



East Bay Harmony Membership Guide

September 2024

The East Bay Harmony Mission

East Bay Harmony is a mixed a cappella chorus 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. Our emphasis is on improving our musical skills and fostering fellowship through song.

Expectations for all chorus members

- 1. Please arrive a few minutes early so we can start rehearsal on time at 7pm sharp!**
- 2. Wear your nametag during rehearsal.** We want to learn who you are! To get your nametag (or a replacement) ask a Board Member.
- 3. Please refrain from wearing scented products.** Perfume, scented hair products, cologne, or strong aftershave can aggravate sensitivities or allergies of fellow members.
- 4. Please don't eat anything in the rehearsal space. Drinks are OK.** You can eat a snack outside during the break, but please take any garbage home with you.
- 5. Please respect the Director and other members by not chatting with neighbors during rehearsal.** We're all about being social, but talking during rehearsal while other chorus members are learning their parts is very distracting. Please be courteous to your fellow members and keep your conversations for break time.
- 6. Return to your seat promptly after breaks.**
- 7. After rehearsal, if you're physically able, please help return chairs to the chair racks.**
- 8. Please follow the protocols in the COVID agreement**
- 9. Have fun and sing from the heart!**
- 10. For questions, concerns, or suggestions, connect with a EBH Board member at: board@eastbayharmony.org**

Who We Are

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.

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

Our emphasis is on improving our musical skills and fostering fellowship through song. In addition, we perform at 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

We're an a cappella group—that means everything we sing is arranged for just voices, with no accompaniment. Our repertoire has included 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.

The chorus members choose all of our songs democratically. At the end of the season, members send in song suggestions for the following year. Our Music Director adds his own and then posts an online audio song poll. The top picks, chosen by rank choice voting, become our next season's repertoire.

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 and five rock bands.

He's been musical director for 15 musical theater productions at RDS, and wrote all the music and lyrics for three full-length original musicals produced there. He continues to compose vocal and instrumental music on his own and in a variety of collaborative settings.

Mark graduated cum laude in Music (classical voice performance) from UC San Diego, and studied drums at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

Accepting New Members

We officially begin accepting new members at our first rehearsal of the new season in September. At the end of the month, we close rehearsals to new members until June, after our annual Friends and Family Concert. (During the summer we have a series of informal sessions where new people can check out the chorus before the new season begins.)

Auditions?

None, nada, no way! But, occasionally, some songs in our repertoire might offer a chance for solos. In those cases, 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 **The Rehearse-o-Matic** online jukebox, which allows you to listen to practice versions of our songs recorded by professional singers. The **Rehearse-o-Matic** is located on the Members page on our website. (eastbayharmony.org)

You can listen along to the whole arrangement, or just your part on its

own. You can use the L/R slider to listen to just your part (the left side) or everyone else's part (the right side) or a blend of both (in the middle.)

Use the 0.5x-1.5x slider to slow down or speed up the recording. And, with the new looping feature, you can pick any tricky spot in a song and listen to it over and over!

You can also download and listen to the songs to your computer, create a playlist to for your phone or burn a CD. (If you're not able to burn a CD, we can make one for you at no charge. Just ask Allison Dufty)

Membership and Dues

East Bay Harmony is funded through monthly member dues.

Membership dues during the regular season are **\$40/month** (or **\$50/month** if you belong to the Small Group.) These funds pay for our rehearsal space, sheet music as well as our Music Director's time.

Once you sign up, you can pay your dues automatically. When you receive your first dues invoice each season, you'll be asked to submit a credit card number; thereafter, your card will be charged automatically each month.

If you'd prefer to pay in some other way, talk to our Treasurer, Mark Schaeffer, about making other arrangements.

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

Please note:

If you decide to be a member, you're a member all year round, including the summer, and are expected to pay dues every month. If you'd like to take the summer off between seasons, you can suspend your membership for the time period when you don't intend to attend rehearsals.

Just talk to or email our Treasurer, Mark Schaeffer.

Sectionals

Voice part sections (alto, tenor, etc.) aim to meet separately once a month during the season. These extra rehearsals are held informally at each other's homes to go over any tricky parts. Sometimes the Music Director will attend as well.

Each voice part has a section coordinator who is responsible for finding a host for each sectional and scheduling a date when as many members as possible can make it. While sectionals aren't mandatory, attendance is strongly encouraged to improve blend and performance readiness.

The section coordinator is an organizer only; any musical questions should be brought to Mark Bernfield.

Keeping in Touch

Once you register on the website, you'll be added to our email list. You can expect to receive an email each week from our music director, telling you what you need to know for the coming Monday's rehearsal. You'll also receive a summary of each week's rehearsal announcements.

For communications that don't involve the whole chorus, you can contact people in the usual way, by using their email addresses. Every member's email address (and photo) is available on the **Contact Info** page in the password-protected **Members** area of the EBH website.

Announcements

Any announcements made at the break must be directly related to EBH business.

If you want to announce something that is not strictly chorus-related (such as an event you're planning or a fundraiser you're participating in), submit it by email to announcements@eastbayharmony.org, and it will be included in a weekly email that goes out to all chorus members.

Rehearsal Times

Rehearsals are held on Monday nights.

There's a two-hour rehearsal from 7:00 – 9:00pm with the full chorus. Soon after the season starts in September, we add 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.

Getting to Rehearsal

Rehearsals are held at The Piedmont Center for the Arts, located at:

801 Magnolia Ave, Piedmont, 94611, on the corner of Bonita Ave.

<http://www.piedmontcenterforthearts.org/>

There's an accessible entrance ramp around the side of the building on Bonita Ave, right next to an accessible parking space. Inside, there's a lift by the short staircase up to the restrooms.



Parking/Public Transit

There's free street parking around the Piedmont Center. Please arrive before 7pm to find a spot nearby.

If you're not driving, the #33 AC Transit bus is the main way to get here via public transportation. The 33 stops directly at the 19th Street BART station and it's about a ten-minute ride if you get on there.

Carpooling

You can find nearby chorus members to share rides with on the **Carpooling** section of our website's **Member** page:

1. Click the "Add location" button  at the upper right corner of the map.
2. Enter your name in the "Your name" field.
3. Enter your address in the "Enter address" field at the top of the map. (It will then appear automatically in the "Your address" field underneath.)
4. Click the Submit button. Your personal pin  will appear on the map.
5. Look for other pins that are near yours. You can click or tap any pin to see the name and address of the person it belongs to.
6. If you'd like to talk to someone about a possible carpool, you can find their contact info [here](#).
7. Check back often to see whether any new pins have been added in your area!

Attendance

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

If you need to miss a rehearsal, please use the Absence Form in the **Forms** area of our website's Member page, or access the form directly here:

<https://eastbayharmony.org/forms/>

Performances

Each spring we put on our Friends and Family Concerts.

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—trivia questions and fabulous prizes!

Several times during the year we'll also perform at Bay Area events. This gives us the chance to share our music with the community and practice performing in front of others before our Friends and Family concerts.

Performance Attire

Standard black performance attire:

Black dress shirts (no t-shirts); black dress pants, (no jeans) skirts or dresses; black dress shoes/sandals.

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

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.

Promotion and Pitching In

We rely on chorus members to help sell tickets to our Friends and Family Concerts by spreading the word to their friends and family (it's in the name!)

You'll receive all the information on how to purchase tickets online and sample messages to email or post to promote our performances.

Also, making the performances happen is a team effort. Every member of the chorus pitches in by signing up for specific jobs (like setting up or cleaning up, storing or carrying equipment, picking up ice, etc.) and by bringing food and/or drinks.

We also recruit a handful of non-chorus volunteers to help with concert tasks that chorus members aren't able to do, like managing the box office and welcoming latecomers.

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 Board members who meet monthly. Please don't be shy about letting any of the Board members or the Director know your feedback. We welcome your input and discuss feedback at our monthly meetings with a goal of constantly improving the chorus.

Any member who is uncomfortable speaking to a Board member in person can use our confidential, anonymous feedback form. You can get to it from the **Feedback Form** page on our website's **Member** page, or access the form directly at:

<https://eastbayharmony.org/forms/>

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