



ELEKTRA

WOMEN'S CHOIR

creating • exploring • celebrating



Policies on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility

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RATIONALE

Elektra Women's Choir's (Elektra) mission is "to inspire and lead in the choral art form through excellence in performance and the creation, exploration, and celebration of women's repertoire."

Elektra acknowledges and celebrates the value and contributions that each individual stakeholder brings to our choral group. We recognize that diversity and equity within our organization supports our success and benefits our organization and larger community.

To this end, we are committed to the following objectives:

1. Developing and upholding policies, procedures and behaviours that promote equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA), and that underscore our commitment to creating an environment where individual differences are valued
2. Striving to create a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment that is fair and flexible; that promotes personal and musical growth; and that benefits from the capabilities and perspectives of the choir's diverse composition
3. Reviewing and revising these policies on an annual basis and/or more frequently if needed

CONTEXT

Elektra Women's Choir creates art rooted in the Western Art Music traditions of classical and folk-based music. We sing repertoire from the thousand-year history of this art form as well as contemporary forms, frequently commissioning new works. We are connected to women's choirs around the world and strive to sing culturally-based music from a place of respect and knowledge-seeking.

At Elektra, it is understood that each individual is unique and that we strive to recognize and respect our individual differences. These differences may include skills, experience, thought, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, cultural or socio-economic background, religion, sexual orientation, political or ideological beliefs as well as other dimensions, such as lifestyle and family responsibilities.

With this core principle as our fundamental backdrop, Elektra is dedicated to weaving EDIA into all aspects of the organization. This commitment is exemplified in the following policies and practices which we will apply to interactions between and within Elektra directors of the Board (the Board), staff, volunteers, choir members, guest artists and the public.

Singers, staff, board and committee members and volunteers are responsible for upholding all of Elektra's policies whenever they are representing or speaking on behalf of the choir. This includes during rehearsals and concerts, in social interactions, social media posts, public appearances, and events.

DEFINITIONS

In this document, the following definitions are understood to apply:

Accessibility: Ensuring access to individuals by removing barriers that prohibit them from participation, communication, understanding and obtaining equitable access to services, learning and usage.

(Adapted from **Cambridge English Dictionary**)

Discrimination: treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you treat other people. (Source: **Cambridge English Dictionary**)

Diversity: Differences in the lived experiences and perspectives of people that may include race, ethnicity, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, class, and/or socio-economic situations. (Source: **UBC's Equity Resources**)

Equity: The quality of treating people fairly and impartially, free of bias or favouritism, by providing them the tools they need to succeed. (Adapted from **Oxford Languages**)

Harassment: Harassment is a form of discrimination that occurs when offensive behaviour is based on a prohibited ground of discrimination enumerated in either federal or provincial human rights legislation. Personal harassment includes bullying, ostracizing, shunning, and other forms of uncivil conduct. (Source: **UVF Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Office**)

Inclusion: Inclusion is an active, intentional, and continuous process to address inequities in power and privilege, and build a respectful and diverse community that ensures welcoming spaces and opportunities to flourish for all. (Source: **UBC's Equity Resources**)

POLICIES

1. Anti-Discrimination Policy

Elektra is committed to promoting a choir culture that is anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and inclusive. This is achieved by:

- a) Developing policies, processes and practices that limit potential unconscious bias.)
- b) Building and nurturing an organization that reflects diverse backgrounds, ages and life experience
- c) Developing and maintaining operational frameworks that ensure all choir members have equitable access to the same performance, social, and relational opportunities, and that they feel safe and supported in pursuing them
- d) Encouraging all stakeholders to take collective responsibility to promote safety and to cultivate an inclusive culture

2. Human Rights Protection Policy

Elektra believes that all people are deserving of dignity and fundamental rights and is committed to upholding the spirit and content of BC's Human Rights Code and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. This is achieved by:

- a) Protecting the rights and interests of people within our organization who have characteristics protected by the BC Human Rights Code
- b) Routinely examining existing structures, policies and decision-making through an anti-racism and anti-oppression lens
- c) Recognizing that equity-seeking is an ongoing process

3. Workplace and Fair Compensation Policy

Elektra strives to pay employees at all levels of the organization in relation to a fair and equitable wage. This includes staff, contract workers and guest artists. This is achieved by:

- a) Negotiating compensation by mutual agreement in writing in advance
- b) Reviewing compensation rates annually
- c) Paying guest artists using a union scale where applicable. Paying prominent guest artists at appropriate current rates. Where no such scale rate exists, fees are negotiated by staff and approved by the board
- d) Compensating Indigenous collaborators at fair and mutually-agreed rates

4. Safety and Anti-Harassment Policy

Elektra is committed to fostering a safe, fair and healthy environment for stakeholders, board members, staff, singers, volunteers, guest artists, and the public. This is achieved by:

- a) Taking steps to eliminate anything that may cause physical or psychological harm, injury or illness
- b) Requesting all Elektra stakeholders protect their personal health and safety by complying with applicable Acts and Regulations and to follow policies, procedures, rules and instructions as prescribed by **Worksafe BC**, the **Canadian Health and Safety Legislation**, and Elektra's organizational **Safety Procedures**
- c) Striving to cultivate a safe communal space that is strictly confidential and non-judgmental, whether it be sectional and group rehearsals, individual consultations with Elektra leadership or other private settings; and where two or more members of Elektra gather
- d) Maintaining an open door policy that provides stakeholders an avenue to bring forward concerns in confidence

5. Accessibility Policy

Elektra believes in equal opportunity in the context of the choir's mandate. We strive to promote awareness amongst stakeholders of their rights and responsibilities with regards to fairness, equity and respect around all aspects of accessibility as well as potential barriers that may affect others. This is achieved by:

- a) Striving to accommodate potential or current stakeholders' physical abilities, such as mobility, visual and auditory limitations, and/or other special needs
- b) Recognizing that, in addition to the above, some accessibility barriers are not visible, such as psychological, emotional and certain underlying health issues. Elektra will work with singers, staff and Board members on a case-by-case basis to provide support and to seek a mutually-agreeable solution
- c) Making every effort to accommodate stakeholders' individual cultural, religious and lifestyle practices. These include days of observance, unexpected personal situations and dietary restrictions
- d) Recognizing that choir members may experience from time to time socioeconomic and personal circumstances that impact their ability to participate fully in certain Elektra activities. Elektra embraces a flexible approach in these circumstances and will work with individuals on a case-by-case basis to seek a mutually agreeable solution

6. Efforts towards Truth and Reconciliation

Elektra believes that the arts have an important role in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada and is committed to seeking out opportunities to collaborate through artistic projects. This is achieved by:

- a) Recognizing that such projects must be open to the voices and ideas of Indigenous collaborators, and that true collaboration requires flexibility and time
- b) Committing to amplify the voice and culture of Indigenous collaborators, providing those within the organization and those experiencing Elektra's programming a way to be educated and changed
- c) Committing to educating ourselves around best practices of engaging with Indigenous people in an arts context
- d) Including a written land acknowledgment on Elektra's website and in concert programs and giving a verbal one at self-presented Elektra events

7. Programming Policy

Elektra's Artistic Director balances multiple priorities when programming for the ensemble, creating a diverse and flexible artistic experience for singers and audiences. Programming includes the following considerations:

- a) The music challenges the choir to stretch its artistic abilities and pursuit of artistic excellence
- b) Programming provides compelling, memorable, and relevant experiences for audiences
- c) Programming contributes towards making the body of repertoire for adult treble choirs stronger, and increasingly dynamic
- d) Programming reflects a commitment to Canadian creators
- e) Historical repertoire is balanced with commissioned works and other contemporary repertoire
- f) Repertoire is selected with sensitivity to cultural context and acknowledgment of ownership and history
- g) Non-traditional forms of delivery, such as online, are increasingly considered
- h) Consideration of secular and religious venues to identify the space best suited for each specific program, bearing in mind acoustics, audience experience, and capacity

8. Community Engagement Policy

Elektra is committed to supporting, encouraging and educating those around us in the choral community through a structured suite of Community Engagement programs and the exploration of new opportunities. Our programs are offered in a safe, people-focused and artistically-rich environment in which participants may learn and grow. Areas of activity include:

- a) Providing opportunities for high school-aged singers to interact with Elektra and develop skills
- b) Providing opportunities for teachers, conductors and composers to build their networks, develop skills and interact with Elektra
- c) Considering online and in-person programs best suited to each activity and their intended participants

9. Dress Code Policy

Elektra has developed a professional dress code for performances to convey cohesiveness and professionalism at concerts and to provide choir members with comfortable performance apparel. This is achieved by:

- a) Expecting choir members to wear this apparel at all public performances and special events identified by Elektra leadership
- b) Making this apparel available to singers at nominal cost when they join the choir
- c) Recognizing that diverse circumstances may prohibit choir members from complying with the current Elektra dress code. These include physical and psychological barriers as well as cultural or religious practices
- d) Working with choir members on a case-by-case basis to reach a mutually-agreeable solution that both respects Elektra's brand and aesthetic as well as choir members' needs

10. Criteria for Participation as a Singer

Elektra was created in the spirit of celebrating women's voices and building community. We welcome self-identifying women aged 19 and up from all backgrounds who meet the choir's criteria to sing in Elektra. These include the ability to sing in the treble range (alto & soprano); experience with classical choral singing at an advanced level; interest in working vocally within the sound of an ensemble; and the capacity to sight-sing and read music.

- a) Singing membership in Elektra is achieved by audition, as outlined on the choir's website. This multi-step process is designed to ensure that the candidate and the choir are compatible
- b) The Artistic Director is the sole decision-maker on who meets the auditioning requirements
- c) Confidential financial assistance is available for choir members who are unable to meet the commitment to pay annual dues
- d) Singers are required to re-audition for the Artistic Director every second summer if they intend to continue. This process also provides an opportunity for both parties to discuss any issues or concerns arising during the past two years

11. Inclusion & Community Building Policy

Elektra recognizes that diversity is a fact and that inclusivity is a choice. The organization is committed to creating a culture that is inclusive and responsive. This is achieved by:

- a) Consulting with choir members regularly to gain insight into potential barriers to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility; and to identify opportunities for further action
- b) Communicating with choir members on a weekly basis to share critical information
- c) Inviting individuals of diverse identities to be a part of the organization as board members, staff and volunteers
- d) Organizing periodic social activities to enrich the choir culture

12. Knowledge Transfer and Training Policy

Elektra is committed to ensuring that all of its stakeholders are familiar and compliant with Elektra's EDIA policies, and that it remains responsive to emerging trends and issues, and best EDIA practices. This will be achieved by:

- a) Consulting regularly and/or as needed with an EDIA Subject Matter Expert to stay informed about changing EDIA trends and to adjust its policies as needed
- b) Briefing new choir, Board, and staff members on the organization's EDIA policies and requiring them to sign a form acknowledging that they will comply with these practices
- c) Scheduling a biennial EDIA training workshop for staff, choir members and the Board that is facilitated by an external Subject Matter Expert to review relevant policies and to provide a forum for discussion and the development of new practices