



APPLICATION GUIDE  
for the  
MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR

**I. SERVICE AS A MUSICAL MISSIONARY**

Only 360 people out of nearly 13 million members of the Church have the opportunity to sing in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Members of the Choir are set apart as musical missionaries to sing and be seen by the world. This special privilege of singing in the Choir requires the enthusiasm of a volunteer and the discipline and responsibility of a professional. Although an all-volunteer ensemble, the Choir performs on a regular basis in the professional arenas of broadcasting, recording and concertizing. It is also heard by a world-wide audience that has come to expect a consistently excellent performance.

To perform at a consistently high level requires intense effort from Choir members whose occupations and other commitments permit only a limited amount of rehearsal time. Consequently, each member of the Choir is asked to commit a significant amount of time to Choir membership. It will be your only Church calling and will take you away from your family and home ward. The decision to apply for membership in the Choir should be a thoughtful and a prayerful one. Because your family's cooperation and support are vital, they should be a part of the decision as well. **Be sure you have considered this critical aspect of Choir service before embarking on the audition process.**

**II. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS**

Candidates must meet these requirements:

- A. Be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in good standing and able to qualify for a temple recommend.
- B. Be between 25 and 55 years of age. (The mandatory Choir retirement age is 60).
- C. Currently reside within a 100-mile radius of Temple Square.
- D. Be in good health to permit consistent participation in long rehearsals, demanding travel, and other performance-related requirements.
- E. Be able to commit to maintaining the required levels of attendance as outlined in the Choir application.

### **III. MEMBERSHIP EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Applications will be evaluated on several criteria including:

1. **Spiritual fitness** as demonstrated by your qualification for a temple recommend;
2. **Vocal and musical ability** as demonstrated in auditions and examinations;
3. **Commitment to attendance** and participation in rehearsals, concerts, recording sessions, and other regular assignments given to the Choir.
4. **Social/emotional/physical fitness** to serve as a part of a demanding performance ensemble and to contribute positively to the overall *esprit de corps* of the group.

### **IV. AUDITION PROCESS AND THE TEMPLE SQUARE CHORALE**

The audition process for the Choir has three parts:

- Phase I: Application and Recorded Audition
- Phase II: Musical Skills Assessment
- Phase III: In Person Audition

Recorded auditions are reviewed by Craig Jessop, Music Director of the Choir, and Mack Wilberg, Associate Music Director. Those moving to the next phase will be invited to take the assessment. Those scoring 80% or better on the assessment will be invited to participate in the in-person audition.

Once you have successfully completed all three phases, you will be accepted into the Temple Square Chorale which functions concurrently as a choral training ensemble and musical training school for singers seeking membership in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. It meets on a published schedule of Tuesday and Thursday evenings for twelve weeks beginning each January. Upon successful completion of the Choir School, with its final exam, as well as the final Chorale performances, you will become a member of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Additional information about each phase of the audition process is included below and you will receive more details in the letter communicating the results of each phase of the process. For those who do not advance to the next phase of auditions, information will be included about areas to improve for a possible future audition. In many instances this will include recommendations for additional vocal training, ward or community choir participation or study in music theory. Many faithful members of the Choir have auditioned more than once before being accepted.

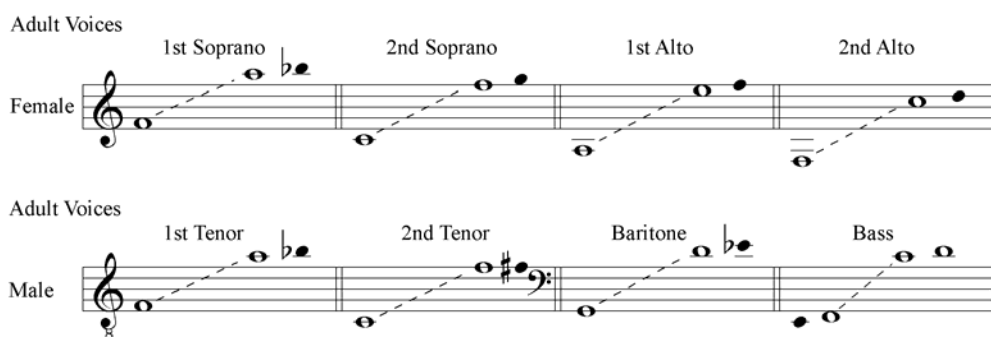
### **V. PHASE I: APPLICATION AND RECORDED AUDITION**

Phase I requires you to complete a written application, obtain a confidential recommendation from your bishop, and prepare a recorded audition on either tape or CD.

A. Written Application

Please complete **fully** all of the information on the Choir application form. Missing information could delay or impede the evaluation of your membership application. Be sure to attach a recent picture (head and shoulders shot preferably) on the second page of the application.

The form asks you to identify the voice part you sing. Please use the following information to guide your decision about the part you indicate. If vocal ranges overlap, light voices are likely to be first voices. Heavier voices are likely to be second voices, especially in the second alto and second bass sections. It is also important for you to consider the range in which your voice operates most freely and efficiently with the richest tone. A final determination of voice part will be made at the in-person audition.



B. Confidential Bishop's Recommendation

Enclosed is a letter that you are requested to have your bishop complete. Fill in your name on **both** pages of the recommendation. Please ask your bishop to place the completed recommendation in a sealed envelope, to sign it across the back flap of the envelope and to return it to you for inclusion with your application materials. ***Your application will not be complete without your bishop's recommendation so please insure that it is included with your completed application and recorded audition.***

The Bishop's recommendation will inquire whether you:

- a. Observe the principles of the Gospel;
- b. Are an active member of your ward;
- c. Have any conflict between family responsibilities and choir membership;
- d. Are a temple worthy representative of the Church; and
- e. Can accept what the First Presidency considers a mission call.

It is the bishop's prerogative to interview you and your spouse (if you are married) before submitting the recommendation.

C. Recorded Vocal Audition

Enclosed is information regarding the preparation of a recorded vocal audition. Obviously, hearing your voice and vocal capabilities is a critical step in the audition process. Every effort should be made to insure that a technically good recording is presented to the music directors. However, we do not encourage you to go to great expense in preparing the recorded audition.

When you have completed all three required elements (the written application, the confidential bishop's recommendation and your recorded audition), please package them together and MAIL them to the address indicated. Please do not attempt to deliver the application materials in person. *Applications are timely by the postmark regardless of when they are received in the Choir office.*

THE FOLLOWING IS GENERAL INFORMATION ON PHASES II AND III OF THE AUDITION PROCESS. THOSE ADVANCING TO THESE PHASES WILL RECEIVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THESE PHASES.

**VI. PHASE II: MUSICAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT**

A. Preparation for the Assessment

The music skills assessment is designed to measure your aptitude in music theory and related concepts which are essential to choral singing. Advanced study in music theory is not required to obtain the scores necessary to advance to the in-person auditions. However, a thorough understanding of music fundamentals measured on the assessment includes:

- The Notation of Pitch
- Time Division
- Note and Rest Values
- Time Signatures
- Intervals
- Basic Scales
- Major Scales
- Minor Scales
- Key Signatures
- Triads

Preparation for the assessment may be accomplished by private instruction, school classes or self study. For self study, we recommend a programmed text which is available as a loaner from the Mormon Tabernacle Choir office once you are invited to taken the Skills Assessment. The text is called Basic Materials in Music Theory by Harder and Steinke, published by Allyn and Bacon, 8th edition, Boston, 1995. It is available for purchase at music stores and university bookstores, however it is fairly expensive to purchase. In most cases, we recommend that you wait to be invited to take the assessment and then make arrangements to borrow a copy from the Choir Office. Comprehensive knowledge of the entire text is not required; a complimentary study guide will be included with the Phase II instruction letter.

B. Areas Covered on the Music Skills Assessment.

The Skills Assessment includes the following tests, some of which are written “question and answer” type questions and some of which require you to listen and select the best answer.

1. Music Fundamentals (written)
2. Tonal Memory (aural): Listen to a solid chord and arpeggiated chord. Decide if the first (1<sup>st</sup>), second (2<sup>nd</sup>), third (3<sup>rd</sup>), or fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) note of the arpeggiated chord is changed from the notes in the solid chord.
3. Melody Recognition (aural): Listen to a melody played alone, then harmonized. In the harmonized version, decide if the melody is in the highest, middle, or lowest part.
4. Pitch Recognition (aural): Listen to the key tone (first note shown) and determine the pitch of the second note. Decide if the first, second, third, or none of the pitches following the key tone is the pitch shown.
5. Major-Minor Mode Discrimination (aural)
  - a. Listen to two chords in question. Decide if they are major or minor.
  - b. Listen to a phrase. Decide if it is in major or minor or if it changes mode.
6. Feeling for Tonal Center (key tone, key center) (aural)
  - a. Listen to four chords of the key. Then listen to three tones played separately and decide which is the key tone.
  - b. Listen to a phrase. Decide which of the notes is the key tone.
7. Auditory-Visual Discrimination (aural and visual)
  - a. Listen to four measures. Identify which measures are played different in pitch from the notation.
  - b. Listen to four measures. Identify which measures are played different in rhythm from the notation.
8. Musical Aptitude (aural): Your natural aptitude for musical activity is tested by a series of short musical statements followed by musical answers. You are asked to determine whether they are alike or different either tonally or rhythmically.

The music skills assessment helps us predict your probable success as a member of the Chorale, the Choir School and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Although some aspects may be challenging, the assessment has proven to be a useful tool in identifying singers who can meet the demands of performance in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

## **VII. PHASE III: IN-PERSON VOCAL AUDITION**

For the in-person vocal audition you will be asked to prepare a piece of music which will be provided with the audition invitation. One of the Temple Square organists will be available to accompany you. In addition there will be a general survey of vocal and musical abilities, which will cover the following areas:

1. Musical memory (the ability to hear, retain, and reproduce musical examples)
2. Rhythmic proficiency
3. Sight singing
  - a. Singing while four parts are played in the accompaniment
  - b. Singing a single line without accompaniment
4. Singing, unaccompanied, the melody of a hymn of your choice
5. Determination of voice part
6. General survey of musical abilities for which there is no special preparation necessary

## **OUR THANKS AND BEST WISHES**

We wish you well as you embark upon the audition process. We look forward to meeting you as you explore membership in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Any questions during the audition process may be sent to the Choir Office via e-mail to Colette Yates ([yatescd@ldschurch.org](mailto:yatescd@ldschurch.org)) or Julie Rohde ([rohdej@ldschurch.org](mailto:rohdej@ldschurch.org)) or by telephone to (801) 240-4150.