



SINGAPORE
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA



SINGAPORE
SYMPHONY
CHILDREN'S
CHOIR

Singapore Symphony Children's Choir

2023 Handbook

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About the SSCC



Nurturing Choral Brilliance

The path to choral brilliance begins at the Singapore Symphony Children's Choir (SSCC). The SSCC is Singapore's pride in children's choral excellence and is the only children's choir that performs with the national orchestra, the SSO.

With over 200 Choristers aged 9 to 18, it offers a multi-tiered, highly-organised membership and training structure. We kindle choral passion by fostering the all-important values for character development and offering abundant local and international opportunities.

Formed in 2006, the choir has sung at the Istana, shared the stage with critically acclaimed The King's Singers, presented at the 33rd ASEAN Summit. The Children's Choir has an album *And I'll Sing Once More* released, and actively commissions and performs works by local composers like Zechariah Goh, and Cultural Medallion winner Kelly Tang, amongst many others.

Vision

The Singapore Symphony Children's Choir is to be an inspiring and artistically-excellent choral programme for young people, esteemed both in Singapore and internationally.

Mission

The Singapore Symphony Children's Choir seeks to enrich the musical and artistic growth of our nation's young people, and nurture a lifelong love for singing and classical music, thereby building a vibrant choral community for Singapore. We develop the talents of the nation's promising young singers, giving them the opportunity to perform with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra.

Desired Outcomes

Each person who goes through the Singapore Symphony Children's Choir programme will emerge a disciplined and confident person who possesses good vocal technique and musicianship, and enjoys classical music. He/she is able to express him or herself artistically, emotionally and socially in a disciplined and responsible manner.

Artistic Staff



Choirmaster Wong Lai Foon

Armed with a passion to inspire choral excellence in children and youth, Wong Lai Foon has been a driving force behind the development and growth of the Singapore Symphony Children's and Youth Choirs. A founding conductor of the Children's Choir (SSCC) at its inception in 2006, Wong has been at the helm as Choirmaster since 2015, and led in the formation of the Youth Choir (SSYC) in 2016.

Under her direction, the SSCC has garnered much praise for its impressive choral tone and polished performances. The SSCC has shared the stage with the celebrated ensemble, The King's Singers, the Maîtrise de Radio France at the Philharmonie de Paris, and has performed for local and world heads of states at state functions.

As a choral educator, Ms Wong aspires to inspire a generation of young choral singers to embrace the choral art and strive for musical and artistic excellence. As Choirmaster, she spearheaded the expansion of the SSCC, which now comprises a Concert Choir, Training Choir, three preparatory choirs, and a Boys' Ensemble. Under her leadership, the SSCC enjoys a busy performing schedule, including performances with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra.

Instructor Ellissa Sayampanathan

Ellissa Sayampanathan obtained her Masters in Music (Choral Conducting) from the University of Cambridge, where she sang with The Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, and studied music pedagogy at the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét, Hungary. She has had the pleasure of studying conducting with Stephen Layton, Pad Zoltán, Graham Ross, and Éva Rozgonyi.

Besides her work at the SSCC, Ellissa currently works regularly with school-based choral groups, teaches music in Special Education classrooms, serves as the Secretary of the Choral Directors' Association (Singapore), and remains active as a singer in various ensembles.





Instructor Phua Ee Kia

Phua Ee Kia was the recipient of the Singapore Ministry of Education Overseas Specialist Award and graduated with a First-Class Honours Degree in Music from the University of Birmingham, UK, in 2004. He studied voice with countertenor Nicholas Clapton, Professor of Singing at the Royal Academy of Music, London.

Phua currently serves on the Artist-Mentor Scheme, an initiative helmed by the Singapore Teachers' Academy for the Arts and supported by the National Arts Council that engages outstanding practitioners to develop MOE teachers' competencies in specialised areas such as music.

Instructor William Lim

William Lim first studied singing with Mr. Choo Hwee Lim before moving on to the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

Some operatic works that William Lim has sung were in Carmen, La Traviata, Pagliacci, Die Zauberflöte, Songs of Liu Sanjie and concert works Bach's B Minor Mass and Beethoven's Choral Fantasia for the Singapore Lyric Opera and the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, The Philharmonic Orchestra, The Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts.



Choir Structure

The SSCC comprises six audition-based ensembles housed under a Training Wing, and a Performance Wing. The progressive training programme is centred around the development of good vocal technique, sight-singing skills, and musicianship.

The Choral Ecosystem

Growing the choral ecosystem: We look to continue developing, inspiring and celebrating choral excellence, at every life stage. With every new chorister joining the SSCC's training programme, we envision a seamless progression for each chorister through the training phase to the performance phase, for the present and through to the future.



Training Wing

- PC1** Preparatory Choir 1A & 1B (Saturday, 0930 – 1200hrs)
The first level of the training programme introduces children to the fundamentals of vocal technique, such as breathing, posture, phonation and diction, together with basic sight-singing and ear-training.
- PC2** Preparatory Choir 2A (Saturday, 1200 – 1430hrs)
Preparatory Choir 2B (Saturday, 1430 – 1700hrs)
The second level progressively builds upon the skills introduced in Preparatory Choir 1, preparing children for eventual admission to the Performance Wing of the SSCC training programme.
- TC** Training Choir (Saturday, 1200 – 1430hrs)
This ensemble gives choristers a foretaste of the demands of the Concert Choir, with the introduction of more challenging repertoire. By this level, singers are expected to be fairly confident as individual singers who can contribute towards creating a healthy choral tone. Musicianship and sight-singing skills are further developed.

The expected time taken to complete the Training Wing phase is a maximum period of 3 years.

Performance Wing



Concert Choir (Saturday, 1500 – 1800hrs)

The treble choir is a highly disciplined and demanding one, providing exciting musical opportunities for choristers. It is the main performing ensemble and the only children's choir with the exclusive opportunity to perform with the SSO.

A commitment period of 2 years is expected upon promotion to the Concert Choir.

Specialised Vocal Training



Boys' Ensemble (Saturday, 1400 – 1600hrs)

A specialised vocal training class, which caters to young men with changing voices. Each voice changes differently and we train our young men through this process, learning to use their new instruments in a safe manner. Choristers in the BE will be assigned to a suitable singing ensemble, to allow them to continue to use their instrument.

Musicianship

The SSCC is committed to helping each child be the best they can be. In developing our choristers, we seek to stretch their musical abilities with our ear-training and musicianship classes. Through these classes, your child will develop the ability to sight-read music off a score, gain confidence as a performer, as well as communicate effectively through singing as a medium of expression.

Musicianship classes are offered as part of the Training Wing's curriculum.

Annual Assessments and Midyear Promotions



SSCC-TW & SNYS Presentation Concert, Victoria Concert Hall, 20 Nov '22

Assessments are necessary to evaluate each chorister's growth in the training programme. To ensure a high level of excellence and to uphold musical standards, choristers are assessed throughout the year, with in-rehearsal feedback, and progress reports developed to each child and issued at the end of each year.

At the recommendation of the choirmaster and instructors, promotion exercises (to the next level) may take place in the middle of the year. Choristers whose performance do not commensurate with the training period, may also be reconsidered on their suitability to continue with the programme.

Rehearsal Format

Our choirs typically rehearse in the Victoria Concert Hall, within the Dance and Music Studios. Choristers can expect each rehearsal to consist of a combination of sectionals, small group participations, musicianship and score study sessions. Rehearsals are focused primarily on vocal development and future concert preparations.

Chorister Expectations and Commitment

An SSCC Chorister must demonstrate a commitment to faithful, consistent and punctual attendance. This show of professionalism is expected in prioritizing our rehearsals and performances. Each chorister plays an important role in their own success, in that of the choir's and the organisation's.



★ 3 Golden SSCC traits: **Confidence, Discipline** and **Responsibility**

Performances

Training Wing (PC1, PC2, TC & BE)

The Training Wing has 2 scheduled performances a year.

May: Mid-year presentation concert

November: Combined presentation concert with the Singapore National Youth Sinfonia (training ensemble of the Singapore National Youth Orchestra)

Performance Wing (CC)

Peppered throughout the SSO season, as and when required and scheduled.

BE choristers are occasionally invited to participate in suitable concerts.

Each SSCC chorister's (and parents') commitment to the organisation is on a long-term basis. For developmental purposes, it is important that choristers participate in all scheduled rehearsals, projects and performances. The SSCC reserves the right to exclude choristers who are deemed to be inadequately prepared for a performance (behaviour and attendance will also be taken into account).

Choristers should be present for full concert programmes as scheduled. Those who miss consecutive concerts will have their SSCC membership reconsidered.

Attendance

(I) **Punctuality**

Endeavour to arrive 10 minutes before the start of all rehearsals and activities to ensure sufficient mental preparation for the rehearsal.

(II) **Apologies & Absences**

In cases of necessary absence such as illness, family tragedy or school activities, inform the chorus administration at the soonest via email to choral@sso.org.sg or in urgent cases, via Whatsapp to the choral mobile number.

Absences for any reason other than mentioned above, will be considered on an individual basis in consultation with the choirmaster and choral management.

(III) Replacement Rehearsals

Replacements are not conducted for rehearsals missed. Choristers can get notes from his/her choirmates and instructors.

(IV) Attendance Requirements

Rehearsal schedules are subject to change. The SSCC reserves the right to add and cancel rehearsals as necessary. Attendance is required for all rehearsals marked compulsory, leading up to a performance. For performance eligibility, each chorister should achieve a minimum of 80% general rehearsal attendance.

(V) Dress and Tutti Rehearsals

Compulsory scheduled dress and tutti rehearsals are typically scheduled on 2-3 weeks before and on concert week itself. An absence from a tutti (or final) rehearsal before a performance may result a chorister's exclusion from a concert.

(VI) Concert Day Warm-ups

Compulsory concert day warm ups are generally scheduled 2-3 hours before a performance. Choristers who do not attend or who are late to warm-ups may be excluded from the performance.

Any critical absences for compulsory rehearsals will be considered on an individual basis in consultation with the choirmaster and choral management.

Conduct & Disciplinary Action

As a representative of the SSCC, it is expected that your child's behaviour will be a positive reflection of our organisation.

To maintain a conducive learning environment for all, your child should endeavour to be well behaved during rehearsals and performances. Choristers who are unable to demonstrate their interest or commitment to the SSCC, may be dropped from future rehearsals and asked to leave the SSCC.

The following disciplinary measures will be administered within the SSCC's rehearsal venues:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 st offence | Direct verbal warning issued to child in rehearsal |
| 2 nd offence | Direct warning to child, choral management will be in touch |
| 3 rd offence | Referred to choirmaster, choral management will be in touch |
| 4 th offence | Parents notified & re-evaluation of child's suitability for SSCC's training programme |

In cases of serious misbehaviour i.e. verbal or physical assault and harassment, and, destruction of property, the SSCC team and management will be informed, and parents notified of possible suspension or expulsion.

Provisional/Probational Enrolments

Choristers who have been accepted into or have progressed onto the next SSCC training phase, on provisional/probationary terms, will be closely monitored over the next term after which an assessment will be made. Trainees who do not show sufficient improvement, and are still found to be lacking in the desired attributes, may be asked to sit out of performances, or be asked to leave the programme.

Administrative Matters

Update of Personal Particulars

Changes in personal particulars must be notified to the choral management to ensure prompt and effective communication.

Testimonials

Testimonials can be provided in digital copy, upon request. Do note that your request should reach the choral management at least a month in advance.

Declaration of Learning Needs and Medical Conditions

Be upfront with the choral management, on your child's learning difficulties and/or previous and existing medical conditions. This information will help the SSCC team prepare, and assist your child effectively, should the need arise.

Leave of Absences

(I) Application

LOA requests, short-term or extended, must be submitted in writing to the choral management for approval. Your application should reach choral management at least 10 days in advance. Where you are required to send in substantiating documents, do ensure that the attachments are in a Windows readable format e.g. PDF, jpg and word doc.

Choristers sitting for major national examinations (eg PSLE, 'O' & 'A' levels, IB) are allowed to apply for a study leave, for a maximum period of 4 weeks. Extended leave of absence, beyond 4 weeks, will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

(II) Return from Leave

Choristers returning from extended leave (9 months or more) will be subject to re-auditions and should notify choral management (at minimum) 2 weeks prior to returning to the choir, so that records can be updated and music made available.

Withdrawal & Termination

(I) Voluntary

- Missing rehearsals more than 4 times without notice

Choristers will be considered voluntarily withdrawn if he/she misses lessons more than 4 times without prior written notice.

- Personal / Health Reasons

Any chorister who wishes to withdraw from the choir must submit a written withdrawal notice with a minimum of a full term's notice. This notice of withdrawal should include a reason for departure and the date from which the withdrawal is to be effective.

If prior written notice is not submitted, choristers may be liable for the next academic semester or year's full semester's fees, even if they are no longer continuing with the SSCC.

(II) Non-Voluntary (i.e. Membership Cessation)

The SSCC reserves the right to dismiss any student due to prolonged absences without valid reason, disciplinary reasons, overdue tuition payments or parental non-compliances with the SSCC's policies.

Members withdrawn or with ceased membership wishing to re-join SSCC, will be subject to a re-audition.

In all cases of voluntary and non-voluntary withdrawal and termination, there will be no pro-rata or refund of fees (partial or entire). Fee refunds for health or personal reasons, within reason and sufficient documentation, will be at the discretion of the choral management.



Uniform and Performance Attires

Weekly Attire

- SSCC T-shirt
- SSCC lanyard and photo pass

Training Wing (PC1, PC2, TC, BE) Performance Attire & Concert Choir (CC) Informal Attire

- SSCC T-shirt
- Plain dark blue or black denim jeans
- Plain patent black flats (Girls)
- Plain patent black shoes and black socks (Boys)



L-R: Loy Sheng Rui (Boys' Ensemble & Youth Choir) and Lisa Chang (Concert Choir) members

Concert Choir Formal Attire

Girls

- Red dresses - dresses to be hemmed and adjusted to 2 inches below the knee
- Long hair to be tied up in a bun (ballet exam standard)
- Light makeup to be put on
- Plain black ballet flats

Boys

- White shirt
- Black long pants
- Red cummerbund and bow tie
- Black socks
- Plain patent black shoes



Members of SSCC - Concert Choir
From L-R: Maya Bessarab, Loy Sheng Rui, Tristan Hui, Violet Ong, Oliver Tay, Navya Singh, Jadyn Koh

Financial Information

The Singapore Symphony Children's Choir is a non-profit organisation and relies on grants from the National Arts Council, generous donations, performance income and member participation fees.

| Ensembles | Fee (w/o gst) | <i>All fees are in SGD and subjected to the prevailing GST rates.</i> |
|-------------------|---------------|---|
| Preparatory Choir | \$1600.00 | |
| Training Choir | \$1850.00 | |
| Concert Choir | \$2400.00 | |
| Boys' Ensemble | \$1200.00 | |

These additional administrative fees are included for all new members:

| | |
|---|----------|
| Annual Music & Administration Fee | \$85.00 |
| One-Time Enrolment Fee <i>Includes SSCC starter pack</i> | \$100.00 |

Membership to the Singapore Symphony Children's Choir is a yearlong placement with fees payable in advance for the entire year. Parents have the option of breaking up the payment into bi-annual payments. Programme fees paid are non-refundable.

Choristers on short/long term leave will not be afforded partial refunds. If a Chorister withdraws or is terminated from the SSCC programme at any time during the season, fees will not be refunded.

An administrative fee of S\$50.00 will be imposed for late payments as other administration duties may have to be carried out. SSCC reserves the right to terminate a member's enrolment should the term fees remain outstanding for more than 6 weeks after the due date.

Miscellaneous Costs

The first piece of all miscellaneous items are included in the "Starter Sack and Music" cost as listed above. Members may purchase additional quantities at the cost below.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| SSCC T-shirt | \$15.00 |
| Manuscript Book | \$2.00 |
| Tuning Fork | \$6.00 |
| Replacement of Misplaced SSCC Folder | \$15.00 |
| Replacement of Distributed Scores | 1 st Time: \$2 Per Score |
| | 2 nd Time: \$4 Per Score |

Financial Assistance Schemes

SSCC Bursary

The SSCC Bursary is awarded at the start of each year and cover full costs of semester fees. To be considered for the SSCC Bursary, choristers must be Singapore citizens who have been accepted into the programme and are recipients of the Ministry of Education Financial Assistance Scheme (MOE-FAS).

Financial assistance awarded with the bursary may include: full/half academic year's term fees, miscellaneous programme fees i.e. SSCC t-shirt, lesson materials and other training/rehearsal related requirements. The bursary awarded will not include any disbursement of monies, nor cover any incidental costs related to replacement of or added purchase of Choristership and/or training material.

Subsidised Fees and/or Payment Plan

Aside from the SSCC Bursary, the SSCC has a Subsidised Fees Scheme (SSCC-SFS) which may benefit choristers within the lower income bracket who qualify for school-based fee subsidies but not under MOE-FAS.

Based on a needs review, the choral management may award a partial subsidy of the year's training fees and/or a payment plan arrangement to the chorister.

You may find more information on the SSCC's financial assistance schemes via the enrolment registration link, or write to us at choral@sso.org.sg.

Membership Benefits

I. Digital Card

An honorary SSO Season Pass membership is awarded to every current and joining member. This Season Pass access is awarded for **one year**, and allows members to enjoy merchant privileges at our partner establishments [linked here](#).

To activate merchant discounts, flash your digital card at the merchant counter before purchase.

II. Ticket Discounts

Members are eligible for two types of ticket discounts as below.

| Type | Performers' Discount | SSG Family Discount |
|----------------|---|---|
| What is it | Only applicable for concerts that the choir member is performing in | All members of ensembles under the Singapore Symphony Group are entitled to this discount |
| Pre-requisites | Must be an SSCC member | |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Details | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% discount • Limited to 4 tickets per transaction <p>Please refer to choral emails for updated info</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% off SSO PlayOn, SSO Subscription and Red Balloon concerts • 10% off all other SSG shows |
| Ticketing Help | <p>For any concerns or queries relating to ticketing, kindly drop SSO Ticketing a note: ticketing@sso.org.sg</p> | |

Choral Management

The choral management team works Mondays to Fridays between 10:00am to 6:30pm. We are contactable via the Choral Mobile on rehearsal days, and via the respective office lines on non-rehearsal days.

Please allow us 5 working days to respond to queries via email.



SSCC & SSYC with SSO, performing Faure's Requiem, under the baton of Maestro Stephen Layton, VCH, 16 Sep '22



Our Boys' Ensemble at the SSCC-TW x SNYS Presentation Concert, Victoria Concert Hall, 20 Nov '22



Singapore Symphony Chorus Recital, Victoria Concert Hall, 29 May '22

Connect with Us

Manager
Choral Programmes
Direct office line
Email

Regina Lee
+65 6602 4215
regina@sso.org.sg

Executive
Direct office line
Choral Mobile
Choral Email

Mimi Syaahira
+65 6602 4248
+65 8121 3648
choral@sso.org.sg

Address

80 Bencoolen Sreet, Level 8
NAFA Campus One Tower Block
Singapore 189655
+65 6602 4200
+65 6602 4222

SSO Main Directory Line
Fax

Social Media

Facebook
[@sgsymphonychildrenschoir](https://www.facebook.com/sgsymphonychildrenschoir)

Instagram
[@sgsymphonychildrenschoir](https://www.instagram.com/sgsymphonychildrenschoir)

Website
www.sso.org.sg/sscc

The SSO Family at Esplanade's 20th Anniversary Concert, Illuminations, Esplanade Concert Hall, 5 Nov '22

