Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When and where is does the honor choir festival take place?
A: The festival will take place on Sunday and Monday, March 8 and 9, on the beautiful campus of Gustavus Adolphus College. Gustavus is located in St. Peter, Minnesota, which is about 45 minutes south of the Twin Cities. Rehearsals will take place in the Schaefer Fine Arts Building and the culminating concert will take place in Christ Chapel, which is one of the finest spaces for choral performances in the upper Midwest!

Q: Who is eligible to participate in the honor choir?
A: The festival is open to any singer in grades 9-12.

Q: How are students selected for the festival?
A: Students must be nominated for the festival by their high school choir director or private voice teacher using this link: [link forthcoming]. After the nomination process is closed on January 17, Gustavus choral and vocal faculty members carefully review each nomination and select the top 125 students for the festival. Selection is based on teacher recommendation related to musical skills and attitude, along with the balance needs of the festival choir.

Q: When and how are accepted students notified?
A: The results of the selection process will be sent directly to the nominating teacher on Friday, January 24. All results will be sent to the email provided during the nomination process.
Q: What will the students be doing at the festival?
A: Lots! Our priority is to provide each student with a high impact educational experience. Much of our time together will be spent in full group choral rehearsals as we prepare to sing a concert on Monday evening. Additionally, students have the opportunity to have an individual voice lesson with one of the outstanding vocal faculty members at Gustavus and to interact directly with nationally renowned choral composer, Dr. Joshua Shank from Gonzaga University. Dr. Anna DeGraff from Gustavus will be leading a masterclass for students to learn new vocal techniques, and during the grand finale concert the students will have the opportunity to listen to hear performances by the Eagan High School Concert Choir and the Gustavus Choir. Of course, it can't be all work and no play! Our dedicated team of Vocal Music Assistants (VMAs) and Vocal Music Education majors will organize a few opportunities for students to socialize with each other and help make some lasting friendship connections.

Q: How do the voice lessons work at the festival?
A: After being selected for the festival, students will have an opportunity to sign up for a 30-minute individual voice lesson with a Gustavus faculty member. There is an additional $10 fee for the lesson. All voice lessons take place in the same building as the choral rehearsals and a Gustavus host (VMA) will be on hand to guide the student to the faculty studio where the location will take place. Students are encouraged to bring an art song or aria to work on during the voice lesson.

Q: Where do the students stay on Sunday night?
A: Students will be assigned housing with current members of Gustavus’ three primary choral ensembles: Gustavus Choir, Choir of Christ Chapel, and Lucia Singers. Although a futon or bed may be available in some cases, generally students sleep on the floor in a sleeping bag. A full packing list of recommended items will be sent to selected students in early February.

Q: How do meals work?
A: Students will eat meals in Gustavus’ award-winning Market Place. The food options available daily will cover any and all special dietary needs. For dinner on Sunday night, the Gustavus students who are hosting the honor choir students will take them to the Market Place and show them how everything works. Festival participants should plan to pay for the following meals while at the festival: Sunday dinner, Monday breakfast and dinner. Monday lunch will be provided by the festival at no additional charge.
Q: What is the cost of the festival?
A: The cost is $35 per student. Or, $45 if the student is electing to have a 30-minute individual voice lesson. After being selected for the festival, the fee will be payable by check or online.

Q: What do the students wear for the concert?
A: Festival participants should plan to dress as they would for their own high school performances (e.g., robes, concert tux/dress, etc.). The mixed ensemble appearance adds to the audiences’ understanding of bringing students together from so many different high school music programs.

Q: I have more questions! Who do I contact?
A: Please reach out to Dr. Brandon Dean (bdean@gustavus.edu), who serves as the festival director.