MOUNT ROYAL CHILDREN'S and YOUTH CHOIRS HANDBOOK 2026-2027

Your reference guide to participating in the Mount Royal Children's and Youth Choirs

MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY CONSERVATORY
Located in the Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts
18 Mount Royal Circle SW, Calgary, AB T3E 7N5
Phone: 403.440.6821
MRU Conservatory Choir Program
Taylor Centre Directions & Parking Map

MOUNT ROYAL CHORAL ASSOCIATION OF CALGARY (MRCA)
Website: mountroyalchoirs.com
General Manager: Jocelyn Paynter
Email: choirs@mtroyal.ca

Important Dates

September 9, 2026	Rehearsals Start – Fall Term
September 30, 2026	No Rehearsal Registration Deadline
October 7, 2026	New Parent Orientation and Annual General Meeting (AGM)
October 14, 2026	Deadline for MRCA Documents and Scholarship and Bursary Applications
November 11, 2026	No Rehearsal
November 28, 2026	Knox Carolfest Performance Arietta, Aria, Arioso, Youth
December 6, 2026	Winter Fantasia Performance All Choirs
December 9, 2026	UAL Fish Creek Performance Arietta, Aria, Arioso, Youth
January 6, 2027	Rehearsals Start – Winter Term
February 3, 2027	New Parent Orientation *Only for families starting in January*
March 24, 2027	No Rehearsal
May 5, 2027	UAL Garrison Green Performance Arietta, Aria, Arioso, Youth
May 19, 2027	Spring Concert – Sing!

THE MOUNT ROYAL CHORAL ASSOCIATION IS SUPPORTED BY

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REGISTRATION

Students must be registered with the Mount Royal University Conservatory to participate in the choir program.

Step 1: Register with MRU Conservatory

Register and pay your choir tuition through the Mount Royal University Conservatory.
Arrangements can be made to pay fees on an installment Payment Plan.
For further information regarding registration, or to register by phone, please contact the **Conservatory office at 403.440.6821**.
Mount Royal Conservatory Programs

Step 2: Complete MRCA Registration Requirements

- Mount Royal Chorister Information Form
- MRU Model Release Form
- **Submit post-dated deposit cheque(s)** (see table below for amount)
    - Please make cheque(s) payable to Mount Royal Choral Association, post-dated to **June 30, 2027**. You can submit separate cheques for each deposit, or one cheque with the Total Deposit amount.
    - **These are deposit cheques only.** They will be returned or destroyed (your choice) at the end of the season once all required items have been returned in good condition and the volunteer commitment has been completed.

Deposit Amounts				
Choir	**Uniform Deposit**	**Music Deposit**	**Volunteer Deposit**	**Total Deposit**
Ariel (K)	$125	N/A	$200	**$325**
Arietta (Gr 1-2)	$125	N/A	$200	**$325**
Aria (Gr 3-4)	$125	$50	$200	**$375**
Arioso (Gr 5-9)	$125	$50	$200	**$375**
Youth (Gr 9+)	N/A	$50	$200	**$250**

Forms can be accessed online from the Mount Royal Choirs Resources Webpage, or paper forms can be picked up at rehearsal sign in desk. Completed forms and post-dated cheques can be handed in at rehearsal sign-in tables.

Step 3: Attend the Parent Orientation and MRCA Annual General Meeting

Date: October 7, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: TransAlta Pavilion, Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts

A parent from each chorister family is required to attend the parent orientation meeting. This includes both new and returning choristers. The orientation consists of a short presentation and a question-and-answer period.

Families joining the program in January will attend the parent orientation scheduled for **February 3, 2027.**

Step 4: Volunteer Sign-up

Volunteer Sign-up begins at the Parent Orientation Meeting. You can sign-up for volunteering throughout the season using the Sign-Up Genius Links below:

Ariel Sign-Up Genius

Arietta Sign-Up Genius

Aria Sign-Up Genius

Arioso Sign-Up Genius

Youth Choir Sign-Up Genius

WHAT IS THE MOUNT ROYAL CHORAL ASSOCIATION OF CALGARY (MRCA)?

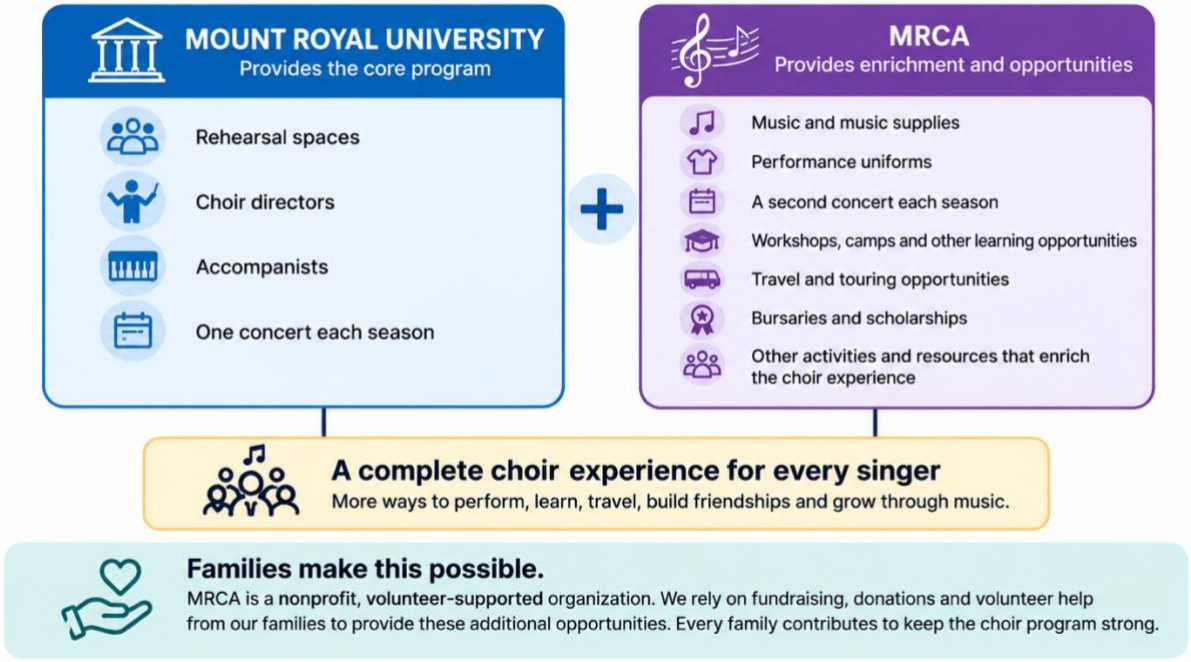
The **Mount Royal Choral Association (MRCA)** is a non-profit organization that supports the Mount Royal University Conservatory (MRU Conservatory) Children's and Youth Choir Programs.

When singers register in the Mount Royal University Conservatory Choral Program, they become members of the Mount Royal Choral Association, MRCA. **MRCA and the MRU Conservatory work together to make the choir program possible.**

Why is MRCA important?
MRCA helps make opportunities beyond weekly rehearsals possible. These opportunities give singers more ways to perform, learn, travel, build friendships, and grow through music.

Every family plays an important role in our choir community. By volunteering and participating in fundraising, families help provide the experiences and opportunities that make the Mount Royal Choirs more than just a weekly rehearsal. As a charitable non-profit society, MRCA raises funds through membership fees, donations, annual fundraising campaigns and AGLC casino events.

Two Partners, One Choir Program
Mount Royal University and MRCA work together to give every singer the best possible choir experience.



The Mount Royal Choral Association of Calgary is a charitable non-profit society
Registered Charity No. 89002 3062 RR0001

MOUNT ROYAL CHOIRS:

ARIEL

Kindergarten
Choir Director: Jocelyn Paynter
Mount Royal Conservatory's youngest choral group, ***Ariel*** provides an introductory experience to choral music. Singers begin a lifelong journey in music in a fun and creative environment. Kindergarten students will begin to learn vocal and musical literacy, while fostering the enjoyment of music. Kindergarten children will develop their musical skills and build social and emotional connections with new friends. Ariel performs in two concerts per season on Calgary's finest stages.
REHEARSAL: Wednesdays 5:00 – 5:45 pm
ED 2001, Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts

ARIETTA

Grades 1-2
Choir Director: Sarah McCune
Arietta provides an opportunity for young singers to begin a life-long journey in music by instilling a love of singing on which to build a foundation for their musical development. Vocal and musical literacy is carefully developed while allowing singers to build social and emotional connections as they pursue musical excellence with new friends. Arietta regularly shares their gift of music with the Calgary community and performs with the Mount Royal Conservatory's family of choirs on Calgary's finest stages.
REHEARSAL: Wednesdays 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
ED 2001, Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts

ARIA

Grades 3-4
Choir Director: Léane Mercier-Tardif
Aria singers continue their musical development by exploring more advanced repertoire and expanding their performance opportunities. These experiences allow the singers to build social and emotional connections as they pursue musical excellence with each other in a fun and creative environment. Aria regularly shares their gift of music with the Calgary community and performs with the Mount Royal Conservatory's family of choirs on Calgary's finest stages.
REHEARSAL: Wednesdays 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
ED 2009, Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts

ARIOSO

Choir Director: Elizabeth Paynter
Grade 5-8
Arioso singers pursue the challenge and reward of singing the highest calibre of choral music, including three and four-part scores, multiple languages, and varied genres. Through exceptional musicianship instruction, varied performance opportunities, local and international touring, and collaboration with other performing arts groups, Arioso singers build community, experience social growth, and a passion for musical excellence. Touring further enriches the singers' education and provides an opportunity for the choir to be showcased to a worldwide audience.
REHEARSAL: Wednesdays 6:00 PM – 7:15 PM
ED2102 - TransAlta Pavilion, Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts

MOUNT ROYAL YOUTH CHOIR

Grade 9+
Choir Director: Elizabeth Paynter
As part of the MRU family of choirs, the ***Mount Royal Youth Choir*** provides singers with performance opportunities grounded in community and artistic excellence. A wide range of the finest choral repertoire and unique and collaborative performances are planned to inspire and challenge all Mount Royal Youth Choir singers to their finest levels of musicianship.
REHEARSAL: Wednesdays 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM
ED2102 -TransAlta Pavilion, Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts

SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES - MRCA HARMONY FUND

One of the principal goals of MRCA is to ensure that all children and youth are able to participate in the choral programs at the Mount Royal University Conservatory. In keeping with this objective, families experiencing financial difficulty may apply for assistance.

The online **MRCA Scholarship and Bursary Application Form is available through the Mount Royal Choirs Resources Webpage. The deadline for fall Scholarships and Bursaries Applications is October 14, 2026.**

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance in all choir activities is essential (rehearsals, performances, workshops, etc.). Each chorister becomes a valued member of their ensemble through their presence.

Regular attendance helps each choir develop a consistent sound, musical skills, and strong ensemble relationships. Every singer's participation matters because choirs depend on their members working together.

The Mount Royal Choirs' Calendar of Events is provided to you in September. Please mark events and

deadline dates on your family's calendar and schedule around them—your child is expected to attend all events listed.

We do realize there are times when an absence is unavoidable. An excused absence can include the following:

- School function (e.g. school concert)
- Illness or health-related reasons
- Family Emergency / Crisis

Parents and choristers are expected to let the Choir Directors and General Manager know of any anticipated absences as soon as possible. Performance absences should be discussed with the choir director, as attendance at all performances is vital to the integrity of all choirs.

Notification of rehearsal and performance absences can be sent by email to: choirs@mtroyal.ca
Three unexcused absences will result in a meeting with the choir director.

SIGN-IN

Parents must sign their chorister in at every rehearsal and performance. Sign-out is required only at performances.

PUNCTUALITY

Aim to arrive 10 – 15 minutes before the rehearsal start time. Encourage younger children to use the washroom before they sign in and enter the rehearsal room. Late arrivals are disruptive, especially for the younger choirs.

RESPECT FOR VENUE

We are privileged to hold rehearsals at the Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts. Concerts and events can take place on the same nights as our rehearsals. Members of the public and university students also use the facility. We ask that children be respectful of the venue when coming to and leaving from rehearsal. **Running and playing in the lobby or hallways is not acceptable at any time**.

Choristers can bring a water bottle to rehearsal. Food and drinks, other than water, are not allowed in the rehearsal rooms.

PARKING

Parents can download the Hotspot Mobile parking app. Prepaid or permit parking can be purchased directly through the app, or at the parking payment meter in front of the Conservatory Entrance.

Information link regarding MRU Campus Parking Map

MUSIC

Choristers in Aria, Arioso, and the Youth Choir will be issued a binder of music and music bag. Please keep the music binder in the bag and bring it to each rehearsal. Ensure water bottles are sealed properly if stored in music bags to avoid damage to music.

Music deposit cheques will be cashed if music and music bags are not returned at the end of the season.

PERFORMANCE UNIFORMS

Performance uniforms are required for each chorister, some of which are provided on loan by MRCA. Families must provide some items to complete the uniform.
Uniform fittings occur early in the season.

For the Formal Performance Uniform MRCA provides:

- **Girls** Tartan kilt or tunic, tie, vest
- **Boys** Tartan vest, tie, suspenders

Items purchased/provided by the chorister include:

- **All** Long sleeved, button up, collared white dress shirt
  Plain black dress shoes; closed toe, no more than 1/2-inch heel
  Shoes and shirts must be approved by the Director or Uniform Coordinator.

- **Girls:** Black opaque tights; skin should not be visible

- **Boys:** Black socks
  Black pants

Choristers must arrive at performances in full uniform. Choristers with incomplete uniforms may not be allowed to perform. Jewelry and watches, due to their reflective nature, will not be permitted. Long hair must be pulled back off the chorister's face. Hair accessories, bobby-pins and elastics should match the primary colour of the chorister's hair.

Your child's performance uniform is dry-cleaned annually. **We are delighted that Fishman's Dry Cleaning is our official Uniform Sponsor.** Please consider supporting Fishman's for your family's dry-cleaning needs. Check out fishmans.ca to locate a convenient location

COMMUNICATION

In order to keep you informed about choir activities, weekly emails are distributed throughout the season.

Reminders and important information about the week's expectations and upcoming events will be included. **Please ensure that your email address is correct and read the emails weekly prior to each rehearsal so that you and your child arrive prepared and meet all necessary deadlines.**

FUNDRAISING

MRCA oversees all activities of the choirs and provides the needed funding for important enrichment activities (concerts & performances, camps, tours, workshops, uniforms, scholarships, etc.) beyond what the general tuition fee covers. MRCA is a registered charitable organization.

All choir families are expected to participate in fundraising activities. MRCA is planning the following fundraisers for the 2026-2027 season.

1) Purdy's Chocolate (fall) (Sales goal: $200 per chorister, $100 per additional chorister)
2) Online 50/50 Raffle (spring) (Sales goal: $200 per chorister, $100 per additional chorister)

If you have an idea for additional fundraising, please message Jocelyn at choirs@mtroyal.ca

Fundraising Opt-out

Families may choose to opt-out of annual fundraising by donating $200.00 ($100 for each additional chorister). Tax deductible receipts are provided.

If this is a preferable option for your family, payment can be made through the MRCA General Manager.

CASINO

Applications for casino fundraising events are submitted to the AGLC. Casinos events are generally assigned every 18 - 22 months. Our next casino is expected to take place in 2027-2028.

DONATIONS

As a registered charitable organization, Mount Royal Choral Association of Calgary gratefully accepts donations. Tax deductible receipts are provided.

Some companies match charitable donations made by their employees. If your employer offers a matching program, your donation may be matched, increasing the amount of support received by MRCA. Please inquire at your place of employment and apply for these funds if it is appropriate for you to do so.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MRCA Board Members are elected at the Annual General Meeting on October 7, 2026. MRCA Board Meetings are held online once a month and last approximately one and a half hours. We encourage

parents who are interested in any of the positions below, or know somebody who might be, to stand for election. Your support and involvement are essential to the success of the choral program!

The MRCA Board comprises the following:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Gaming Coordinator
- Fundraising Coordinator
- Members at Large

VOLUNTEERING

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

Parent involvement is an integral part of the choral program. There are numerous volunteer positions available throughout the year. The volunteer commitment is determined each year based on choir registration numbers and planned activities.

VOLUNTEER DEPOSIT

The Mount Royal Choral Association requires a volunteer deposit cheque in the amount of $200 to ensure that each family makes a suitable contribution throughout the year. The cheque will be returned or destroyed (your choice) at the end of the year when volunteer commitments are met. Families are responsible for completing their volunteer commitment by the end of the season. **Please keep track of your volunteer hours and assignments**, as MRCA may not be able to provide individual reminders before the deposit date.

The volunteer commitment required per chorister will be calculated each season based on choir registration numbers and planned choir activities. Sign up for volunteer tasks takes place at the Parent Orientation on October 7 and throughout the year via Sign-Up Genius.

HOW CAN I HELP?

The following volunteer positions are required to support the 2026-2027 season. Parents are asked to **sign up for volunteer assignments at the Parent Orientation in October 2026, via Sign-up Genius, or by contacting Jocelyn Paynter, General Manager at choirs@mtroyal.ca**

Ariel Sign-Up Genius

Arietta Sign-Up Genius

Aria Sign-Up Genius

Arioso Sign-Up Genius

Youth Choir Sign-Up Genius

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Rehearsal Assistant (Police Information Check required)

Rehearsal Assistants attend weekly rehearsals throughout the year to directly support the choir director and the choristers in learning their music. Rehearsal Assistants must be able to read music.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Help children get settled before rehearsal starts (hanging up coats, taking off wet footwear, organizing music, finding an appropriate spot to sit, etc).
- Accompany younger children to the washroom and/or water fountain
- Support children who are feeling ill
- Support the rehearsal by helping with behaviour, distributing music and materials, and staying actively engaged
- Assist with general duties that support the choir rehearsal

As a thank you for the weekly commitment, Rehearsal Assistants receive an honorarium of paid parking.

Concert Chaperone (Police Information Check required)

Provide overall support to the director and general manager of the choirs during performances.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Arrive 20 minutes before the concert; stay 20 minutes after concert
- Assist with chorister check-in
- Assist with organizing children in venue space, ushering them back stage or putting them in correct seating arrangements
- Accompany younger children to the washroom and/or water fountain
- Support children who are feeling ill
- Support the back-stage flow (listening for instructions, behaviour management)
- Ensure general oversight and safety of choristers

Rehearsal Sign-In Volunteer

Provide an overall support to the general manager of the choirs during rehearsals.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Arrive 20 minutes early to rehearsal
- Assist with chorister check-in
- Assist with tasks that support the choir program, such as distributing name tags, receiving and distributing forms or concert promotional materials, preparing music and/or uniforms

Music Resource Volunteer

Responsible for helping with music and organizing music binders for the choristers.

Volunteers assist with:

- Work bees that take place during rehearsal times
- Prepare music and music binders, generally in September and January.
- Distribute and document distribution of binders
- Collect and empty binders in December and May.
- Organizational tasks in the music library.

Uniform Volunteer

Responsible for the organization and distribution of choir performance uniforms.
Volunteers assist with:

- Work bees that take place during rehearsal times.
- Organize uniforms and garment bags
- Assist with chorister sizing
- Distribute and document uniform pieces and garment bags given out to choristers
- Assist with mid-season uniform checks
- Collect uniforms at the end of performance season

Fundraising Volunteer

Provide support for MRCA fundraising initiatives
Volunteers assist with the Purdy's fall fundraiser:

- Work bees that take place during rehearsal times
- Unpack and sort chocolates by item
- Gather items for individual orders
- Distribute and document order pick up

Year End BBQ Volunteers

Assist with the set up and cleanup of the year end BBQ in May.
Tasks may include shopping and BBQ pick-up.
The BBQ takes place at Sandy Beach Park or North Glenmore Park.

Board Member

The Board of Directors oversee the society's operations. Board members help manage the society according to the Association's bylaws. Board members are required to attend monthly board meetings, and actively participate in the running of the organization, assisting with sub-committees, e.g. fundraising, planning, special projects, etc.

HOW TO OBTAIN A POLICE INFORMATION CHECK (PIC)

In accordance with our Child Protection & Abuse Policy, a Police Information Check is required for all Chaperones and Rehearsal Assistants.

The Police Information Checks (PIC) application fee is $15 with a letter from the organization (MRCA) identifying you as a volunteer. Applicants must request the letter issued from the MRCA prior to

applying for their PIC. Please contact **Jocelyn** at **choirs@mtroyal.ca** for your designated letter, include your legal name in your inquiry.

Applying for your PIC

Use Calgary Police Services online PIC application service
https://www.policesolutions.ca/checks/services/calgary/

Processing time can take approximately 2-3 weeks. Upon completion, a letter will be sent to you with the results from the application. The Police Information Check Unit will not disclose to a third party – any specific information will be disclosed to the applicant only.

Please forward your Police Information Check to choirs@mtroyal.ca once received.