

Amandla Chorus: Membership Inquiry



Since 1988, the Amandla Chorus has been singing songs of justice, freedom, and peace from around the world. In our early years, we sang mostly South African freedom songs, and while we retain some of those in our repertoire, we have greatly broadened our songlist to include songs in a number of languages, as well as my compositions.

We are looking for a few new members with these attributes:

- Able to sing on pitch and hold harmonies with other parts
- Able to read music and/or learn quickly by ear
- Available for weekly rehearsals, Tuesdays 6:45 – 8:45 pm in Greenfield, MA mid-September through May
- Work well with others and maintain a good attitude in a group
- Interested and available to perform in public (concert halls, schools, jails, places of worship, rallies and other events). (Note: Amandla singers only sign up for those events for which they are available.)
- Eager to learn songs in a number of languages
- Planning to live in the area for at least the next couple of years.

Additional Information:

- Membership in Amandla is explored first through a low-stress audition.
- Since our repertoire includes quite a few songs in non-English languages, and ranges from very easy to moderately challenging, newest singers are not expected to be able to sing or perform ALL the songs in the first season or two. (And some songs are performed by smaller core groups.)
- New members are brought up to speed with teaching CDs, section rehearsals, and help from section leaders and “buddies.” (New singers also speed the learning process by bringing small recording devices to rehearsals.)
- There are many opportunities in Amandla for leadership roles; if, however, you just want to sing and meet the basic requirements of membership, that’s fine, too. (See enclosed Statement of Commitment.)
- There is an initial period of 2-3 months for prospective new members during which both the singer and the director/section leaders see how it’s going; together, we feel it out for a good fit. At the end of this period, full membership is considered and decided upon.
- Members help support the work of the group by contributing an annual pledge. (Important: No one is excluded from Amandla for economic reasons.) In addition to the sliding scale monetary pledge, there are possibilities for bartering.
- Aside from our “regular concerts,” Amandla members can volunteer to celebrate and participate in life’s cycles by bringing our songs and hearts to

special situations or events. These have included the following: memorial services, bedsides of the dying, rites of passage (e.g. bat mitzvah, graduation), weddings, baptisms or naming ceremonies, women in early stages of labor, and just about anywhere people are living and dying and want community and song.

Membership in Amandla requires time and commitment, but the rewards are great. If you have questions or would like to schedule an audition, please call as soon as possible. Thank you for taking the time to read this material carefully, and for your interest in Amandla!

Peace,

Eveline MacDougall
Founder & Director
(413) 773-8655

Amandla Chorus: Statement of Commitment

(Written and agreed upon by chorus members in early 1990s; modified by agreement over the years.)

We are committed to striving for excellence as a performing group. To this end, I agree to the following:

- To attend all scheduled rehearsals, arriving on time and staying for the duration of the rehearsal. If I know in advance that I must miss an upcoming rehearsal due to an unavoidable commitment or life circumstance, I will note this in the attendance binder.
- To work cooperatively and respectfully with my fellow singers to improve our sound through the honest and kind sharing of feedback and suggestions. I will also share with the director any feedback that could be helpful to her.
- To come to rehearsals prepared, knowing my musical parts and lyrics, which will facilitate the fine-tuning of material during rehearsals. To this end, I also agree to take the initiative to ask for help from section leaders or other fellow singers, and to use any materials or means that assist in learning and polishing (teaching CDs; recording during rehearsals; etc.)
- To attend performances for which I've signed up, arriving by the designated "show-up time," and staying for the duration of the Amandla performance.
- To be accountable for the information included in chorus newsletters and orientation materials.
- To fulfill my membership pledge in a timely fashion. (I am aware that no one is excluded from Amandla due to lack of financial resources, and will clearly communicate with the director if I need to arrange for a payment plan or a barter option in any given season.)

- To refrain from wearing perfumes, essential oils, or scented products of any kind—including clothing treated with fabric softeners—to rehearsals and concerts. I understand that choral singing involves deep breathing in close proximity to other people, and that the presence of chemicals and scents is counter-productive and irritating.

I agree to clearly communicate with the director and/or section leader(s) regarding any changes I make (or undergo) which may affect my commitment to Amandla.