2023

**ALL THINGS PFC**

★★★★ MEMBER HANDBOOK

Website: [pfchorus.com](https://pfchorus.com)

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## About [Philadelphia Freedom Chorus](https://pfchorus.com/)

The Philadelphia Freedom Chorus (PFC) is an innovative and fun-loving, competing a cappella women's chorus dedicated to singing well in four-part harmony. Our goal is to serve the greater southeast Pennsylvania and surrounding areas, offering both opportunities for women to learn and grow vocally, as well as to provide entertainment to our community.

PFC is a chapter of Sweet Adelines International, an independent, non-profit music education association and one of the world's largest singing organizations for women. PFC also participates in an annual competition that enables us to measure our musical growth and skills.

**PFC is part of** [Atlantic Bay Mountain Region 19](https://www.region19sai.org/)

Region 19 is comprised of more than 20 [choruses](https://www.region19sai.org/choruses.html) and nearly 40 [quartets](https://www.region19sai.org/quartets.html) from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. The Region also hosts competitions, events and workshops.

**What to Expect**

PFC works to compete annually in Sweet Adeline’s Region 19 Competition and performs at events throughout the year. The chorus rehearses together twice monthly every other Sunday, as well as holding sectional rehearsals at the discretion of membership, at mutually agreed upon times.

## What is Barbershop?

[Barbershop 101](https://sweetadelines.com/about/barbershop-101) (Sweet Adelines)

Barbershop singing is one of the trickiest yet most rewarding accomplishments of a vocal ensemble. Imagine this: you’re singing a song with three other harmonizing ladies, each hitting the perfect pitch when bam—you hear it. An overtone vibration, a resonant ring, a different sound than any one tone being sung by any one singer! This overtone produces a visceral experience and is unique only to four-part barbershop harmonies!

Although the voice parts in women's barbershop harmony have different names and functions than they do in other SATB or SSAA vocal styles, the foundation is the same—beautiful music, stunning chords and a passion to create the intangible, moving essence of music that brings us together.

**The Basics**

* Sing in tune.
* Hear those around you and blend your voice with theirs, as our organization emphasizes ensemble singing, not a solo-building group.
* Eventually hold your own—that is, you will need to be able to sing your own part when surrounded by those who don’t. In a barbershop ensemble, there are many times when you are singing while standing by someone who isn’t singing your part.
* Start a normal warm-up routine at home before you practice. This will be good for your voice, and depending on what you choose to do for warm-ups, you can specifically work on many different skills at once (e.g., flexibility, range, breath control, dynamic [volume] control, etc.).
* Make a plan to practice the songs at home, either with the help of learning tracks or not. It’s just like exercising the body—if you do it on a regular basis, you will reap the benefits, and if you don’t, you’ll definitely see the decline.

**Voice Parts in Barbershop Singing**

In simple terms, barbershop harmony is vocal harmony produced by four parts: **Lead, Tenor, Baritone and Bass**. Finding the right part for your voice is the initial step. Any woman of average singing ability, with or without vocal training, will find a part that fits her range.

There are certain things you may want to know depending on the part you will be singing. Most of us are familiar with the SATB or SSAA choral music, where the melody is usually in the First Soprano line, above all others. The voice parts in barbershop harmony for women have different names and functions than they do in other SATB or SSAA vocal styles. The LEAD voice generally sings the melody and is below the TENOR harmony; the TENOR part sings the highest note in the chord; the BARITONE part fills in the all-important missing note in a chord that may be above and below the melody; the BASS part supplies the harmonic foundation (root or fifth) of the chord. Similar to choral music, minimal vibrato should be apparent in barbershop singing. Wide and obvious vibratos tend to hamper the “lock and ring” that we look for in our chords.

**TENOR** is a harmony part sung consistently above the lead. The tenor should have a light, sweet, pure tone that will complement but not overpower or overshadow the lead voice. Light lyric sopranos generally make good tenors. The range for tenor is from G above middle C to high F on the top line of the clef. Occasionally you will have notes below the lead. When this happens, your tonal quality will need to change from being light and clear to being more full and round. Flexibility is the key and knowing when you need to change.

**LEAD** is the melody and must be sung with authority, clarity and consistent quality throughout the lead's range. The lead sings with limited vibrato to add color and warmth to the sound. With too much use of vibrato, the chord will not “lock” or “ring” or produce the unique, full and “expanded” sound that is characteristic of barbershop harmony. The lead is responsible for conveying the interpretation, emotion and inflections of the song. The range is equivalent to a Soprano II and is from A below middle C, and C above middle C. On the rarer occasions when the melody line is in another part, which may be only for a few notes, the lead will need to be aware to lighten her vocal quality to allow the melody to shine wherever it is being sung. If you are in a quartet, the others will follow your lead. In a chorus, we all follow the director.

**BARITONE** covers approximately the same range as lead. The voice part is similar to the equivalent of an Alto I except that baritone harmony notes cross the lead notes. Primarily sung below the lead but sometimes sung above, depending on where the melody is situated, baritones must constantly adjust their balance to accommodate their position in the chord. They must have a good ear.

**BASS** is the lowest note in the barbershop chord. Singers should have a rich, mellow voice and generally sing the root and fifth of each chord. The bass sings a relatively straight, well-produced tone with a minimum of vibrato. The range is comparable to that of a contralto or Alto II in traditional choral music. The range is from E-flat below middle C to G above middle C. Similar to the baritone, this part is written in the bass clef an octave lower than it is actually sung. A bass sings with a heavier tone quality than the others and generally with more volume, to fill out the “cone.” The bass part provides the foundation of each chord.

**THE BARBERSHOP CONE**

Barbershop harmonies have a different balance than the traditional cylindrical balance of SATB or SSAA ensemble music. Our top voices sing with less weight and intensity than our lower voices.

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## Glossary of Commonly-Used Terms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Definition** |
| a cappella | Having no instrumental accompaniment. |
| ballad | Simple romantic song usually set in romantic verse. |
| Barbershop style | A uniquely America art form of music that requires singing a cappella in four part, very close harmony in order to create a ringing chorus in which you will hear overtones or the “fifth voice” |
| chest voice | Deep vibrant voice that resonates in the chest, associated with most bass and baritone notes and lower lead notes. |
| chorus | Follows the introduction ­ often has different lyrics when there is a repeat. |
| ‘coning’ | The vocal instrument necessary to maintain the proper balance of a barbershop sound. It will primarily involve singing lighter in both volume and quality in the upper range and with more breadth, depth and volume in the lower range. |
| diphthong | A combination of two vowel sounds. |
| down the tiles | (DTT) means your focus is directly out at the audience and not at the director or to the sides. You square your body DTT, which means your feet will be square to the end of the stage facing the audience. |
| dynamics | The softs and louds we use to give music contrasts. Examples are below, however, some ensembles may use different divisions (Eg. Levels 1-10) |
| Level 1 | Softest sound we can make that still has intensity and support |
| Level 2 | Next loudest dynamic from level 1 |
| Level 3 | Medium volume ­ usually a solid, comfortable, “full chorus” sound |
| Level 4 | Next loudest level above 3 |
| Level 5 | Loudest, best supported sound possible, but not an “out of control” scream |
| finesse | Extreme delicacy or subtlety in action, performance, skill and discrimination. |
| forward quality | A term of imagery which describes a tone that resonates in the front of the head, nose and mouth. It creates intensity in the sound, even when singing softly. |
| from the edge | Starting at the beginning of the song |
| Groupanizer | Members only website used to access sheet music and tracks as well as to record attendance and song status. |
| hard palate | hard bony roof of the mouth toward your teeth, the soft palate lies behind it. |
| head voice | High light voice that resonates in the face. It is associated with most tenor notes and higher lead notes. |
| inside arch | The part of the inside smile that gives the feeling of a dome or umbrella in the soft palate and hard palate areas. |
| intensity | The strength or energy of a tone. |
| inter­costal breathing | Refers to “rib” breathing – a lateral, outward expansion of the ribs and connecting muscles. |
| interval | The distance between two notes. |
| intonation | Singing “in tune”. |
| “intro” | Introduction to a song – sometimes very dramatic, 4­8 measures long. |
| key signature | The musical notation that indicates the number of sharps or flats, and therefore the key in which the song is written. Common key signatures in barbershop arrangements are B b (2 flats), E b (3 flats), F (1 flat), and C (no sharps or flats). The key signature is usually the pitch blown by the pitch pipe to begin the song. |
| legato | Singing extremely smoothly. |
| lift | Making sure the body is fully extended at the end of any move. Making the chest rise and stretch so that it opens the lungs for singing. |
| mask | The sets of facial muscles under the eyes into the temples, around the flanges of the nose, in the lip, and from the temples down to the chin. |
| overtone | An unsung tone heard above the highest tone of a properly balanced and matched chord. |
| pedal tone | An unsung tone heard below the lowest tone of a properly balanced and matched chord. |
| phrase | A musical sentence. |
| pitch | Deals with sound frequency waves and auditory distinction. It separates clear tonal center, as compared to noise or blur of noise. |
| press | The movement of the body from the RCP (regular chorus position) shifting |
| regular chorus position | (RCP) placing the outside foot (toes) on the edge of the risers pointed at the director, and the inside foot just behind about shoulder width apart. Outside foot should be pointed just to the inside of the chorus. Upper part of the body should be square to the director and pressed forward so that the back foot (inside foot) - heel is slightly off the ground. |
| re­set | When going back into RCP you will need to snap the body and re­energize lifting the body so that you are in RCP with back foot lifted slightly off the ground. |
| “singing through” a phrase | A very legato way of connecting every vowel and consonant of every word together so there is no break in the sound at all. |
| soft palate | A membranous and muscular extension of the hard palate in the roof of the mouth, which serves as a partition separating the mouth cavity and the nasal cavity. |
| split spread | Same as spread but half of the chorus goes the other direction. When using arms with this move you must be sure that the energy and tension are from beginning of the arm movement and that you lead with the upper part of the hand and no the fingers or the wrist. |
| spots | The actual written music. Notes are the “spots” on the paper |
| staccato | A crisp and quick attack and release of a note. |
| swell | This is the movement of expanding the midsection of the body to give the illusion of getting larger and expanding. Used to enhance ballads and soft parts of songs. |
| tag | A four to eight measure ending that is often very dramatic. |
| thigh­draulics | using your thigh muscles to squat and move with the director to produce a stronger more stable sound. |
| tonic | The root tone of the key in which the song is written, e.g., in the key of C the tonic (root) is C. |
| uptune | A lively song that is usually sung on a steady beat. |
| verse | Follows the introduction – often has difference lyrics when there is a repeat. |

## Membership & Dues

**Full Members** make up the core leadership and general membership of the chorus. Members must pass an audition and be voted in by the membership. They agree to the personal responsibilities of learning and performing chorus repertoire, and the financial responsibilities to the Chapter, the Region, SAI International. “Good standing” (being current with dues) is necessary for performance and voting privileges.

**Associate Members.** The parameters of Associate member status can vary by Chapter. Current PFC Associate members pay a reduced chapter fee. Their primary responsibility is to perform with the chorus in SAI competitions. An associate member has the option to learn other repertoire and participate in non-contest performances. An associate member does not have voting rights within the chapter.

**PFC Dues:** Chapter Dues are $25 per month. In addition, there is $100 Annual Membership fee for Sweet Adelines International, and $25 Annual Regional Assessment Fee for Region 19 of SAI.

As a convenience to our members, the monthly assessment is $37, which includes the chapter dues, plus $9/month toward the annual International membership, and $3/month toward the annual regional membership.

Dues are submitted via check payable to: Philadelphia Freedom Chorus.

MAIL TO:

DOTTIE KEEFER

2 OLD SPRUCE LANE

LEVITTOWN, PA 19055

If you are inclined to pay bills online through your bank, you can talk to Dottie about setting up “autopay” for your chorus dues!

## What is [**Sweet Adelines**](https://sweetadelines.com/join-today)?

Sweet Adelines International (**SAI**) is a worldwide organization committed to Elevating women singers worldwide through education, performance, and competition in barbershop harmony and a cappella music.

We sing a cappella music in four-part barbershop style. When four voice parts simultaneously execute on time and on pitch, the chord will produce a “fifth note” called an overtone. Hearing overtone “ring” is a special kind of magic!

Our members, who are from diverse backgrounds, of all different ages and occupations, are universally connected through song. Whether you sang years ago and long to perform again, or are still the first to sign up for karaoke, we would love for you to find your place with us! (from <https://sweetadelines.com/join-today>)

**SAI dues are $100/year. Members have access to the** [Members Only Education](https://sweetadelines.com/education) **site with great resources for singers of all levels!**

## [Members-Only Section](https://pfchorus.com/user/login?destination=g/dashboard%2520to) of PFC’s Website

**Website:** [**pfchorus.com**](https://pfchorus.com/user/login?destination=g/dashboard)

**The Member-Only section contains:**

* Attendance Survey: It is important to keep your attendance up to date so that leadership can plan appropriately for rehearsals.
* Music (audio and sheet): Learning tracks for each part, as well as full mix are included in MP3 format and can be downloaded.
* Member Roster (Contact information and photos)
* Information about upcoming Conventions/Competitions
* Chapter Guide
* Chartering Handbooks
* Standing Rules and Bylaws
* Director's Contract
* Audit & Income Tax Paperwork
* Planning Tools
* Competitions
* JCDB - Judging Category Description Book
* PFC Contest Videos
* PFC's Contest History
* Coaching Recordings
* Improve Your Voice/Musicianship
* Chords and Key Signatures
* Pythagorean Tuning
* Roland Wyatt Warm-ups
* Somatic Voicework
* Just for Fun
* Classic Tags
* ...and much more!

**To enter the Members-Only area:**

1. Go to https://pfchorus.com/ and click on the “Members” link at the top left of the webpage.

OR

1. Bookmark <https://pfchorus.com/user/login?destination=g/dashboard> to go directly to the member login page.
2. Your user name and temporary password will be sent to you in an email from the chorus leadership team

## Apps & Tools for Learning Music & More

In the members-only section, there is both sheet and audio music for you to download to your smartphone or computer. The music can be played on your device’s music player. Go to the members-only site and select the “[My Music](https://pfchorus.com/g/my_music)” link to view the music library. Apps are available for convenience of using a smartphone or tablet.

Meet Up

is used as a tool to promote the chorus for prospective members. We encourage chorus members to sign up for each rehearsal in the PFC Now! Group so that potential members can see what to expect when they decide to attend a rehearsal.

GroupMe

is a tool for informal chats and notifications within the PFC chorus group. If you don’t have GroupMe, download the app and you will be invited to join the **PFC Now!** Group by chorus leadership.



Playback Genius

connects with “My Music” on the PFC members only site for easy access to learning tracks with extra features to make practicing easy.



### Voice Memos

 is a simple recording and playback device that most chorus members use for recording during rehearsal or for personal playback.



Perfect Pitch

is a tool that helps with pitch accuracy, vocal warm ups, and allows for recording.

## Rehearsals

PFC's members have been drawn from Philadelphia and its suburbs, Central Pennsylvania and the Lehigh Valley, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland! We rehearse two Sundays per month from 1:00 to 5:00 PM at First Presbyterian Church, 356 Summit Road, Springfield, PA 19064.

### Attendance Guidelines

1. **Sunday Rehearsals:** Attendance requirements for Regional and
2. International competitions and our annual show will be implemented at the discretion of the Director and the Music Committee.
3. **Coaching Sessions:** ALL coaching sessions are mandatory. Attendance is also mandatory at special group rehearsals.
4. **Rehearsal Hours:** You will be expected to be on the risers and ready to begin at 1:00 p.m. and stay until 5:00 p.m. on rehearsal days. We recognize that some people have valid reasons for late arrivals or early departures. Please discuss these reasons with leadership so the group can prepare accordingly.
5. **Section Rehearsals:** Section rehearsals are strongly encouraged and will be scheduled on an as-needed basis by section leaders, and may also be set among chorus members.
6. **Extra Choreo:** If extra choreo rehearsals or other activities are planned before the start of regular rehearsals, attendance is strongly encouraged.
7. **If You Need to Miss a Rehearsal:** Please advise your team leadership in advance if you know you will be absent.

### What to bring to Rehearsal

**Voice recorder (preferably one that records digitally)**: We encourage you to record yourself singing and to record rehearsal for review during the week. You will also need a recorder for the performance/competition readiness program where we all work one-on-one with assigned music checkers. The program is a combination of self -analysis and external feedback. It is our way of making sure we each are able to individually produce our best vocal product. For more information, please ask your section leader.

**Water:** Water is usually available at rehearsals for a donation of $1 per bottle. You are also welcome to bring your own.

**Sheet Music:** Feel free to bring your sheet music, especially when you are in the learning stages.

**Enthusiasm and a Positive Attitude:** We are all working together as a team to achieve musical excellence. It’s a lot of work, but it’s also a lot of fun!

### Rehearsal Etiquette

Be on time warmed up and ready to start rehearsal on time.

## Performances/Competition

### Regional Competition

The spring Regional Competition allows quartets and choruses to compete or to perform for evaluation. Each quartet and chorus performs a ballad and an up tune, or an entertainment package, to be judged or evaluated in the categories of Music, Sound, Expression, and Showmanship. The judges are trained specialists from our International organization.

Regional Competition is considered a full chorus commitment. Most of our members arrive on Friday for a chorus rehearsal, and to support the chorus quartets participating in the quartet competition that evening. On Saturday there is usually a morning rehearsal scheduled. In the afternoon the chorus competition takes place, and in the evening the “Encore” show of all the winning choruses and quartets. Saturday evening concludes with a mass sing where members from all the choruses gather to sing together. All chorus members are encouraged to stay. There may also be an ‘after­glow’ following the showcase in which there will be a lot of quartets who will sing.

Prior to competition, there will be a rooming sign­up sheet. You can choose which roommates you’d like to room with, or reserve a room on your own. This weekend is also a great time to visit other choruses throughout our region, and see the hard work they have been doing. Many choruses have open rehearsals and allow members to come in and observe what they are doing throughout the weekend. PFC has an open rehearsal policy and we welcome visitors during our rehearsals. Our chorus excitement is high because we’ve prepared for this weekend months in advance.

Free time provides you with the opportunity to relax, visit other choruses, sit and visit with chorus friends, or even make new friends. There are plenty of people milling around who will be singing, visiting, and having a good time. Sometimes the chorus rents a hotel room in which we can gather. The harmony mall is available in the hotel setting for shopping opportunities if you wish.

Posed chorus pictures will be available for purchase. You will be asked to sign up for them and submit payment a couple weeks prior to competition. A schedule of events for the entire weekend is provided to chorus members a few weeks in advance.

**Regional Competition Expenses Include:**

* All Events Pass
* Transportation
* Pictures (optional)
* Hotel Room (prices vary)
* Items for sale at Harmony Mall (optional)
* Food and beverages

### International Competition

When a large chorus (60+members) places first at Regional Competition, they are then eligible to go on to International Competition 18 months later. Divison A and Division AA small choruses (PFC is currently Division A) whose regional score in is the top 5 of all regions are invited to compete in the International Harmony Classic Competition 18 months later. This duration enables the winning chorus time to prepare or competing on the International stage. The current champion chorus cannot compete at the next Regional Competition in spring. Instead they perform their “Swan Song” at that regional competition and may perform for evaluation only.

The chorus works very hard to prepare for International Competition, but it is also an exciting time. Travel arrangements are usually booked up to a year in advance, if possible. Chorus members should arrive at the International Competition location no later than Tuesday evening, as there may be an early morning rehearsal on Wednesday. The hotel reservations are made through the International Competition contact person in the chorus. About nine months in advance, you will be asked to sign up on a rooming list, or sign up for a rooming pool where roommates are randomly drawn. You are required to purchase an all events pass, which allows you entrance into all events except the Coronet Club show. All events passes are purchased approximately a year in advance to assure a good block of seats, but can be purchased for a little extra money right up to competition. Posed chorus pictures will be available for purchase. You will be asked to sign up for them and submit payment a couple weeks prior to competition. Before International Competition, we will hold a meeting with new members to give them additional information.

If you are planning to take a vacation along with International Competition, our Director asks that you vacation AFTER the competition if you can.

**International Competition Expenses**

* All Events Pass
* Transportation
* Pictures (optional)
* Hotel room
* Coronet Club Show (optional)
* Food and beverages
* Items for sale at Harmony Mall (optional)

### Special Performances

Throughout the year, PFC performs together at special events such as Christmas caroling, singing at special events, retirement homes, Friends & Family Events and more. If you have a suggestion for a performance, bring it to the leadership team who will manage details.

### Performance Etiquette, Costumes, Make-up and Whatnot

#### Performance Etiquette

* No talking at any time while on stage (from entrance to exit).
* If quartets or sections are performing, chorus members will listen quietly at the group.
* Should you become ill while performing, sit down where you are. Our Director will be in control of the situation and give direction for action to be taken.
* No personal jewelry or watches (except wedding/engagement rings) are worn during a performance. Chorus jewelry will be worn as directed by the costume committee. These guidelines are followed to achieve a professional unit performance.

#### Costumes and Makeup

**Costume Committee Chair –** Robin Carberry can answer questions on everything you will need for your costume including the costume itself, undergarments, accessories, and shoes. Robin will also provide information about **performance makeup.**

#### Name Tags

**Robin Carberry** orders the PFC name tags for the chorus. Contact her about getting your new name tag or if you ever need to replace your tag.

#### PFC Shirts

**Robin Carberry** orders the PFC t-shirts. Contact her about **PFC colors are royal blue and black, with silver jewelry.** There will be times when you may be asked to wear these colors or your t-shirt such as during a convention/competition, special rehearsal, or the occasional public performance.

You might want to have some clothing with the PFC logo or name on it. This clothing is NOT a part of our costume and is NOT required. It is for your own enjoyment and desire to show your pride about the chorus.

Websites-Social Networking-Contact Info

### Websites

* Sweet Adelines International: [sweetadelines.com](https://sweetadelines.com/)
* Region 19 Website: [region19sai.org](http://www.region19sai.org/)
* PFC: [pfchorus.com](https://pfchorus.com/)

### Emails/Phone numbers

PFC Member e-mails and phone numbers are on the chorus roster in the members-only area.

Email is used primarily for chorus updates. **“Official Chorus Business”** would be anything dealing directly with the operation of the chorus. Examples include (but not necessarily limited to):

* Rehearsal Notes
* Performance Information/Directions
* Board/Committee Information
* Coaching Information
* Regional Events/Education/Information
* International Events/Education/Information
* Last minute schedule changes (due to inclement weather, etc.)

### Facebook:

Click Here for the PFC Facebook page🡪 [PFC](https://www.facebook.com/PFCHORUS)

Click Here for the PFC Members only Facebook page🡪 [PFC Members only](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1658842427706947)