



Member Handbook

Mesilla Valley Concert Band



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Introduction

Mission

The mission of the Mesilla Valley Concert Band is to enhance the already rich cultural experiences for adult musicians and diverse audiences to enjoy in the great American Southwest through the performance of the highest levels of wind and percussion music. This requires an inordinate amount of commitment in rehearsal and performance and focus during our invaluable 120 minutes of rehearsal each week. It is important to remember our mission and do what is necessary to fulfill it at a very high level.



Conductors/Directors

Dr. William Clark is the Music Director of the MVCB. Dr. Clark has been in music education at both the secondary and university level for 50 years (he reports he started at age two). Mr. John Schutz, the assistant director, has also made a career of music education, directing high school bands and working in the administration of Las Cruces Public Schools as the Fine Arts coordinator.

Director's Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the directors include determining the rehearsal dates and schedules, the concert dates, choosing the programming and leading rehearsals. The directors are conscientious in their preparation before each rehearsal and the expectations of themselves are very high, as are their expectations of the members of the band.

Other responsibilities include informing the band as soon as possible of changes to the rehearsal schedules or other scheduling issues and when asked, being on KRWG radio for interviews and representing the band in a professional manner throughout the community.

▶ Without music, life would be a mistake.
Friedrich Nietzsche

The Board Members

The MVCB is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation. As such, the organization is required to have a set of by-laws (which can be made available to you upon request), and a board of directors.

Our board officers are president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. All other board members are “members at large”.

Board Member Responsibilities

The board officers have specific responsibilities.

President: Conducts regular meetings/confers on regular basis with music director

Vice President: Conducts regular meetings in the absence of the president. Will assume the remaining term of the president if the president resigns from the board.

Treasurer: Maintains books for the organization, maintains list of donors, deposits donations to account, is responsible for all monetary issues of the band.

Secretary: Writes and distributes meeting minutes to board members.

Members at Large: Attend meetings when called, offer thoughtful and respectful comments during meetings, vote when a vote is needed, and be responsible representatives of the organization throughout the community.

Members

All musicians participating in the rehearsals and concerts of the MCVB are considered members of the organization. With this membership come a great many benefits, not the least of which is working with one another to provide high quality music to the community and enjoying the music ourselves.

Along with benefits are responsibilities.

Member Responsibilities

Practice

As musicians we should not be strangers to the practice room. If you have progressed in your ability on your instrument to the level that you are a member of the MVCB you have been known to practice.

One never reaches a level as a musician however when practice is no longer necessary. To maintain a high-quality organization which continues to fill a con-

cert hall, we must all make a commitment to continue to practice to a level of excellence.

Practice is to be done outside of rehearsal. It is not respectful to other band members to only practice during the time which is set aside for the interpretation and cohesion of pieces. While it is acceptable to use break time and time before rehearsal to go over one's part, this is not sufficient practice for the level of music the MVCB is known for.

If you feel you cannot devote the amount of time necessary for you to have your part learned before rehearsal, you may find other music groups which are more appropriate for you.

Rehearsal

Our rehearsals are weekly on Sunday evenings beginning promptly at 6:00. The rehearsal time is limited for each concert for which we are preparing. Typically we have only four rehearsals before a concert. This rehearsal schedule is typical of professional music organizations, and we must be as ready for our rehearsals as professional musicians are for theirs.

What does this mean?

BE ON TIME! We should all be ready in our seats, instrument, equipment and music ready for the rehearsal downbeat at 6:00. It doesn't mean that we can be on our way to our seats at 6:00. You are the best judge of how long it takes for you to set up, get out your equipment and be warmed up prior to rehearsal. However, less than 15 minutes seems to be leaving it up to chance that you will be ready on time.

BE PREPARED! Again, the practice sessions you do during the week will be of utmost importance for rehearsals being efficient and productive. We all have busy lives and have chosen to spend our time making music, none of us like to have that time wasted by others who have not devoted enough time to preparing music during the week.

BE AWARE! Your actions during rehearsal impact every other member of the band. Talking and playing during the conductor's addressing other sections is very disruptive and impacts the ability for those around you to hear. This is not a trivial matter. It is not the intent to make band less fun, but understanding the appropriateness of your behavior is critical to everyone enjoying the experience of being in band.



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Friedrich Nietzsche

Equipment

Please take the time to take stock for each rehearsal what equipment you will need to bring with you. Mutes, extra reeds, swabs, etc. In addition to those unique to your instrument, we all need to keep track of our own music and stands.

If you do not have a piece in your folder due to an oversight, please notify your section leader so the copy can be made in advance of when it will be rehearsed. Keep your music well organized. We have many pieces which are multiple pages and when sorting of music takes place, it should be clear which pages belong to which piece.

We bring our own stands to rehearsals because the university can no longer guarantee adequate numbers of stands be available. Wire stands for rehearsals are fine, however for concerts they are not, even if they are black in color.

Concerts

The concert schedule is released well in advance of the first rehearsal of the season. Please mark the dates on your calendar. The music director will inform all regarding the time of the pre-concert dress rehearsal. Usually this is 1:30 p.m. for the concert beginning at 3:00 p.m.

Again, timeliness is of critical importance. The dress rehearsal is shorter than regular rehearsals and it allows everyone to begin to concentrate and be ready for the concert itself. The distraction of late-comers to the rehearsal is a break in this concentration and results in a lesser performance.

The dress for MVCB concerts is always dress black (see special programs for the exceptions). This really does mean BLACK. Men should be in black (not dark gray or blue) tuxes with white tux shirts, black socks and shoes. Women should be either in all black (no colored sequins or accessories) or a women's tux. A white shirt under a black jacket is not appropriate unless you also wear a black bow tie.

Women should also be aware of the level of modesty in their chosen outfit. Skirts should be at an appropriate length, as when you sit down the skirt rides up. Sleeveless shirts or dresses are fine, however be aware of the modesty of the strap. We are offering music to the entire community and need to represent ourselves as professionally as possible. Our dress uniform makes an impression. The reason for being adamant about the dress code is the whole point of wearing concert dress black is to be **uniform** in appearance. This allows the audience

to concentrate on the music we are making and not on a fashion show. If you forget to dress according to these guidelines, expect a gentle reminder from your section leader.

Other Policies

Methods of Communication

The MVCB has grown a great deal since its beginnings making an organized flow of information more important. The notification of section leaders and/or music director of your absence from a rehearsal or concert has already been touched upon.

Other communication methods and policies include:

E-mail distribution list —

If you are not on this distribution list, please give your information to the Communications Director (Anita Feil, Alto Clar.). She will include you on all the official e-mails. These e-mails are designed to give you necessary information (often directly from the music director a.k.a. Your Fearless Leader, a.k.a. YFL). They are also designed to make you chuckle and grin, so please take that into consideration as you read them. We do want you to enjoy being in the group!

If you have information you feel is pertinent to the entire band, you must give it to the Communications Director and she will let you know if it is appropriate to distribute to the entire group. We keep personal contact information very private and the distribution list is not to be used for personal endeavors. Other organizations have approached the Communications Director wanting access to MVCB mailing lists, they have been refused. As members we need to both appreciate and abide by the same policies.

If you would like to contact individual band members regarding information you would like to share with them, you are more than welcome to speak with them before or after a rehearsal and obtain their permission to include them on your own distribution list.

If you do not have access to e-mail, please let the list director know so you are certain to receive the same information via an alternate method. Also, if you would like to be removed for whatever reason from the list, again, let the Communications Director know.

Announcements During Rehearsal —

Prior to each rehearsal it is often necessary for a few announcements to be given to the band at large. This is another reason for one, being quiet and paying attention and two, being on time.

Website —

The MVCB website URL is www.mesillavalleyconcertband.org This website is for band members as well as the public to learn more about the organization and have quick access to information (such as concert dates and times). Please take the time to look at the website and share the site with friends and relatives.

Program —

The concert program is a voluntary effort which has been handled by Melody Munson-McGee (Bsn.) If there are any corrections that must be made in the program, please inform the Communications Director. This is also for corrections that need to be made regarding donor's names. From time to time a donor may approach any band member regarding such a correction. Please graciously either point out Anita Feil as the appropriate person to talk to, or take down their name and phone number and pass this along to Anita yourself.

Sunshine Fund

The Sunshine Fund was set up to show our fellow members care and appreciation when they have suffered a loss in the family, have been hospitalized or are facing other dire circumstances. The Sunshine Fund is given to a well-respected band member volunteer who is then responsible for collecting money from the band members (usually twice a season). The Sunshine Fund is not a responsibility of the board of directors, and belongs solely to the band. The accounting for the money collected and the purchases made out of that fund are the responsibility of the volunteer.

If you are in the position of having need of the Sunshine Fund benefits, please know the policy is you will receive flowers upon the death of a family member or for a hospitalization. For other matters you will receive a card. Please notify either the music director or communications director of your circumstances if you need to benefit from the Sunshine Fund, and they will contact the volunteer whose responsibility it is to recognize your distress.

Special Programs

Being a community organization we have willingly worked with other organizations to provide additional benefit to the community beyond our regularly scheduled concerts. Here is a brief description of these programs and the expectations of members that go along with them.

Youth Concerts

Each spring, in coordination with the Las Cruces Public Schools and other music groups, we play two youth concerts for area school children in grade 4. These concerts are designed to introduce a new form of music to many who have never heard a live music performance or classical music at all. Each instrument in the band is demonstrated and students are encouraged to think about joining band as they move into middle school.

Why is this important? Research has shown that students involved in music perform better academically and socially. We should all go above and beyond in supporting music in the schools, especially in a day and age when programs across the country are being cut.

These concerts are usually one morning in the middle of the week. It is understood that some will not be able to perform at these concerts. Before the concerts take place, the section leaders will identify who will be at the concert and ensure that each part of music is covered. If this means you are playing a different part than usual, please be flexible and understand it is one of the necessary times you cannot let your ego get in the way.

Dress for the youth concerts is dressy casual.

Scholarships

There are several scholarships associated with the MVCB. The choosing of the recipient of the scholarships is the responsibility of Dr. Clark along with the NMSU Music Department Head.

If you have questions regarding the scholarships or would like to contribute to the scholarships, please ask Dr. Clark.



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Friedrich Nietzsche

Donors

Our organization would not be able to exist without membership dues if we didn't have generous donors. This is how we are able to buy new music, rent music, have guest artists, print programs and have publicity about our concerts.

To thank our donors every year we hold a reception after a specific concert. A sign-up sheet is passed around for members to agree to either bring a food item or money is donated for the organizer to use to purchase additional food items.

The donors very much appreciate this type of acknowledgement of their gifts. What they appreciate most however, is having the opportunity to interact with the band members. It should be something each and every band member does at this time. Please see it as a way to say thank you, both figuratively and literally to these generous people. Don't skip out on the next donor reception, take twenty minutes out of your day to say thank you.

Guest Artists

Typically once a season the MVCB has a guest artist perform with the band as a whole. The arrangement of this is up to the discretion of the music director. Guest conductors also are invited to participate with the band and again it is the decision of the music director as to who is invited to conduct the MVCB.

Small chamber groups made up of band members have been another terrific outlet for musicians in the band. If you are part of such a group and would like to perform on a concert, it is your responsibility to make the request of the music director and audition the piece(s) you would like to perform. Understand that programmatic decisions are made far in advance and if your group is not chosen, it is not necessarily a reflection of your ability, or the quality of your performance (unless so indicated), but may have to do with the programming throughout the season.

If you have any questions regarding any of the information in this guidebook, please let the Communications Director know. She will either clarify for you right away, or give the question to the appropriate board member to answer.

Let's make some music!