO)

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ABOUT MCO

MCO MISSION & PURPOSE

Millennial Choirs & Orchestras (MCO) is a performing force of over 3,000 participants and growing. With locations in California, Arizona, Utah, Texas, and Idaho, MCO has become the largest organization of its kind in the world, offering superb music training and professional performance opportunities to musicians of all ages and abilities.

MCO was founded in 2007 for the purpose of teaching and encouraging excellence in quality sacred and classical music. Its primary purpose is to fulfill the need for more refined music education and performance in our communities, with a focus on God and country. Following the music traditions of centuries past, MCO is bringing God into the concert hall with the sacred/classical music that is such a rich part of world history. This is vital in today's society, particularly for the youth of America.

MCO provides an invaluable learning environment whereby children, youth, and adults may associate with and develop talents with those who maintain upstanding Christian values, while instilling in its participants a deep love for sacred and classical music. The organization is made up of thousands of volunteers who represent a variety of faiths.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

Millennial Choirs & Orchestras' motto is **ALL AGES. ALL FAITHS. ONE VOICE.**

MCO welcomes all youth and adults in the community who agree to abide by its Participant Handbook, including the MCO Code of Conduct and Terms of Participation. While the youth choirs are not required to audition, the Grand Chorus (adult choir) and Symphony Orchestra must audition.

WHY MCO WAS FOUNDED

We believe in the importance of quality, appropriate sacred and classical music, and particularly choral and orchestral music. By educating children, youth and adults in this type of music, it will not only benefit and add culture to the lives of those who participate, but it will also benefit music in communities and church congregations for generations to come. We also believe in the importance of providing an opportunity for members of all faiths to unite in praising God through worshipful music and the music of the master classical composers.

MCO gained its inspiration from the great Evan Stephens (1854-1931), a Mormon conductor and composer. One of his trademarks was the ability to teach quality music to the masses in his community. He began with singing schools for children, which were immensely popular. At one time he had nearly 1000 children in his classes. While the tradition of local religious choirs for adults has lasted through the present day, Stephens's youth choirs were the last large-scale, Christian-based musical training offered to youth in America, well over 100 years ago. Today, more than ever, we are in need of wholesome, quality music and a spiritual music education for our youth.

ENSEMBLE OVERVIEW

All MCO ensembles provide participants the opportunity to enjoy the musical, social, and spiritual experience of participating in a quality performance ensemble with others who have similar interests and values. For an overview of what is accomplished in rehearsals, see “Rehearsals Overview” on p. 8. Ensembles in all MCO locations are as follows:

Symphony Orchestra	Accomplished instrumentalists
Grand Chorus	Accomplished adult singers (ages 18 and over)
Millennial Chorus	Comprised of Concert Choir girls & all Youth Chorus
Concert Choir	9 th -12 th grades (homeschool at least age 14 by Sept. 1)
Youth Chorus	6 th -8 th grades (homeschool at least age 11 by Sept. 1)
Children’s Chorus	2 nd -5 th grades (homeschool at least age 7 by Sept. 1)
Young Singers Chorus	Age 4 by first rehearsal of semester through 1 st grade

The age/grade designations for the youth choirs are a standing policy of MCO. The only exception made to this policy is for 8th grade males whose voices have completely changed, in which case they may be moved to the Concert Choir (9th-12th grade choir) upon the musical director’s prior approval.

The following is a description of each ensemble. For specific registration, audition, rehearsal, and performance dates, detailed information can be found at www.millennial.org.

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

- Accomplished instrumentalists, audition required
- Rehearsals as scheduled; performances at concerts (times, locations, and calendar are available when you sign up online to audition)
- Repertoire draws from major choral/orchestral works and repertory symphonic literature, including hymns and anthems arranged for choir and orchestra
- No cost to participate, except for procuring concert black attire on your own

GRAND CHORUS

- Accomplished adult singers ages 18 and over, audition required
- Rehearsals on Thursday evenings; performances at concerts and other occasional events (times, locations, and calendar are available when you sign up online to audition)
- Repertoire draws from major choral/orchestral works and repertory choral literature, including sacred anthems and hymns
- Participation fee required: details are provided during the audition process

MILLENNIAL CHORUS

- Advanced treble choir combining Concert Choir girls and all Youth Chorus
- Rehearsals on Thursdays afternoons; performances at concerts and other occasional events (times, locations, and calendar are available at registration online)
- Repertoire draws from choral literature appropriate for treble choirs, including sacred anthems and hymn

CONCERT CHOIR

- 9th – 12th grades, or if homeschooled at least age 14 by September 1
- No audition required
- Rehearsals on Thursday afternoons; performances at concerts and other occasional events (times, locations, and calendar are available at registration online)

- Repertoire draws from choral literature appropriate high school-aged choirs, including sacred anthems and hymns
- Concert Choir women begin rehearsal earlier than Concert Choir men to participate in the advanced youth ensemble “Millennial Chorus”
- Tuition required; find registration details and deadlines at www.millennial.org

YOUTH CHORUS

- 6th – 8th grades, or if homeschooled at least age 11 by September 1
- No audition required
- Rehearsals on Thursday afternoons; performances at concerts and other occasional events (times, locations, and calendar are available at registration online)
- Repertoire draws from choral literature appropriate for youth choirs, including sacred anthems and hymns
- Youth Chorus also participates in the advanced youth ensemble “Millennial Chorus” as part of the regular weekly rehearsal
- Tuition required; find registration details and deadlines at www.millennial.org

CHILDREN’S CHORUS

- 2nd – 5th grades or if homeschooled at least age 7 by September 1
- No audition required
- Rehearsals on Thursday afternoons; performances at concerts and other occasional events (times, locations, and calendar are available at registration online)
- Repertoire draws from choral literature appropriate for children’s choirs, including sacred children’s songs and folk songs
- Tuition required; find registration details and deadlines at www.millennial.org

YOUNG SINGERS CHORUS

- Age 4 (by first rehearsal of the semester) through 1st grade
- No audition required
- Rehearsals on Thursday afternoons; performances at concerts (times, locations, and calendar are available at registration online)
- Repertoire draws from music appropriate for the education of young children, including sacred children's songs and folk songs
- Tuition required; find registration details and deadlines at www.millennial.org

SEASON CALENDAR

MCO has two semesters each season with winter and summer breaks in between semesters. Each semester is 10-12 weeks in length with a minimum of ten rehearsals, and includes one major concert near the end of the semester (often with multiple performances). Optional recording sessions, music workshops, or tours may occur during a portion of the winter or summer breaks. The basic season is as follows:

1st SEMESTER

September through early December
December concert

2nd SEMESTER

February through April
April concert

WINTER BREAK

December – January

SUMMER BREAK

May – August

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

MCO participants are asked to commit for at least a semester at a time. Commitment for an entire season (two semesters) is preferred as it results in consistent musical progress in each ensemble, and steady progress for individuals in their musical education and skills.

PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

Each individual who joins Millennial Choirs & Orchestras automatically takes upon themselves two important responsibilities as a participant of the organization:

1. **Concert Advertising:** each MCO household is responsible for bringing 10 guests to each set of concerts.
2. **Recruiting of Participants:** each participant/parent is responsible for spreading the word and encouraging other families and individuals – both singers and instrumentalists – to participate in MCO.

REGISTRATION

Registration is for youth choirs age 4 – 12th grade. Youth choirs do not need to audition but simply submit a registration form and pay tuition online, then begin attending rehearsals. Prospective participants are also welcome to observe a rehearsal before registering, as long as they register before the final deadline. Registration details and deadlines can be found on the website, www.millennial.org.

AUDITIONS & RE-AUDITIONS

Auditions are required for the Grand Chorus (adult singers) and the Symphony Orchestra (instrumentalists). Auditions occur prior to the beginning of each semester. For specific audition dates and to fill out an audition form, go to www.millennial.org.

Grand Chorus and Symphony Orchestra participants who have sung/played in past seasons but who took a semester off may or may not need to re-audition. Please contact MCO to find out how to re-join the Grand Chorus or Symphony Orchestra if you have participated in the past by emailing your location's choir or orchestra leadership.

TUITION/FEES

Millennial Choirs & Orchestras is among the most affordable music education organizations in America, and an inexpensive supplement to an academic education and private music lessons. Tuition (youth) and participation fees (adults) are charged for ensembles that rehearse on a weekly basis. Tuition/fees provides the opportunity for all MCO participants to receive music education and performance under the instruction of musical directors/educators who have received advanced degrees from some of the finest institutions in the world, and composers who compose captivating new works specifically for MCO participants and audiences.

Tuition is paid as part of the online registration process. The average fees are listed on p. 7. Exact deadlines, tuition fees (including early bird or season discounts), and payment processes are subject to change. Also registration is subject to close at any time if ensemble capacity limits have been reached. For the most current information always refer to www.millennial.org.

Returning Grand Chorus singers register for each semester by the posted deadlines. New Grand Chorus singers will be given instructions on how to register after they have auditioned and been accepted into the choir.

PERFORMANCE ATTIRE COSTS

All choral ensembles are required to purchase concert attire from MCO's retailers. The orchestra wears concert black. Details about concert attire are given to participants at the beginning of each semester. See concert attire estimated costs in the table below.

TABLE OF COSTS

Tuition/fees and estimated performance attire costs for the 2015-16 season are as follows
Costs are estimated and depend on location, shipping costs for attire, etc. See website for more details.

ENSEMBLE	AGE/GRADE LEVEL	TUITION PER SEMESTER	PERFORMANCE ATTIRE
Young Singers Chorus	Age 4 – 1 st grade	\$115-\$125	Girls \$30 Boys \$30
Children's Chorus	2 nd - 5 th grades	\$145-\$155	Girls \$35 Boys \$40
Youth Chorus	6 th - 8 th grades	\$175-\$185	Girls \$60 Boys \$45
Concert Choir	9 th – 12 th grades	\$175-\$185 girls \$145-\$155 boys	Girls \$70 Boys \$100
Millennial Chorus	Concert Choir girls & all Youth Chorus	Included in Concert Choir girls/Youth Chorus tuition	Same attire as Concert Choir girls/Youth Chorus
Grand Chorus	age 18 and over	\$50	Women \$100 Men \$100
Symphony Orchestra	Accomplished Instrumentalists	N/A	Concert Black (purchased on your own)

TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION – REFUND POLICY

MCO expects participants to commit to an entire semester at a time. However, we understand extenuating circumstances may prohibit you from continued participation. Please see the refund policy for tuition and fees in the table below. Extenuating circumstances include a move out of the area, a death in the family, and other life-altering situations, reviewed by the Financial Director on a case-by-case basis. Unexpected scheduling conflicts do not constitute an extenuating circumstance.

Refunds will be issued as follows:

AMOUNT REFUNDED	REASON FOR REFUND
100%	MCO made a change that caused a conflict for you, such as a change in a mandatory date, or a change in times or places of rehearsals or performances. The change must have occurred <i>after</i> you registered and <u>the refund must be requested <i>prior</i> to the final registration deadline.</u>
90%	Extenuating circumstances – prorated depending on how many rehearsals have been attended. No refund within 3 weeks of the end of the semester.
75%	Non-extenuating circumstances <i>prior</i> to the final registration deadline.
None	Non-extenuating circumstances <i>after</i> the final registration deadline.

Refund requests must be in writing. MCO participants can send an email to registration@millennial.org or write to Millennial Choirs & Orchestras, P.O. Box 6084, Huntington Beach, CA, 92615. MCO cannot provide refunds for concert attire as it is purchased on your own from the retailer.

PAYMENT PLANS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Payment plans are available for those who need or want to spread their tuition payments out throughout the semester/season. There is no application process for payment plans, but it is simply an option you may choose during the registration process online.

Scholarships are available for individuals/families who are unable to afford the full tuition amount, even with the payment plan option, due to a legitimate financial hardship. Scholarship applications can be requested by emailing registration@millennial.org.

REHEARSALS OVERVIEW

MCO weekly rehearsals not only expose the participants to various classical and sacred works, but also teach the fundamentals of technique, music history and theory, conducting, and an appreciation for quality music. In addition, the religious themes that permeate the texts of the classical and sacred works we sing are discussed. We begin every rehearsal with a prayer.

REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

Participants in all ensembles must abide by the following rehearsal expectations:

- At all times abide by the Code of Conduct and Terms of Participation found on p. 14
- Maintain good attendance as described in the ATTENDANCE POLICY below
- Refrain from carrying on side conversations or inappropriate behavior
- Remove hats and sun glasses
- Silence cell phones and put them away, even when you are not singing/playing
- Stand and/or sit with good posture
- Refrain from chewing gum, eating food, or drinking beverages (except bottled water)
- Have music and a pencil at all rehearsals (in ensembles that require it)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rehearsals: Attendance will be taken in each ensemble at every rehearsal. In an effort to maintain consistent progress for each ensemble, choir participants must maintain at least 75% attendance at weekly rehearsals each semester. Missing more than 25% of regular weekly rehearsals may result in the participant not being allowed to perform in the concert, unless special arrangements have been made with the musical directors. Orchestra participants rehearse infrequently and should make every effort to attend all scheduled rehearsals.

Concert run-through & other mandatory rehearsals: Attendance at all concert run-throughs and other rehearsals so designated is mandatory. *Participants who miss a concert run-through or other mandatory rehearsal without the permission of the musical directors will not perform in the concert. This includes youth and adults.*

Participants who foresee a conflict with a concert run-through or other mandatory rehearsal must notify the ensemble leadership *within the first week of the semester for adults, and within a week of the close of registration for youth.* Ensemble leadership will notify musical directors, who will assess each situation and make decisions about whether the participant will be permitted to miss the event and still perform in the concert.

NON-PARTICIPANTS AT REHEARSALS

In order to keep all participants safe, and to keep rehearsal buildings and grounds in pristine condition, the following policy is in effect:

Only choir and orchestra participants and parents who are Rehearsal/Concert Assistants will be allowed into rehearsal buildings. The following exceptions apply:

- Prospective participants and parents who wish to observe a rehearsal may do so at the beginning of each semester until registration closes, or at other times with the prior permission of the musical director.
- Other guests may observe a rehearsal with the prior permission of the musical director.

Rehearsal building restrooms are reserved for participants only. Parents who are not Rehearsal/Concert Assistants and family members or friends who are not MCO participants who need to use the restroom must do so at a nearby park or shopping center.

TRAVEL TO AND FROM MCO EVENTS

MCO is not responsible for participants while en route to and from MCO events. MCO strongly recommends that parents transport their children to and from all MCO events rather than having them walk, ride a bike, or drive on their own.

PARKING

Participants must park according to instructions provided at the beginning of each semester.

Unless otherwise specified, parents should not exit their cars to drop off youth at the doors, but should stay in their cars and drop them off at the specified location (drop-off and pick-up procedures will be provided at the beginning of each semester). Rehearsal/Concert Assistants escort youth in and out of the building.

Parents/family members/friends of MCO participants should not exit their vehicles or walk the building grounds while waiting. They may park in the parking area and wait inside their cars, or go to a nearby park or shopping center. Pick-up and drop-off procedures are set up for the safety of MCO participants and to maintain a consistent flow of traffic.

PERFORMANCES OVERVIEW

MCO choirs and orchestras perform regular concerts together in state-of-the-art concert halls, providing an incomparable experience for all participants, even children as young as four years old. The result is a more cultured, musically sensitive generation of youth and adults.

We seek to inspire, teach, and uplift members of the organization and the community. MCO's regular concerts offer the recurring opportunity for participants and audience to be edified and inspired by fine choral and orchestral music, including stirring, inspirational hymns and anthems. Concerts are intended for members of all faiths in the community. Concert attendees should be old enough to sit through an entire concert quietly. Young children who cannot sit still for long periods of time, toddlers, and infants should not attend MCO concerts.

Performances generally consist of one or two concert days near the end of each semester and other occasional events as scheduled. Performances will appear on the calendar well in advance of each semester.

All of the ensembles will perform at each concert. All participants are required to stay for the entire concert unless special arrangements are made for the younger ensembles to be released early. Concert Assistants will care for the youth in a holding room when they are not performing, and will usher them to the stage for their performance.

DRESS CODE

It is important to remember that participants are representing MCO and its mission when they are in attendance at rehearsals, concerts, and other performances and events. All participants will abide by the dress code at all of MCO's rehearsals and events.

REHEARSALS & OTHER MCO-SPONSORED EVENTS

Participants will dress modestly at all rehearsals and events. Men and women (boys/girls) should not wear revealing clothing. Tank tops, sleeveless/strapless tops, short shirts, short shorts, short skirts/dresses, and tight, revealing clothing are prohibited at all of MCO's rehearsals and events.

PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

MCO believes in the professionalism and refinement of performing ensembles wearing matching attire in concerts and other performances. All ensembles must wear the required performance attire. Participants will not complain or comment on any performance attire as this disrupts the morale of the organization. See performance attire estimated costs in the table on page 7. The following policy is in effect:

Women (girls) will wear the prescribed performance attire for their particular ensemble, including shoes, hosiery (if required), and jewelry (if required). No other jewelry will be allowed except for a wedding ring. Watches must be removed for performances. Hair must be a natural color and out of the face for performances. Makeup must be worn (if required) according to instructions given prior to performances.

Men (boys) will wear the prescribed performance attire for their particular ensemble, including black socks and dress shoes. Hairstyles should be conservative, a natural color, out of the face, and not extending in length beyond the collar. Men must be clean-shaven (completely free of all facial hair) for all performances. No jewelry will be allowed except for a wedding band. Watches must be removed for performances.

Choral ensembles from age four through adults must purchase performance attire from the retailers prescribed by the organization. Details on purchasing performance attire are given to participants at the beginning of each semester.

Orchestra should wear concert black unless otherwise instructed, purchased on your own through any retailer. Tuxedos are required for men and may be purchased through retailers prescribed by MCO. Black dresses or long skirts and tops are preferred over dress pants for women. Strapless, sleeveless, and excessively short (capped) sleeves on tops or dresses are not allowed.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Millennial Choirs & Orchestras understands the financial and scheduling demands of today's families, and thus requires very little of our parents when compared to other musical, athletic, and extracurricular organizations. There is no requirement to fulfill a certain amount of service hours to MCO, or to fundraise. Parents *are* required to serve as Rehearsal Assistants and Concert Assistants as described in the following section.

MCO takes every precaution to ensure that the youth are safe. Parent assistants are always in groups of two or more when assisting the youth. The assignments that require direct interaction with youth in rehearsals and back stage at concerts are given to mothers. Only mothers escort youth to and from restrooms. Fathers assist in groups or in husband/wife teams.

REHEARSAL ASSISTANTS

Parents of the youth ensembles are required to serve as Rehearsal Assistants in one or more rehearsals each semester (depending on each locale's needs). Parents who are unable to serve as Rehearsal Assistants for whatever reason must provide a substitute to serve in their place. Parents who sing in the Grand Chorus (adults) or play in the Symphony Orchestra, and parents who already serve in some capacity on an MCO board/committee are still required to serve as Rehearsal Assistants or provide a substitute.

CONCERT ASSISTANTS

Parents of the youth ensembles are required to sign up to serve as Concert Assistants at one of the performances at the end of each semester. Parents who are unable to serve as Concert Assistants for whatever reason must provide a substitute to serve in their place – someone who is not already serving in that particular performance. In situations where both parents are also MCO participants (Grand Chorus and/or Symphony Orchestra), at least one parent is still required to serve as a Concert Assistant and will be given an assignment that does not conflict with their participation in the performance.

MCO LEADERSHIP

MILLENNIAL MUSIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Millennial Choirs & Orchestras functions under the 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization *Millennial Music*. The Millennial Music Board of Directors is comprised of a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and other officers as needed. This is the governing body of MCO.

MCO DEANS & FOUNDING MUSICAL DIRECTORS

The MCO Deans & Founding Musical Directors, Brandon Stewart & Brett Stewart, oversee all administrative and musical matters for the entire organization.

ASSOCIATE DEANS

Under the direction of the MCO Deans, the Associate Deans oversee administrative and musical matters for specific locales, including overseeing the locale leadership volunteers and volunteer committees.

MUSICAL DIRECTORS & ASSOCIATE MUSICAL DIRECTORS

Millennial Choirs & Orchestras is conducted by a team of Musical Directors and Associate Musical Directors. Musical Directors oversee the musical and logistical matters of all rehearsals and performances. Associate Musical Directors assist the Musical Directors where needed.

MANAGING DIRECTORS

Each locale has a Managing Director who provides leadership at the local level, including management support for the Orchestra Manager, Grand Chorus Manager, Youth Choirs Manager, and other volunteers. Managing Directors ensure that their committees are staffed and functioning effectively. The Managing Directors also provide project support for the Musical Directors as needed.

ORCHESTRA, GRAND CHORUS, AND YOUTH CHOIRS COMMITTEES

Each locale has Orchestra, Grand Chorus, and Youth Choirs Committees that are all-volunteer committees made up of participants/parents associated with these ensembles and other friends of the organization. These committees assume the logistical responsibilities of maintaining their respective ensembles. Committees are chaired by managers (Orchestra Manager, Grand Chorus Manager, and Youth Choirs Manager) who oversee their respective committees.

MILLENNIAL CHOIRS & ORCHESTRAS

CODE OF CONDUCT & TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

All participants in MCO agree to abide by the following Code of Conduct & Terms of Participation:

1. I will check my ego at the door when participating in any rehearsal, performance, or activity. I understand that I am part of a vast organization that has a specific mission and purpose – an organization that must accommodate literally thousands of participants and supporters.
2. I will help to maintain a professional atmosphere at all rehearsals and performances.
3. I will show respect and courtesy to fellow participants and parents, the Musical Directors, and other MCO leadership.
4. I will cooperate and be flexible with fellow musicians.
5. I will be on time to rehearsals and adhere to the attendance policy.
6. I understand that MCO functions are often recorded (video and audio) and photographed for archival purposes, and that pictures, videos, and audio recordings may appear without my consent or knowledge as marketing tools through the Internet or other forms of media.
7. I understand that, unless entered into a specific contract, I will not receive any compensation nor royalties for any performances, audio or video recordings, photo shoots, or appearances in which I have taken part, whether amateur/archival, or professional/commercial.
8. I will not complain or make negative comments about the performance attire.
9. I understand and will seek to uphold MCO's policy that it does not facilitate negativity and criticism, but instead encourages constructive and appropriate comments and requests to the applicable leadership.
10. I will not gossip, nor will I say hurtful things to others.
11. I will not use the name of this organization in conjunction with any inappropriate material or topic, nor any controversial issue.
12. I will not post advertisements or news about MCO without the prior consent of the appropriate board or committee.
13. I will not use contact information (including names, email, addresses, and phone numbers) of MCO participants for anything other than approved MCO business (approval must be obtained through the appropriate board or committee).
14. I will not publish negative or controversial comments about MCO in public settings such as the Internet, including on personal blogs.
15. I will maintain upstanding Christian values while participating with MCO.
16. I will use the lessons learned and the talents I develop through the organization to bless and benefit my own life, my family, my community, and my church.
17. I will remember that God has given me my talents, and I will continue to develop and use them for good.
18. I support the important mission and purpose of Millennial Choirs & Orchestras and will encourage others to participate and to attend performances.