



Portland's Community A Cappella Singing Program

Welcome to our Spring 2024 Semester

We're so glad you're here!

What to expect

Each group will learn 3 songs that are unique to that group, and 2 All-Group songs. Most of the weekly classes will be devoted to the group's 3 unique songs. We will work on the All-Group songs together at the Kick-off rehearsal on February 3rd (2:00-5:00 pm, with a 1:30 intro to our program for new singers), a mid-semester rehearsal on March 16th (3:00-5:00 pm) and an optional Brush-up Rehearsal on April 27th (3:30-5:00 pm).

The first performance opportunity will be a Practice Concert around Week 9, on your usual rehearsal night. The Practice Concert class takes place at a retirement home, meeting usually a little earlier than 7:00. We gather to warm up and rehearse our 5 songs, then perform them for residents, and afterwards the class goes out to dinner nearby as a group.

The Song Showcase concert is when all groups take turns performing their songs for friends and family. The concert will be at 3:00 on May 4th, with singers arriving at 1:30 for rehearsal and sound checks.

Song Selection

Two or three weeks before the beginning of the semester, your instructor will invite you to a Song Listening party (either in person or over Zoom). This is a chance to get to know each other before the semester starts, and listen to song ideas from group members. After the party, the instructor will send out a poll, and then will select 3 songs that complement each other. The final song selection is based on singer input, adaptability to an a cappella format, and artistic discretion. If your song isn't selected, don't take it personally! Feel free to suggest it another time.

All singers are invited to give input on future All-Group songs at any time. Your instructor will provide you with a link to the form that we use for adding ideas to our running list.

Dropbox

Instructors will send an email invite to join a Dropbox or Google Drive folder they created for your group. Dropbox is a free file hosting service that you can access using a web browser, or by downloading the app to your computer or phone. The folder will contain music scores, practice files, and rehearsal recordings. You can add the folder to your Dropbox account for offline access. Once you no longer need access to the files, or if you run out of space on your free Dropbox account, you can delete the folder from your Dropbox account. The files will remain in the instructor's original folder until they delete them. (See <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-delete-a-folder-in-dropbox> for a tutorial on how to do this).

Health policies

Our health policies may change to reflect the recommendations of health authorities, our host buildings, and our trusted medical advisors. We ask that our singers stay up-to-date on their vaccines. As of January 2024, masks are welcome during classes, but generally not required.

Attendance

Instructors appreciate an email giving them a heads up if you have to miss a day.

Planned Absences: We understand that the occasional planned absence may be necessary for work, travel, or family. In order to work on tuning, timing, and dynamics as a choir, it's important that all singers commit to attending weekly rehearsals regularly. A large number of absences may necessitate taking a semester off and rejoining when you have more availability to commit to your group.

When should a singer take a hiatus? Here are some examples:

- Planning to miss more than one weekly rehearsal in the first 3 weeks of the semester
- Planning to miss more than two rehearsals in a row
- Planning to miss more than three weekly rehearsals over the course of the semester.

Illness: Illness spread within a choir can wreak havoc on the semester, so we encourage extra caution: stay home if you feel unusually physically run down, if you have tested positive for Covid, or if you or a household member have flu or virus symptoms.

Music & Memorization

You will be given a folder on your first day of PDX Vox, and music scores for each piece. These are yours to keep, and we encourage you to write notes on your music during rehearsals. As the

semester progresses, you can expect to use your score less—you will likely be ready to leave the music in your folder for the service concert, with the goal of full memorization by the Showcase at the end of term.

Added performance elements

Once your group is comfortable with the music, additional elements may be added to one or more of your songs. Simple movements /choreography, body percussion, or singing mixed with other parts, make the performance more interesting (and yes, a bit more challenging). These elements are meant to be fun and a learning opportunity, so even if they are outside your comfort zone at first, we hope you'll enjoy the challenge.

Solo opportunities

Many of our arrangements have opportunities for brief solos. Some people love to shine in a solo, some are interested but hesitant to put themselves in the spotlight, and others tell themselves, “No. way.” (Sometimes, the “No-way” folks eventually turn into the “Love to Shine” folks with the support of their choir friends and instructor!) Solos are open to anyone who is willing to step up, and your instructor will ask for volunteers mid-way through the semester.

Soloists use a microphone during the public performances so their voice will stand out over the rest of the choir. Instructors will bring a microphone to rehearsal so that you'll have a chance to get used to singing into the mic.

Questions?

Contact Alison@pdxvox.com for general program information including payment, all-group rehearsals and performances, and so on. Contact your instructor (Aaron@pdxvox.com, Steven@pdxvox.com, Hannah@pdxvox.com, Katy@pdxvox.com, or Rachel@pdxvox.com) for questions about the music or weekly rehearsals.