

The Houston Symphony Chorus

Betsy Cook Weber, *director*

Scott Holshouser, *pianist*

Anna Diemer, *principal vocal and diction coach*

Julia FitzGerald, *interim chorus manager*

Tony Sessions, *chorus librarian and stage manager*

TENTATIVE 2021- 2022 Season Calendar TENTATIVE **(Everything about this coming season is subject to change.)**

Revised 7/5/21

TENTATIVE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Andrea Bocelli

Number of Singers: 60

Choral Preparation: Julia Hall

Conductor: TBA

Regular Rehearsals from 7 – 10 pm; one absence is allowed before an ITS is required. Location: Trinity Lutheran Church; 1316 Washington Ave. 77007.

Monday, October 11

Wednesday, October 13

Thursday, October 14

Friday, October 15

Monday, October 18

Wednesday, October 20

ITS (Independent Testing Session)

Wednesday, October 20, from 5 – 6:30 pm by appointment

Orchestra Rehearsal (mandatory)

Thursday, October 21; call 3:45 pm at Toyota Center downtown

Performance (mandatory)

Thursday, October 21; call 7:15 pm at Toyota Center downtown

Note: Performers should plan on staying at Toyota Center from 3:45 pm on October 21 until the conclusion of the performance; dinner will be provided.

TENTATIVE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Messiah

Number of Singers: 60

Choral Preparation: Janwin Overstreet-Goode

Conductor: Bernard Labadie

Regular Rehearsals: Tuesday evenings from 7 – 10 pm; one absence is allowed before an ITS is required. Location: Trinity Lutheran Church; 1316 Washington Ave. 77007.

Tuesday, October 5

Tuesday, October 12

Tuesday, October 19

Tuesday, October 26

Tuesday, November 2

Tuesday, November 9

Tuesday, November 16

Tuesday, November 23

Tuesday, November 30

ITS (Individual Testing Session for those singers who miss more than one rehearsal)

Tuesday, November 30, 5 – 6:30 pm by appointment. Location: Trinity Lutheran.

Conductor's Piano Rehearsal (mandatory). Location: TBA

Tuesday December 7; call: 7:15 pm.

Orchestra rehearsals (mandatory); Jones Hall

Wednesday, December 8; call: 7:15 pm.

Thursday, December 9; call: 7:15 pm.

Performances: (all mandatory): Jones Hall

Friday, December 10; call: 7:15 pm.

Saturday, December 11; call: 7:15 pm.

Sunday, December 12; call 1:45 pm.

TENTATIVE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Xmas Pops

(Please note that the Xmas Pops concert schedule is very tentative and is likely to change.)

Number of Singers: 60

Choral Preparation: Matthew Lyon Hazzard

Conductor: Michael Krajewski

Regular Rehearsals: Tuesday evenings from 7 - 10 pm; one absence is allowed before ITS is required. Location: Trinity Lutheran Church; 1316 Washington Ave. 77007.

Tuesday, October 5

Tuesday, October 12

Tuesday, October 19

Tuesday, October 26

Tuesday, November 2

Tuesday, November 9

Tuesday, November 16

Tuesday, November 23

Tuesday, November 30

Tuesday, December 7 (No Xmas Pops rehearsal because of *Messiah* Concert Week.)

Tuesday, December 14

ITS (Individual Testing Session for those singers who miss more than one rehearsal)

Tuesday, December 14, 5 – 6:30 pm by appointment. Location: Trinity Lutheran.

Possible Conductor's Piano Rehearsal (mandatory); Location: TBA.

Tuesday, December 14, 7 – 10 pm.

Possible Conductor's Piano Rehearsal/Orchestra Rehearsal (mandatory); Location: Jones Hall.

Thursday, December 16, call: 5:45 pm.

Orchestra Rehearsal (mandatory); Location: Jones Hall.

Thursday, December 16, call: 7:15 pm.

Performances: (mandatory, but will consider email requests to be excused from one concert; these requests will be considered in the order in which they arrive, and are due November 1 at the latest.) Location: Jones Hall

Friday, December 17, Time TBD (Conoco)

Saturday, December 18, call: 1:45 pm. (tentative)

Saturday, December 18, call: 7:15 pm.

Sunday, December 19, call: 1:45 pm.

Sunday, December 19, call: 6:45 pm.

Monday, December 20, times TBD (tentative)

Tuesday, December 21, times TBD (tentative)

TENTATIVE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Harry Potter

THIS SERIES IS VERY TENTATIVE AND SHOULD NOT BE MENTIONED/POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR DISCUSSED PUBLICLY.

Number of Singers: 40 (SATB)

Choral Preparation: Betsy Cook Weber

Conductor: TBA

Regular Rehearsals from 7 – 10 pm; one absence is allowed before ITS is required. Location: Trinity Lutheran Church; 1316 Washington Ave. 77007.

Friday, January 7

Monday, January 10

Wednesday, January 12

ITS

Wednesday, January 12 from 5 – 6:30 by appointment

Conductor's Piano Rehearsal (mandatory)

Thursday, January 13, call: 5:45 pm

Orchestra Rehearsal (mandatory)

Thursday, January 13, call 7:15 pm

Performances (all mandatory)

Friday, January 14, call 7:15 pm (tentative)

Saturday, January 15, call 1:45 pm (tentative)

Saturday, January 15, call 7:15 pm (tentative)

Sunday, January 16, call 1:45 pm (tentative)

Sunday, January 16, call 7:15 pm (tentative)

NOTE: The actual performance schedule will be determined later.

TENTATIVE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Mahler Symphony No. 2 (*Resurrection*)

Number of singers: 120

Choral Preparation: Betsy Cook Weber

Conductor: Andrés Orozco-Estrada

Regular Rehearsals: Tuesday evenings from 7 – 10 pm; one absence is allowed before ITS is required. Location: Trinity Lutheran Church; 1316 Washington Ave. 77007.

Tuesday, January 4

Tuesday, January 11

Tuesday, January 18

Tuesday, January 25

Tuesday, February 1

Tuesday, February 8

Tuesday, February 15

Tuesday, February 22

Tuesday, March 1

Tuesday, March 8

Tuesday, March 15

Tuesday, March 22

Tuesday, March 29

Tuesday, April 5

Tuesday, April 12

Tuesday, April 19

ITS (Individual Testing Session for those singers who miss more than one rehearsal)

Tuesday, April 19 from 5:00 – 6:30 by appointment. Location: Trinity Lutheran.

Possible Conductor's Piano Rehearsal, in which case it will be mandatory. Location: TBA.

Tuesday, April 26, 7 – 10 pm.

Possible Conductor's Piano Rehearsal, in which case it will be mandatory. Location: Jones Hall.

Wednesday, April 27, call 5:45 p.m.

Orchestra Rehearsals (all mandatory). Location Jones Hall.

Wednesday, April 27, call 7:15 pm.

Thursday, April 28, call 7:15 pm.

Performances (all mandatory). Location: Jones Hall.

Friday, April 29, call 7:15 pm.

Saturday, April 30, call 7:15 pm.

Sunday, May 1, call 1:45 pm.

TENTATIVE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE (Revised 7/5/21)

Beethoven Symphony No. 9

Number of singers: 120

Choral Preparation: Betsy Cook Weber

Conductor: Juraj Valčuha

Regular Rehearsals: Tuesday evenings from 7 – 10 pm; one absence is allowed before ITS is required. Location: Trinity Lutheran Church; 1316 Washington Ave. 77007.

Tuesday, January 4

Tuesday, January 11

Tuesday, January 18

Tuesday, January 25

Tuesday, February 1

Tuesday, February 8

Tuesday, February 15

Tuesday, February 22

Tuesday, March 1

Tuesday, March 8

Tuesday, March 15

Tuesday, March 22

Tuesday, March 29

Tuesday, April 5

Tuesday, April 12

Tuesday, April 19

Tuesday, April 26 (no rehearsal because of Mahler Concert Week.)

Tuesday, May 3

Tuesday, May 10

Tuesday, May 17 (possible Conductor's Piano Rehearsal, in which case it is mandatory.)

ITS (Individual Testing Session for those singers who miss more than one rehearsal)

Tuesday, May 10, 5 – 6:30 pm by appointment. Location: Trinity Lutheran.

Possible Conductor's Piano Rehearsal (mandatory)

Tuesday, May 17, 7 – 10 pm. Location: TBA

Possible Conductor's Piano Rehearsal (mandatory)

Wednesday, May 18, call: 5:45 pm. Location: Jones Hall

Orchestra Rehearsals (both mandatory). Location: Jones Hall

Wednesday, May 18, call 7:15 – 10 pm.

Thursday, May 19, call 7:15 – 10 pm.

Performances (all mandatory). Location: Jones Hall

Friday, May 20, call 7:15 pm.

Saturday, May 21, call 7:15 pm.

Sunday, May 22, call 1:45 pm.

TENTATIVE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE (Revised 7/5/21)

John Williams in Concert

Number of singers: 120

Choral Preparation: Betsy Cook Weber

Conductor: Steven Reineke

Regular Rehearsals: Tuesday evenings from 7 – 10 pm; one absence is allowed before ITS is required. Location: Trinity Lutheran Church; 1316 Washington Ave. 77007.

Tuesday, January 4

Tuesday, January 11

Tuesday, January 18

Tuesday, January 25

Tuesday, February 1

Tuesday, February 8

Tuesday, February 15

Tuesday, February 22

Tuesday, March 1

Tuesday, March 8

Tuesday, March 15

Tuesday, March 22

Tuesday, March 29

Tuesday, April 5

Tuesday, April 12

Tuesday, April 19

Tuesday, April 26 no rehearsal because of Mahler Concert Week

Tuesday, May 3

Tuesday, May 10

Tuesday, May 17 no rehearsal because of Beethoven Concert Week

ITS (Individual Testing Session for those singers who miss more than one rehearsal)

Tuesday, May 24, 5 – 6:30 pm by appointment

Possible Conductor's Piano Rehearsal (mandatory)

Tuesday, May 24 7 – 10 pm

Possible Conductor's Piano Rehearsal (mandatory)

Wednesday, May 25; call 5:45 p.m.

Orchestra Rehearsal (mandatory)

Wednesday, May 25; call 7:15 p.m.

Performances (all mandatory)

Friday, May 27; call 7:15 pm.

Saturday, May 28; call 7:15 pm.

Sunday, May 29; call 1:45 pm.

Betsy's answers to FAQ

1. What safety protocols will be in place for rehearsals and performances this fall?

These policies are evolving as the world health situation evolves; in short, these protocols could change at any time. If you are interested in singing, but not entirely comfortable with the protocols as described below, my suggestion is that you complete the *Interest Form* and *Audition Form* (if required) and indicate any concerns you have in the space provided. Please know that we support each singer's right to determine and manage their own safety.

- COVID Vaccinations will be required.
- Proof of vaccination will be required.
- Exceptions to vaccination will not be allowed for Fall 2021; this policy may change for Spring 2022, but singers will not be placed in any series until HSO has vaccine documentation in hand.
- Masks will be optional in rehearsal and in performance.
- Seating will follow guidelines provided by Trinity Lutheran for regular rehearsals and by the City of Houston for Jones Hall. There will be more distance between singers than we have had in the past, but, at this point, I am not certain exactly what that distance will be. During regular rehearsals, singers are welcome to move to create more space for themselves.

2. How will you determine placements?

All interested applicants should complete the *HSC 2021-2022 Interest Form* located on the HSC website (<https://houstonsymphony.org/about-us/chorus/>). They should also email a copy of their COVID certificate to Julia Boldt FitzGerald, Interim Chorus Manager (Julia.Fitzgerald@houstonsymphony.org). The due date for these materials is Sunday, July 31, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. Singers who auditioned for the 2019 – 2020 season don't have to do anything else.

Applicants who did not audition for the 2019 – 2020 season must also complete the online *Audition Form*, which is also accessible on the Chorus website.

3. If I want to try to improve my 2019 – 2020 audition scores, is it possible to re-audition for placement in the 2021 – 2022 series?

Yes, in that scenario, you should submit the *Audition Form*, which can be found on the HSC website. You must submit a full re-audition, not just one category. Whether you improve your scores or not, we will only consider this new audition score

4. What is the due date for completion of the *Interest Form* and the *Audition Form*?

The due date for everything is Sunday, July 31, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. Please note that the completion of the sight singing portion of the audition is appointment, and the last sight singing appointment is July 30. Please plan accordingly.

5. When will placements be announced?

Around mid-August via email.

6. Will you be accepting audition material after the July 31 due date?

Yes, we will be soliciting and accepting auditions throughout the season, but the initial placements — the vast majority of placements — will be assigned based on the first batch of material, which is due on July 31.

7. I'm a little bit bummed to see that each of the Fall 2021 series will use only 60 singers.

I know. I understand. I am sympathetic. It is true that a number of singers may have to wait until Spring 2022 to return to singing with the Chorus. The good news is that the numbers required for our Spring 2022 programming will be closer to “normal.”

8. Did you make a mistake in the “Anna Diemer” listing at the top of the calendar?

No, over the course of COVID, Anna’s private studio and coaching schedule exploded in a very good way. Sadly for us, but happily for her, her schedule is now overly-full doing work that gives her even more happiness (and remuneration) than keeping the Chorus running smoothly. I am pleased that she isn’t leaving us, but is instead, transitioning into the role of *HSC Principal Vocal and Diction Coach*. As you well know, her work in that regard is absolutely superb.

9. Who will be the new Chorus Manager?

Management will be accepting applications over the course of the summer. The new Manager will hopefully, be in place in time for our October rehearsals. The job posting can be found here.

<https://www.paycomonline.net/v4/ats/web.php/jobs/ViewJobDetails?job=37489&clientkey=5DF197CB483F38559B6F80A2C5C8B953>.

In the meantime, please join me in thanking Chorus Council member, Julia FitzGerald, who will stand in for Anna during the summer as Interim Chorus Manager. If you need to contact the Chorus over the summer, please email Julia at Julia.Fitzgerald@houstonSymphony.org

10. So why isn't Betsy Cook Weber listed under “Choral Preparation” for the Fall 2021 series?

One of the perks of academia is the possibility of a sabbatical, during which time a faculty member is allowed to work on a project instead of teaching. Ensemble directors rarely take sabbaticals because we (probably foolishly) worry that our programs will lose momentum if we take time off. In the fall of 2020, I realized that my UH and HSC schedules would both be unusually light in the fall of 2021. With

this in mind, I submitted a proposal to UH and simultaneously notified HSO management of my plans. I received enthusiastic support from both organizations for which I am very grateful.

In short, at about the same time you all begin your October rehearsals, I will travel to the UK, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Sweden to study and write case studies of a number of outstanding collegiate, or collegiate-aged mixed choruses. (Trinity College Cambridge, Youth Choir Kamer, Maska, Balsis, St. Jacob Vokalensemble, Royal Holloway to name some.) I will also be studying and visiting some outstanding all-volunteer Symphony Choruses like our own (City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus; they premiered Britten's *War Requiem*, Vaughan Williams *Mass in G Minor*, etc.), London Symphony Chorus, and the BBC Symphony Chorus.

My project consists primarily of the case studies, but I would be lying if I didn't tell you that I hope to establish relationships that might evolve into future collaborations for both UH students and HSC.

11. So, who will be our fearless leaders while you're gone?

Our December series preparations will be led by three of our outstanding rehearsal conductors with whom you have worked before. Julia Hall will lead preparations for our concert with Andrea Bocelli in the Toyota Center. Janwin Overstreet-Goode will lead *Messiah* preparations, and Matthew (Matt) Lyon Hazzard, whom so many of you got to know during *El Niño* rehearsals, will lead the fray for *Xmas Pops*. These directors' impressive bios will be posted on our HSC website over the course of the summer.

I look forward to returning for our Spring 2022 series. ☺