



Choir Handbook 2025-2026

ETown Vocal Music Society Artistic Staff

Jane Berry

Artistic Director - ETown Minors and Augmented

Caleb Nelson

Vocal Specialist/Tenor Vocal Coach/ Advisor ETown Extended

Elle Lyrette

Soprano Vocal Coach

Jessica Heine

Alto Vocal Coach

Chris Scott

Tenor Vocal Coach

Tim To

Bass Vocal Coach

ETown Vocal Music Society Board

Debbie Quast, Co-Chair

Amber Othen, Secretary

Kelly Burns, Director at Large

Sheena Brandon Geier, Director at Large

Robin Gerow, Director at Large

Evgeny Kuznetsov, Director at Large

Alecto Brandt, Co-Chair

Chris Moore, Treasurer

Laura Ferguson, Director at Large

Darek Burdziuk, Director at Large

Laura Schultz, Director at Large

*Welcome to the 2025-2026 season of the ETown Vocal Music Society!
We are excited to make music with you this season.*

About our Society

The ETown Vocal Music Society (ETVMS) is a non-profit organization with a board and staff dedicated to continually bringing a cappella vocal music to each member of our two ensembles. With the ETown Minors ensemble in its fifteenth season, and ETown Augmented entering its tenth season in 2024-25, ETVMS is thrilled to continue encouraging growth in our community!

Communication

We believe it's important to have a strong digital communication base with our members, since so much of what we do today is scheduled online. Important information about rehearsals and upcoming performances is sent out via email, and you can connect with us on social media, too.

Email

Please make sure that we have your most recent or most-often-checked email address in our files. We will use email to get in touch with you for weekly email updates and any other important news.

Reach us at: ETownAugmented@gmail.com Contact our treasurer at: ETownFinancial@gmail.com
For ETown Extended inquiries: ETownExtended@gmail.com

Website

You will find information about registration, our coaches, events, [our debut EP album](#), and much more on our website. Check it out! <http://www.etownvms.com/>

Social Media

Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/ETownAugmented>

We also have a private members only Facebook page for Augmented members to stay connected. To join search "ETown Augmented Members" or ask someone who is already a member to add you!

Music Archive

You can download our sheet music to your tablet instead of using a paper and binder. Click [HERE](#) to download the sheet music. Any vocal tracks created to help us practice will also be found in the same place. Please don't share the digital music or vocal tracks outside our group.

Fees

For the 2025-2026 Season there are several different fee options (also outlined in the Registration form).

1. **Fees are \$180 per cycle** payable as:
 - a. Two lump sum payments of \$180 at the beginning of each cycle;
 - b. One lump sum payment of \$340 early bird rate for the whole season, if prepaid by the specified date - October 16;

- c. One lump sum payment of \$360 for the whole season, if paid after the early bird period ends; or
 - d. By special arrangement with the Treasurer.
2. As part of our agreement with Eastwood Community League, members in good standing of Eastwood Community League are eligible for a discount of 15% per cycle with proof of membership. If this is something you would like to access, please contact the Treasurer.
 3. As we are sharing the space with Eastwood, we are committed to helping out by providing volunteer support for their Bingos and other events such as Casinos, and community outreach events. The Board will provide information as opportunities arise.

Fees may be paid by cheque (payable to “ETown Vocal Music Society”), cash, or email money transfer (Etownfinancial@gmail.com).

If you have any questions or concerns about the fees, please contact the Treasurer at Etownfinancial@gmail.com.

Volunteering

ETVMS is a non-profit society, and as such, we need a lot of volunteer help to ensure our choirs run smoothly and efficiently. At our AGM in October we will be voting on new members to the board. Please consider letting your name stand to join our other enthusiastic volunteers! We will have a casino in the spring that we will need to staff, and a variety of Bingos to help staff for Eastwood as part of our rental agreement with the community league.

If you have an interest in volunteering in another capacity, we have a variety of opportunities available. Contact any one of our board members for more information about what areas we currently need assistance with!

Policies and Guidelines

Code of Conduct

The vision of ETown Augmented (and all bodies of the ETVMS) is for singers of various abilities and experience to come together for music learning, as well as a positive social experience. In the spirit of these objectives, we ask that you be respectful of the rehearsal process by coming prepared with all your materials, learning your music to the best of your ability, and keeping your talking to a minimum to maximize the learning opportunity for yourself and those around you. When the ETown Minors join us for rehearsal time, we know you will be great role models for these young choristers and set a positive example for efficient and fun rehearsals!

What to bring to rehearsal

Please always bring your music, a pencil, an eraser, and a water bottle to rehearsal. Members are expected to wear their name tag at rehearsals, as it allows everyone to learn your name and pronouns and enables the director and coaches to address you properly when you have a question.

ETVMS Safe Space Policy

ETVMS is dedicated to providing a safe and inclusive vocal music experience for everyone, regardless of skill or background, gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, ability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, or any other characteristic or trait.

We support the idea that section parts do not need to be tied to gender. We encourage members to avoid assumptions regarding this idea and be supportive of all members' comfort level and desire to sing in their preferred section. Note that coaches/directors will, at times, ask members to change sections to challenge them vocally and balance our sound as a group. We hope that, in these instances, you will feel encouraged to rise to the challenge!

We are all responsible for creating a positive environment and at ETVMS we expect all members to engage respectfully in choir activities to ensure a safe experience for everybody. By attending our rehearsals, performances, and any other events affiliated with ETVMS, you agree to abide by these expectations and be held accountable if you engage in inappropriate behaviour.

Each of us is the ultimate authority on our own boundaries, which may be different with different people and which may change over time. You can always tell another member that they've crossed a boundary of yours or talk with a Board member about it. Each of us is also responsible for our own behaviour. Please endeavor to respect every person in the room and remember that your actions affect those around you. If you cross a boundary, apologize, avoid belittling or denying another person's experience, and ask consent for or refrain from engaging in any behaviour, conversation, or language that has the potential to cross a boundary.

ETVMS does not tolerate any type of harassment among its members. This includes inappropriate or unwanted verbal comments/quips/jokes or verbal abuse, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.

If any member engages in behaviour that contributes to an unsafe environment or constitutes harassment, intentionally or otherwise, Board members may take any action they deem appropriate to ensure a safe environment is restored for the benefit of all members. Any member asked to stop inappropriate behaviour is expected to comply immediately. **Any member who does not comply immediately may be sanctioned or expelled from the event or organization without a refund, at the discretion of the Board of Directors.**

Our Home

We are fortunate to have Eastwood Community League as our choir's home! Every effort must be made to keep the rehearsal space neat and clean at all times. Please help out by putting away your chair at the end of rehearsal and taking any garbage with you.

Music

Sheet music will be provided to you throughout each cycle. Please take good care of your sheet music by keeping it in a protective folder, and make markings only in pencil so that the next person who uses it can erase them. All sheet music must be returned in good condition at the end of the cycle, or upon leaving the choir, whichever is first.

Arrangements

ETVMS is open to in-house arrangements. Choir members who arrange music may present completed arrangements to the Artistic Director/ETVMS Board for approval. The Artistic Director determines when/if the piece will be sung and by which choir. The Artistic Director will consider the level of difficulty

to learn the piece in approving the piece. An honorarium of \$100 per piece that is approved by the Artistic Director will be awarded to the arranger.

Rehearsal recordings and video

Please do not share any recordings provided to you or that you take during rehearsal. This helps us keep our arrangements protected and private, and ensures that other members of the choir are not having their image and/or voices shared without permission. Thank you for respecting our arrangers and your peers.

Attendance and Punctuality

Singers are expected to attend rehearsals regularly and be on time. We understand that it's necessary to miss a rehearsal or two from time to time. If you know you will be missing a rehearsal, please email us at etownaugmented@gmail.com to let us know. If you miss 3 or more rehearsals during a cycle, it is your responsibility to check in with the director to find out what you have missed and make a plan for learning your music. **Please note that the director and/or vocal coaches reserve the right to ask a singer to not participate in a concert if they feel that the member has missed too many rehearsals to be adequately prepared.** All singers participating in concerts MUST attend the dress rehearsal or they will not be allowed to sing in the concert. (Extenuating circumstances will be taken into account on a case-by-case basis).

Health and Safety

ETVMS is devoted to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy singing environment for staff and choristers. As such, ETVMS expects all staff, members, and volunteers to do the following before participating in rehearsals or events:

- Monitor yourself for new or worsening symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose, loss of sense of taste or smell)
- Stay home when you are sick
- Follow all ETVMS guidelines for singing safely:
 - Maintain physical distancing
 - As appropriate, wear a mask upon entering rehearsal and performance spaces and continuously for the duration.

About our Artistic Staff



Jane Berry - Artistic Director of Etown Minors and Etown Augmented

Jane Berry comes from a diverse background of musical experience. Jane grew up singing in choirs from an early age, performing in both jazz and classical settings before eventually going on to begin her music studies at Acadia University where she completed a BMUS in Composition. She then continued to complete a MA at University of Ottawa and PhD at the University of Alberta. Jane is one of the key arrangers of the works we sing. She works her magic with singers of all ages, and does a phenomenal job of bringing out the best in everyone she works with.



Caleb Nelson - Vocal Specialist/Sound Engineer/Advisor ETown Extended

Caleb Nelson is our resident master of all trades. From coaching any voice part, to arranging a majority of our mashups, to playing cajon, he does it all and makes it look effortless! Caleb has extensive experience in Edmonton's music scene, specializing in classical, contemporary, and pop vocal techniques. He has worked with Alberta's top choirs, including the 2025 Juno Nominated Luminous Voices. This past spring his first original choral composition co-written with poet Anna Marie Sewell, *To Wash The World*, had its world premiere.

Chris Scott - Tenor Coach

Chris Scott is a multidisciplinary artist with a strong emphasis in composing music for digital media based in treaty 6 territory. He is a graduate of Berklee Valencia's Masters in Music: Scoring for Film, Television and Video games, as well as the Boston Conservatory's Musical Theatre BFA. He is honored to have been welcomed into ETown and is ecstatic to be coaching as the Tenor Section lead. Chris is an artist that thrives in collaborative atmospheres and can be seen working towards building his career as a music creative in Edmonton through his various independent projects, self-produced musicals and singing with Chronos Vocal Ensemble.

Instagram/SoundCloud: [chris.t.scott](#)

Web: www.christophertomasscott.com.



Jessica Heine - Alto Coach

Singer and songwriter Jessica Heine (Hi-na) charms audiences with her songwriting and dynamic voice. A fine arts graduate with a BMus in vocal performance, she revels in singing classical music, but her real passion is folk music and storytelling through song. Jessica recently released her first new album in almost 10 years, *Goodbye Party*; a record that explores farewells, some of them incredibly hard, others providing new opportunities and beginnings. In this new music is an optimism that showcases a hopeful strength of spirit that Heine breathes not only into her music, but her life as well.



Elle Lyrette - Soprano Coach

Elle Lyrette was born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta. She moved to Winnipeg in 2008 to complete her Bachelor of Music from the University of Manitoba. While in Winnipeg, Elle was a member of two professional choirs. Elle moved back to Edmonton in 2015 and sang with Chronos Vocal Ensemble and was an associate member of Pro Coro Canada. She does a variety of gigs in the Edmonton area and is very excited to be working with ETown Vocal Music Society. Elle's passion is singing, making music with others and has a love for early music!

Tim To - Bass Coach

Tim To is known among choirs in Edmonton for his love of the International Phonetic Alphabet, and for the various tuning forks he carries around with him all the time. As a singer involved with the local classical music scene, he takes any opportunity he can to sing early music and baroque repertoire, but really he just likes singing great music with great people.



2025-2026 Season Dates

AUGMENTED // CYCLE 1									
SEPT / 25		OCT / 25		NOV / 25		DEC / 25		JAN / 26	
		2	Regular Rehearsal	6	Regular Rehearsal	4	Regular Rehearsal	1	No Rehearsal
11	Open Rehearsal	9	Regular Rehearsal	13	Regular Rehearsal	11	Regular Rehearsal	8	Regular Rehearsal
18	Regular Rehearsal	16	Regular Rehearsal	20	Regular Rehearsal	18	Regular Rehearsal	15	Regular Rehearsal
25	Regular Rehearsal	23	AGM during rehearsal	27	Regular Rehearsal	25	No Rehearsal	22	Dress Rehearsal
		30	Regular Rehearsal					24	CONCERT

AUGMENTED // CYCLE 2									
FEB / 26		MAR / 26		APR / 26		MAY / 26		JUN / 26	
Jan 29	Open Rehearsal	5	Regular Rehearsal	2	No Rehearsal	7	Regular Rehearsal	4	Last Rehearsal
5	No Rehearsal	12	Regular Rehearsal	9	Regular Rehearsal	14	Regular Rehearsal	6	CONCERT
12	Regular Rehearsal	14	Sing! A Cappella Festival	16	Regular Rehearsal	21	Regular Rehearsal	11	Year End Potluck
19	Regular Rehearsal	19	Regular Rehearsal	23	Regular Rehearsal	28	Regular Rehearsal	20	Extended Concert
26	Regular Rehearsal	26	Regular Rehearsal	30	Regular Rehearsal	Casino Dates: March 30 & 31, 2026 Minors' Cabaret: March 28, 2026			

