

(Updated 2017)

FAQs about Amandla Membership

“**Amandla**” is a Zulu word for “power” and reflects our roots in the anti-apartheid movement.

MEMBERSHIP

Why is there a “trial period” for new members? It allows us to see if it’s a good fit. You’re not expected to pay the member fee unless you’ve made a full commitment. Each member must be able to sing their part and to blend with others, as well as to receive feedback and attend rehearsals regularly.

Why are there auditions? We need to keep our sections balanced, and simple try-outs are the best way to do that.

What is the member fee? *No one is excluded due to economics, and we have a scholarship program.* Generally, our annual membership fee is sliding scale \$300—\$800 (each singer decides).

What if I’m low income? Everyone’s asked to contribute something, but scholarships make up the difference for those unable afford the minimum.

What’s the age range? Most years, our members are teens through eighties.

How can I keep up with chorus news? Newsletters and our on-line yahoo group are just two. Brief announcements are made during rehearsals, too.

Why are we asked not to wear fragrances? Fragrances—including strong-smelling personal care products, laundry detergents, etc.—make it difficult to breathe and function as a chorus. Thank you for respecting this request.

What should I bring to rehearsals; what do I do when I arrive? Please bring your music (in a binder) and water bottle. In messy weather, please remove boots; feel free to bring alternate footwear. When you arrive, please find your name button, circle your name in the attendance binder, and mute your cell phone.

Can I skip warm-ups & just arrive later? No. Warm-ups are vital for individual singers & the chorus as a whole. Please arrive on time! Late arrivals create disruption. Thank you.

What must I do to prepare for rehearsals? Please learn assigned songs to the best of your ability and review other material we’ve covered. Each singer is encouraged to establish regular practice times outside of rehearsal. We make rehearsing at home easier with a Yahoo site where we upload songs including songs broken down into soprano, alto, tenor and bass parts (SATB).

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MUSIC

How do I get the sheet music? You are given an initial packet. After that, check our music library boxes. If you don't find what you need, ask our music librarian.

How can I learn the music? Most important is to attend rehearsals and practice in between—use our on-line recordings, work with a keyboard or with a buddy. Develop habits that work best for you. Don't hesitate to ask for help! The on-line resources also include pronunciation tips, lyrics, and more.

Do the SATB sections ever practice separately? We sometimes split into section rehearsals; singers can request this.

Can I ask questions in rehearsals? Yes! If it's an easy answer, you'll get an instant reply (if it also benefit others). If a longer answer is needed, Eveline will circle back to you.

What if another singer is “off” their part? Gently check with that person and see if they're aware of how they're doing.

What if someone says I'm “off”? Please be open to feedback. Ask for more information, or check with Eveline.

How do I give and receive feedback? Honestly and kindly. Keeping lines of communications open strengthens Amandla!

Note about additional musical opportunities within Amandla: There are chances to sing in small groups—or fun in rehearsals, and/or in performances. Let Eveline know if you're interested in doing a solo, or if you play an instrument and would like to do in a performance. Eveline welcomes suggestions about music, too.

CONCERTS

How many concerts does Amandla do each season? One or two major concerts, and many smaller events. Singers sign up only for the concerts they're able to do.

What's the Amandla costume? How do I get mine? Solid-color shirt—bright colors encouraged! Black pants, skirts, shoes, etc. **The sash:** If purchasing a custom-made sash is economically difficult, please speak with Eveline about a loaner.

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CHORUS BUSINESS

How are decisions made in Amandla? After soliciting input from singers, Eveline decides about music and artistic elements. Other business goes through the board of directors, who work in tandem with Eveline on policy and financial matters.

Are minutes from board meetings available for members to see? Yes, on our Yahoo site, or you can request a paper version.

What if I have concerns or feedback? Please put a note in the feedback box [at rehearsals], contact a board member, or send a message to Eveline.

THE AMANDLA SOCIAL COMMUNITY

Why is there a closing circle at each rehearsal? Amandla singers have a chance to get to know each other better through [optional] brief personal sharing in our closing circles. No one is required to share; we simply ask that everyone be present and respectful.

Do I have to hold hands during closing circle? Absolutely not! No problem if you're concerned about cold germs, or prefer physical space. No one will give you a hard time if you keep your hands to yourself.

If I wish to connect more with other singers, how can I do that? Come early to rehearsal, or stay after, and chat with folks. Use the member directory to connect with folks outside of rehearsal (gauging, of course, whether they share your interest in connecting). We have occasional potlucks & parties. Chatting DURING work/sing time, however, is discouraged.

Is it OK to just come, sing, and generally keep to myself? Of course! Please participate socially at the level that feels right to you.

MISC.

How can I learn more about Amandla's history? Check out our website. Or ask Eveline to show you some of our many archive scrapbooks, compiled since 1988 to preserve memories of our work with Pete Seeger, Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Tutu and many others, as well as memorabilia from hundreds of concerts and workshops in prisons, homeless shelters, elder care facilities, schools—Eveline loves sharing the archives!