

East Bay
HARMONY



Membership Guide

June/2017

Who We Are

East Bay Harmony is an a cappella chorus of women and men that offers an opportunity to all to experience the joy of singing in harmony with others, learn and improve musical skills and promote music in a warm, welcoming community.

EBH embraces popular music as a source of enjoyment and connection that can be shared by all, regardless of background or musical experience.

Our members have varied levels of vocal experience, ranging from professionals to complete beginners. We come from all over the Bay Area, from San Francisco to Marin, Richmond, Emeryville, Oakland, Berkeley, San Leandro, Lafayette and Moraga and beyond.

Our emphasis is on improving our musical skills and fostering fellowship through song. In addition, we perform at senior citizens' homes, schools, Bay Area events and our annual Friends and Family concert.

Our History

East Bay Harmony was established in November 1999 as part of the Urban Harmony Movement, an outreach program of the Contemporary A Cappella Society of America. CASA was founded in 1990 to foster and promote a cappella music, inviting all members of the community to join together and spread "harmony through harmony."

What We Sing

Everything we sing is arranged for just our voices, with no accompaniment. Our repertoire includes doo-wop, pop, folk and R&B tunes, jazz, Broadway standards and the occasional madrigal. We have also sung Bulgarian, South African and Spanish songs.

Each season our Music Director makes some recommendations and the chorus gets a chance to vote for their favorites. Chorus members are also always welcome and encouraged to pass on ideas and arrangements to the Director.

Accepting New Members

We begin accepting new members at our first rehearsal of the new season in September. New members are welcome to continue to join until the end of October.

Auditions?

None, nada, no way! But, some songs in our repertoire offer a chance for solos. Once or twice a year we'll have solo auditions for these parts after the regular rehearsal. Everyone is welcome to try out!

What if I Don't read music?

No problem! We offer two ways to learn and practice our repertoire, regardless of music-reading ability:

- **The Rehearse-o-Matic** online jukebox allows you to choose your vocal part (soprano, bass, etc) and listen along to the whole chorus, or just your part on its own. You can also download the song to play on your computer, burn a CD or take with you on your portable music player. (If you don't know how to burn a CD, just ask, we can do it for you.) The Rehearse-o-Matic is located on the Sound Files page on our website.
- **Myriad Score Files** offer a way to for you to practice songs while following along with the sheet music. You can adjust the tempo and mix of the music to make practicing as easy as possible. The software needed for this is free! Myriad score files and links to the software are on the PDF page on our website.

Our Music Director

Mark Bernfield has been music director of East Bay Harmony since 2001. When not working with EBH, Mark teaches 6th–8th grade general music at Redwood Day School in Oakland, where he also directs the RDS Jazz Band, three rock bands, and the Middle School Chorus. He also acts as musical director and has written words and music for the annual RDS musical theater production

As a professional drummer, Mark has performed and recorded with a variety of Bay Area jazz, blues, R&B and rock bands, and maintains a busy private drum teaching practice. Mark graduated cum laude in Music (classical voice performance) from UC San Diego, and studied drums at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

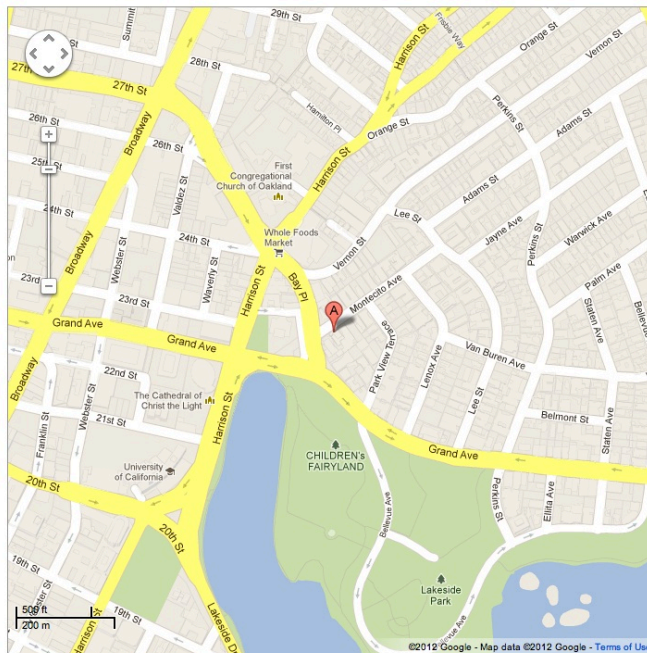
Getting to Rehearsal

Rehearsals are held Monday nights at St. Paul's Episcopal School in Oakland, located at **116 Montecito Avenue, Oakland, 94610**.

We're not affiliated with the church or its choir, we just rent space there. If you have trouble using stairs, there's an elevator to the 2nd floor rehearsal space.

Look for the EBH buzzer near the door and we'll buzz you in.

<http://goo.gl/maps/9JrE4>



Parking/Public Transit

Our rehearsal space is a 15-minute walk from the 19th Street BART station. The AC Transit #12 bus stops just around corner on Grand Ave.

There's free street parking, and, while no one has gotten a ticket (yet!) at the Veteran's Building lot just across the street, we have to say park there at your own risk.

Rehearsal Times

Rehearsals are held on Monday nights. There's a two-hour rehearsal from 7:00 – 9:00pm with the full chorus is followed by a one-hour Small Group Master Class from 9:00 – 10:00 pm.

The Small Group is for those chorus members who are interested in honing their musical skills and ability to blend, with an eye to performing in small groups such as quartets or sextets.

Note: Conversations during rehearsal can be distracting to other chorus members. Please try to keep them to a minimum or save them for the mid-rehearsal break.

Membership and Dues

East Bay Harmony is funded through monthly member dues. We're an affiliate of Fractal Plane, a not-for profit organization.

Dues are **\$30/month** for the main chorus and an additional **\$10/month** for members of the Small Group. These funds pay for our rehearsal space, our sheet music as well as our Music Director's time.

Once you sign up, you can pay your dues automatically with a credit card. (If you'd prefer some other arrangement, please talk to the treasurer Mark Schaeffer.)

No one will be turned away for lack of funds. If these dues would represent a hardship for you, just talk to the Treasurer confidentially to arrange an amount you'd feel comfortable paying.

No dues are charged for the first month you attend as you try us out and decide whether you would like to make a commitment to the chorus.

Snacks & Setup

Since some members come to rehearsal straight from work, we take a break halfway thru for a snack. Three members each week provide the snack: a combination of savory and sweet. Once you become a dues-paying member, you'll be added to the rotation.

New snack and setup schedules are posted on the website every six months or so.

Annual Retreat

One weekend each Fall we meet for an all-day local retreat. The retreat generally features a lot of singing as well as educational sessions, fun ice breaker/getting-to-know-you activities, and a singing workshop with a guest musician/teacher

Members bring their own lunches and snacks to share. There's no extra cost for the retreat.

Performances

Each Spring we put on our Friends and Family Concert. These two performances—one evening and one afternoon—serve as our annual fundraising campaign as well as a fun time to celebrate, show off what we've learned and spread the word about East Bay Harmony. Plus—lots of food, wine and prizes!

We find that blending and musicality are much improved when chorus members are focused on our Director during performances rather than looking at sheet music. So for our Friends and Family performances, chorus members memorize their parts.

We often hold a few “sectionals” before performances. This is extra rehearsal time where a section (alto, tenor, etc.) gets together informally to go over any tricky parts. We involve all members of the section in planning the times and while attendance is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged to improve blend and performance readiness.

Some members also choose to get together throughout the season to sing together so if you are interested in these opportunities, be sure to ask around.

Several times during the year we'll also perform at senior citizen homes, schools or Bay Area events.

Performance Attire

Standard black performance attire:

For Men: Black dress pants (no jeans), black button-up shirt with short or long sleeves (no button down collars), black dress shoes (no sneakers), tie.

For Women: Black dress pants (no jeans) or black modest-length skirt, black short or long sleeve dress blouse (no t-shirts), black dress shoes/sandals (no sneakers). The scarves need to be worn around the neck and be visible down the front of your body. You can still choose whatever way you want to tie it (or not tie it), or the location of any knot or bow.

Freshly cleaned East-Bay-Harmony-turquoise scarves and ties will be brought to the performance.

Attendance

Steady attendance creates a better-sounding chorus. While we strive for a low-pressure experience, we ask that members will make a real commitment to attend weekly rehearsals, especially in the weeks leading up to our performances.

If for some reason you can't come one week, send a note via the wiggio mail group to let us know.

Please arrive early enough so you can settle in and be ready to begin singing promptly at 7:00pm.

Member Feedback

Our goal is to make the best group singing experience possible. We are committed to giving high quality performances while retaining an accessible, fun experience. We need your help to do this by letting us know any compliments, concerns or questions.

Our chorus is run by a group of volunteer “steering committee” members who meet monthly. Please don’t be shy about letting any of us or the Director know your feedback. We welcome it and discuss at our monthly meetings with a goal of constantly improving the chorus.

We also welcome volunteers to help with the many tasks that keep the chorus going. If you're interested in helping out, let a Steering Committee member know.

Keeping in Touch

Once you join, you’ll be asked to provide an email address to be added to our Wiggle Mail Group. This way we can send and receive group-wide email messages.

Our Music Director sends out weekly updates to let us know which songs we’ll be practicing each Monday.

