

# Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence



## DESCRIPTION

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The Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence is given in memory of Margaret Hillis, founder of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and its conductor for 37 years, for her more than 40 years of professional achievement and outstanding contributions to the choral art. This award is presented annually to a member chorus that demonstrates both artistic excellence in performance and a strong organizational structure with financial stability for a significant period of time. The awardee also exhibits a commitment to outreach, education, and/or culturally diverse activities.

The award winner will be selected by a panel of judges consisting of members of the Board of Directors of Chorus America, and a conductor or singer from a Chorus America member chorus, who is not presently serving on the Chorus America Board and whose chorus will not be under consideration for the award.

The winner receives an engraved plaque and cash award of \$5,000.

## ELIGIBILITY

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Eligibility rotates through a three-year cycle:

- 2020: Children's/youth choruses
- 2021: Professional and professional-core choruses: fully professional choruses that pay 100% of their singers and choruses with a core of professional singers (25% of singers, or 12 singers, whichever is fewer)
- 2022: Adult volunteer choruses

A chorus may win this award only once.

## DEADLINE AND HOW TO APPLY

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The deadline to submit via the Chorus America Application Portal is Thursday, January 23, 2020 at 5PM ET. Choruses may nominate themselves or another worthy organization.

Season brochures, programs, and critical reviews are not required as part of this application and will not be considered.

The online application will ask for the following information:

- Name of choral ensemble & year founded
- Nominee address
- Name of Artistic Director, Executive Director/Manager, and President of Board
- Name & Title of nominator
- Name of principal contact person for Nominee, if different
- Principal contact phone number & email address
- Total number of singers in ensemble and number of paid singers

## DEADLINE AND HOW TO APPLY (cont.)

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Your application narrative should include the following and not exceed five (5) pages in length:

- Mission statement
- Excellence: State why you believe the chorus nominee has distinguished itself in the area of performing excellence over at least the last three complete seasons. Be as specific as possible about the artistic achievement of the chorus.
- Repertoire: Briefly comment on the chorus' programming philosophy and programming highlights from the past three complete seasons.
- Financial History: Briefly comment on the chorus' fiscal management and current financial position, including plans for maintaining stability in the future. If deficits occurred in any given season, explain the efforts made for debt reduction.
- Education Outreach Programs: List and briefly describe all programs involved with education, outreach or reaching new audiences in your community.

Your application must also include:

- A list of repertoire performed during the last three complete seasons and current year. Give dates of all performances.
- Financial statements for the last three complete seasons and a year-to-date budget vs. actual finance report for the current year.
- A representative recording following these guidelines:
  - The total recording time must be limited to a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of 30 minutes.
  - The recording must be in MP3 format.
  - All selections on the recording must be from the last three complete seasons or the season in progress.
  - Clearly label the file itself with the chorus name.
  - At least one selection should be a complete piece.
  - At least one selection must be an unedited live performance or rehearsal.
  - Include at least some a cappella singing in the selections.
  - Applicants are encouraged to exclude long orchestra introductions.
  - Applicants are encouraged to include a variety of compositional styles and choral techniques.
- Provide a play list separate from the audio recordings, listing composer, title, date performed/recorded, and timing of each selection. Note which are live recordings and which are edited recordings.