

MidSouth Music Institute Inc.



2017-2018 Season Guidebook

Organizational Structure

The MidSouth Music Institute, Inc. (MMI) is a non-profit organization under Internal Revenue code section 501(c)(3). MMI is recognized as a choral arts education venue of equal opportunity for young people and is eligible to apply for grants and seek and accept donations in return for tax credit. This status assists the choir with growth and reaching full potential. Volunteer hours are deeply appreciated, a requested component of grant proposals, and extremely important to the success of the program.

MMI is governed by a Board of Directors. The organization also has an outstanding Teacher Advisory Council and is seeking to develop an active Parent Association. The Executive Director oversees day-to-day operations, and artistic aspects are overseen by the Artistic Directors and conductors. Biographies, contact information, Board of Directors members, and Teacher Advisory Board members can also be viewed at www.CoroRio.org.

ARTISTIC STAFF

Reese Norris & Joelle Norris: Artistic Directors
Ellen Koziel, Joelle Norris, Tara Tanner, Don Trott, Reese Norris: Conductors
Melinda Brown, Jennifer Rushton, Allen Sanders: Accompanists
Terrell Hall: Sight Singing & Music Theory Instructor
Tara Tanner: Voice Class Instructor

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jim Brown, Reese Norris, Amy Chatham, Melissa Lovorn, Jennifer Overstreet
Catherine Feazell, Richard Storey, Dan Witherspoon, Jabarie Glass

Program Overview

The MidSouth Music Institute, Inc. is the umbrella organization under which CoroRio operates. CoroRio is an educationally based choral ensemble program. Participants learn healthy vocal technique, sight-reading, and music theory while experiencing performance excellence. The learning environment is creative, explorative, and fun. The students form lasting relationships with others outside of their community and develop a lifelong appreciation of music.

Auditions

Auditions for CoroRio can be scheduled by emailing the Executive Director, Joelle Norris, at cororio@gmail.com. Auditions for singers are held in the spring of each year. Auditions may also be scheduled throughout the season by special request.

Membership

Singers are invited to participate in the choir based on the skills demonstrated in audition. Students grades 1 – 12 are eligible and invited to audition. MMI welcomes young people of all races, backgrounds, and abilities to be a part of the program. A limited amount of tuition assistance is available for those demonstrating financial need.

It is expected that members of MMI understand the meaning of commitment and responsibility in a choral setting. Each child and parent should consider membership in the choir as an honor. Dedication to the program will enhance the singer and their family's personal experience and will foster a strong foundation of responsibility for the singer. Membership in CoroRio is for one full season - August through May. Each singer is expected to remain active and committed for the entire season. Tuition is to be paid in full even when a child is unable to fulfill their commitment and resigns mid-season.

Resignation

We expect each singer who has made a commitment to sing for the entire season to live up to that commitment. However, if an unusual situation arises which would make it impossible for the singer to honor that commitment; a letter of resignation is requested documenting the reason for discontinuing participation in the program. If a student resigns, the parent is still responsible for all fees.

Registration and Tuition

- Membership fees are based on one-year involvement in the Midsouth Music Institute, Inc. *Tuition does not include the cost of other festivals and tours.*
- Tuition can be paid in monthly installments **by direct debit** or in one annual payment.
 - Monthly installments need to be set up with automatic debit through bank account.
 - Annual tuition paid in full will receive a 5% discount.
 - The first annual installment is due at registration in August
- Participation will be suspended for any account that becomes more than 30 days past due unless special arrangements are made with the Executive Director. Cash, check, direct debit, and online payments through PayPal are accepted for tuition and fees.
- A registration fee for all members will be due in August. This will cover the cost of sheet music, uniforms and other incidental expenses.

Program Advertising

MMI produces a program book which is distributed at concerts throughout the season. The book will contain information about the organization, choir, photographs, a list of contributors, advertisements sold by the singers and other interesting items. **All choir members are required to sell \$125 worth of ads by the last Tuesday in September.** If a student prefers not to participate in ad sales, he/she can choose to make a \$125 donation to the organization. A reduced schedule is available for students who have more than one child in the program. Please see ad sale instructions for detailed information.

This endeavor was designed to streamline our fundraising and relieve future family burdens. For a more detailed explanation on "Why We Fundraise" please visit our website. There will be no other organizational fundraisers that singers will be required to participate in.

Payment Procedures

- Tuition checks and other miscellaneous payments may be given to your child's choir manager at rehearsal or mailed to:
MidSouth Music Institute, Inc.
Joelle Norris, Executive Director
653 Oakley Road
Senatobia, MS 38668
- Please list the following information with all payments so that your account can be accurately identified:
 1. Reason for payment (i.e., tuition, t-shirts, etc.)
 2. MMI member's name, and
 3. MMI member's assigned choir.
- Refunds will not be available. A full year's tuition is due even if the child withdraws from the program mid-season. Please understand that, as a nonprofit organization; MMI establishes its operating budget based upon tuition from committed participants.
- All returned checks will result in a \$10.00 charge to the child's account.
- Accounts will be tracked through *Charms*. Instructions on how to use the program can be found at www.cororio.org/Charms.html

Tuition Assistance and Discounts

Tuition assistance is available on a limited basis, as the MMI budget allows. Applications may be obtained by emailing Joelle Norris, Executive Director, at cororio@gmail.com. Completed, returned applications will be presented at the next quarterly meeting, where the Board of Directors will consider the application and thereafter the Executive Director will notify the family of the decision. All tuition assistance requests remain confidential and are presented anonymously to the MMI Board of Directors. Only the Executive Director has access to these completed applications.

Families with three (3) or more children enrolled in the program will receive a 50% discount off the third and subsequent children.

Expectations for Scholarship Recipients

- Enthusiastic participation at all rehearsals. Students who miss more than 2 rehearsals may lose their tuition scholarship.
- Participation in organizational fundraisers
- Child and/or parent volunteer hours
- Timely monthly payments for remaining tuition due

Uniforms

It is as important to the team effort to appear professional and artistic as it is to sound professional and artistic. Upon arrival at a concert venue, all singers should be clean and well groomed with no obvious make-up, hair accessories, or hair colors. Jewelry, earrings (except earring studs) and other accessories will not be permitted. If a singer is not in designated concert attire, they will not be allowed to perform in the concert. Please refrain from wearing perfume or cologne because it can potentially cause allergic reactions in other singers.

Each student will receive a CoroRio t-shirt and scarf/tie as part of their uniform. These will be given at the beginning of the year and are to be kept by the student. If lost, replacements will be available at a cost of \$10 for scarves/ties and \$15 for t-shirts.

Performance Dress Code:

CoroFuenta, CoroRio, CoroCorriente, CoroArroyo, CoroNino will wear:

- Black dress shoes
- Black dress socks/hose
- Solid black dress pants that meet the shoe
- Solid black 3/4 or long sleeve dress shirt
- Designated scarf / tie (included in registration fee)

Commitment to School Music Programs

CoroRio is grateful to and reliant upon the support of the dedicated music teachers in the mid-south area. Therefore, we strongly encourage that each of our singers be leaders of their school choirs. Exceptions may be considered in circumstances such as when the school music program requires that students choose between instrumental ensembles and choir or when the singer's advanced education schedules do not allow time for participation, therefore leaving CoroRio as the only alternative for choral study.

Attendance Policies

It is an honor to be a member of one of the choirs of CoroRio. Each singer (and their parent) is expected to demonstrate commitment by being punctual and consistently attending all rehearsals and performances. Each child is independently important to the success of the program. Just as with any other team effort, the success of the choir is reliant on the attendance of all of its members. Therefore, the child and family should make participation a priority in the child's life and schedule. We understand that there will be unavoidable conflicts from time to time, so please consult school calendars, sports calendars, and family calendars early in the year to avoid as many as possible.

In an effort to make our attendance expectations consistent among all members, we will adhere to the following attendance policy:

- 1) Any conflicts that the student has with rehearsal dates must be communicated in writing as soon as possible, but not less than one (1) week prior to the missed rehearsal. Whether or not the submitted absence will be "excused" is left to the discretion of the ensemble director.
- 2) Students will be granted up to a maximum of three (3) "excused" absences per semester. Beyond those three "excused" absences, the singer will have to pass off his/her music for a panel of directors in order to be eligible to perform at the concert at the end of the semester.
- 3) Singers with more than one (1) "unexcused" absence per semester may be dismissed from the program, pending a review and conference with the ensemble director and the executive director. If a student is dismissed from the program, tuition will not be refunded.

Each singer should make attending weekly rehearsals a priority. The CoroRio calendar provides dates months in advance. Because of this, CoroRio singers should make all effort to respect the policy

"if CoroRio is first on the calendar, CoroRio is first priority."

School Related Absences

CoroRio members are expected to treat school choral and/or instrumental performances as a priority over a CoroRio performance unless otherwise negotiated between a CoroRio conductor and the school director. School performances are identified as performances for which a grade in school will be given (orchestra, band, choir concert); not an extracurricular activity (school plays, musicals etc.).

Dress Rehearsals and Performances

All dress rehearsals and performances are mandatory. An absence for any reason from a final rehearsal may result in the singer being excluded from the following concert and is up to the discretion of the conductor. Punctuality is imperative, especially on concert days. Students arriving after concert doors open will not perform.

Weather Policy

MMI will follow the DeSoto County School Board decisions on closings due to weather unless there has been a substantial change in the weather subsequent to the school announcement. We will attempt to post our closings on our website when practical.

Singer Procedures

The following policies will be enforced for the children's safety and in order to achieve productive, professional quality rehearsals out of respect for each other.

1. Arrive no more than 10 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time and immediately check in with your Choir Manager. Late arrivals must always check in before taking their seat.
2. Please do not hand any payments to your conductor or artistic staff.
3. Do not roam the building or campus at any time. Students should check in and go directly to the rehearsal area.
4. Do not bring food or drinks into the rehearsal area. A tightly sealed water bottle containing water will be permitted.
5. At all times, show respect for each other, parent volunteers and the facilities.
6. Pay attention to the conductor at all times and do not talk or in any way distract other singers.
7. We are guests of Desoto Hills Baptist Church and any other venue we rehearse/perform in. Please do not run, yell, or demonstrate any other disrespectful behavior.
8. Always bring your music, pencil, and any other hand-outs given by the director for the singer's use.
9. Folders and music are the singers' responsibility. If folders and music are lost or irreparably damaged, the student will be responsible for the replacement costs of the music.
10. If a singer is unable to actively participate in the rehearsal, s/he should still bring all necessary materials and observe quietly. It will benefit the singer to quietly listen when experiencing a minor illness rather than stay home and miss rehearsal completely. Additionally, research has proven those who sing through colds and minor illnesses encounter shorter, less-severe symptoms.

Disruptive Behavior

Removal from a rehearsal will result in a requisite meeting with the choir's conductor immediately following the rehearsal which may involve, at the conductor's discretion, the student's parents, and/or the Artistic/Executive Directors. Severe or repeat offenses will result in a leave of absence from the program, the length to be determined on an individual basis. It may also result in removal from the program. Any singer caught with alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, drug paraphernalia, or any type of weapon (including pocket knives) will be immediately suspended from the program.

Every singer is entitled to participate in CoroRio free from harassment, threats or fear. Singers harassing, threatening or making it difficult for others to participate will be subject to consequences through their choir director and the CoroRio staff.

Expectations of Parents

1. Parents are responsible for collecting and reading any handouts, emails and letters from their child after rehearsals or via e-mail regularly.
2. Parents are responsible for delivering their child safely to rehearsal. Please, do not leave your child unattended on the church campus. Additionally, parents are responsible for promptly picking up their singers. Failure to comply will jeopardize the safety of the singer and participation in the program.
3. Parents, please respect that rehearsals take place in a professional, artistic, and learning environment. Noise in the hallways by groups of adults or young children can be very disruptive to rehearsals and to church professionals in nearby offices.
4. Parents, teachers, and anyone else interested are always welcome to observe rehearsals. Please remember that it is imperative that the choir's surroundings be quiet so that the singers can concentrate. If disturbances occur, the director reserves the right to close that and subsequent rehearsals.

5. Final dress rehearsal and pre-performance rehearsals will always be closed to the audience, including families. Only the Choir Managers will be allowed into the rehearsal area prior to a performance. This will enable the singers to concentrate on the music, the director, and any final instructions void of any possible distraction.
6. Performance halls will remain closed to all audience members, including parents, until 30 minutes prior to a scheduled concert.
7. For their safety, be sure your child knows who is picking them up from rehearsal. Children are asked to let the Choir Manager know if someone shows up that they were not expecting.

Cell Phones

All cell phones must be turned off prior to entering the rehearsal space. There will be no texting, photography or playing with phones during rehearsal. A singer observed using a phone during rehearsal may be dismissed from the rehearsal. Repeat offenders may be considered for removal from the choir program.

Fundraising Project Chair

Anyone interested in chairing a fund raising project should prepare a project presentation, and, via email, schedule a time to share your ideas with the Executive Director. Please include a thorough description of the project to give to the Executive Director. After reviewing the presentation, the Executive Director will approach the Board of Directors for approval. The project chair will be notified if the project is approved.

Responsibilities of a Project Chair:

- Supply information and handouts for all participants
- Order, distribute, and store items sold.
- Keep accurate record of products sold and profits earned.
- Present/keep accurate and current receipts
- Secure collected funds
- Turn money over to Executive Director weekly with appropriate paperwork
- Keep a detailed list of amount earned by each singer; presented, upon completion of the project, to the Executive Director.

Community Service

Students/singers enrolled in the organization will have the opportunity to be involved in individual community service projects that will provide an enrichment educational resource for the students/singers. The activities will also provide a community-based defense against juvenile delinquency by providing a wholesome, cultural activity outside of school in addition to leadership and esteem building endeavors. Also, the community service initiative will provide a resource, cultural and otherwise, for the surrounding community, and will help build a more selfless and committed citizen out of each participant.

Development

As a non-profit organization, MMI is always looking for potential funding sources. Please contact the Executive Director or Marketing & Development Director to share any information.

Tour Policy

Tours are very important to MMI. They establish lasting friendships in a way that no other choir function can provide. Tours also assist the program with national and international recognition and networking. Singers are highly encouraged to participate in any tour scheduled for their choir. Currently, performance choirs are offered annually to CoroRio, CoroArroyo and CoroFuente. Additional spots with the group will be opened to members of CoroCorriente when accompanied by an adult family member. During the year, MMI assists with fundraising opportunities for tours. Watch for information to find ways to earn money towards your tour.

Public Relations

The MMI Board of Directors and staff work to promote the MidSouth Music Institute to build awareness of and participation in CoroRio. If you would like us to make sure a particular resource such as your community newspaper is on the list, please email the Executive Director with the appropriate information. All public contact must be coordinated by the MMI/CoroRio staff.

Privacy & Disclosure Statement

All official MMI information will be distributed through the MMI Office, website, Facebook, Twitter, and through our Charms Network. Any other communication should not be trusted as accurate unless otherwise stated.

Email, Postal Addresses, Telephone Numbers

We won't trade, rent or sell any of these to other parties. The only time these items will be distributed is if an MMI family requests a carpool list of people in their area. If you do not wish to appear on these lists, please contact our Executive Director immediately.

Emergency Medical Forms

Every MMI singer must have an up-to-date Medical Release Form on file in our office in case of an emergency. This information will remain confidential and only available to MMI staff and MMI chaperones in extenuating circumstances.



ANNUAL AGREEMENT

**[Must be signed and returned for child to participate in MMI Choirs]
[One form should be submitted per family]**

I agree to pay the required fees for my child(ren) to participate in CoroRio/CoroArroyo/CoroFuentes/CoroCorriente/CoroNino in a timely manner for the 2017-2018 season. I understand that these fees and payment due dates are detailed in the financial section of the 2017-2018 MidSouth Music Institute, Inc. Season Guidebook, (available at www.cororio.org) as they apply for the specific choir to which my child is assigned and accepts membership and include both tuition and fundraising responsibilities.

I, as parent or guardian, understand that **CoroRio is an annual program** and I am making a financial commitment to pay for the entire year regardless if my child chooses to forfeit their commitment to the choir and withdraw before the year is complete. I understand that I will also be responsible to fulfill this financial commitment if my child is removed from the program for disciplinary reasons outlined in the Season Guidebook.

Please select one of the following three payment options available.

_____ I will pay for the year in full (10 months tuition) in August and receive a 5% discount.

_____ I will make 10 monthly payments towards the annual tuition to be debited from my checking account from September-May (August payment to be paid by cash/check) or until my balance is paid in full. ***I have attached the direct debit authorization form to this contract.*** (Available on website or at choir manager station.)

_____ I will make 10 monthly payments towards the annual tuition by credit card and authorize MMI to charge my card (with a 5% convenience fee) from August- May or until my balance is paid in full. **(Please complete the information below.)**

Name on Card: _____ Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration _____ Security Code _____ Billing Zip _____ Monthly Amount: _____

I have read and understand all policies and procedures found in the 2017-2018 Season Guidebook and will endeavor to excel within those parameters.

Responsible Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

Singer name: _____ Choir: _____

Singer name: _____ Choir: _____

Singer name: _____ Choir: _____