

Costume Guidelines 2021-2022

Welcome to Madrigals! New Madrigals and their families will participate in a series of costume meetings to become informed about all options and requirements. The Costume Committee will happily assist families in finding the costume arrangement that suits their student and budget.

Davis Madrigal Costume Styles

The Davis Madrigals perform as a full choir and smaller octets groups throughout the year. Audiences admire their heavenly voices and rich costumes. These velveteen costumes are constructed of quality materials and individualized with trims and additional fabrics. Davis Madrigals costumes are an interpretation of the Renaissance period as many of the extremes of this fashion period would hinder the ability of singers to perform, walk great distances comfortably or fit in the back seat of a carpool. Madrigal costumes embody the festive spirit of the Renaissance court fashions but are modified for modern performance conditions.

Costume Requirements for Performances

One complete and approved Madrigal costume is required for performances. Women will require a gown, headpiece and shoes. Men will require a hat, shirt, jerkin (vest) or doublet (jacket), pants, sox or tights and shoes. Men may have more than one shirt and extra sox or tights are recommended. Capes are always optional and women may add a velveteen purse. All costumes and components must meet current style guidelines and are subject to approval by the Costume Committee.

Styles and colors have evolved over the history of the choir and many have been retired. Current styles and examples may be found in the “Design Packets” on the website and as separate documents for and Men’s Costumes, Women’s Costumes and Cape Designs. All students must show up prepared for performances with their costume. Here are the expectations for performances:

- Each costume contributes to and enhances the opulent visual display of the choir as a whole.
- Each costume is individualized by design choices while blending harmoniously in the current choir color & style range.
- Each singer wears a costume that is maintained in good repair and fits well.
- Each singer arrives well-groomed including hair with their complete costume.
- Each singer conducts themselves professionally and responsibly while in costume and during choir performances and travel.

Color Balance and Velveteen

The primary velveteen fabrics are limited to a set of rich and saturated colors. This jewel tone color range creates a harmonious and festive Renaissance look. Color availability varies from year to year and depends on the current balance of costume colors returning to the choir.

Every new singer will be provided with a set of velveteen color swatches in available hues and a color survey form. Students will return the completed survey along with photos per the instructions provided. The Costume Committee will review all surveys and photos before assigning primary colors. Each student will be matched with a flattering color that supports the balance and array of velveteen colors in the choir. Every effort is made to match each student to a color they enjoy.

Students who choose to rent a costume will complete the color assignment process too. However, the costume closet maintains a limited inventory of garments and singers will be assigned the costume in their size. If new rentals are to be built, students will be matched to the most favorable hue available.

Costume Rentals and Loans

Rentals are available from the Madrigal Costume Closet inventory for \$300-350 per year. Scholarships are available upon request. New rental costumes are built on an as-needed basis and added to the collection when older costumes are retired. Some alumni rent their costumes directly to new students and prices will vary but expect to pay for maintenance and cleaning. A list of pre-approved rentals is available. Any other rental must be approved.

Occasionally, costumes are passed down from family members or friends. New students may receive kind offers and loaned costumes of an unknown vintage. However, costumes must be auditioned, assessed and meet the current guidelines. Garments or headpieces may need an update, repaired and all must be altered to fit well. Some colors and styles have been retired and will not be approved.

Designing & Constructing New Costumes

Designing a new Madrigal costume is a rewarding creative process. Refer to the Design Packets for the range of garment design choices for the Women's and the Men's Costumes. These packets are available on the Madrigal website and can be printed. These packets will visually guide you through much of the costume design process. You may print, cut and paste designs from the packets, or create your own drawings based on the examples. Some garment and sleeve styles are popular so draw a variety of different garment variations. Contact the Costume Coordinator for additional assistance, or consult your seamstress for design ideas and support.

The design process will include 2-3 meetings with the Costume Committee and your seamstress will need to attend these. Designs for new costumes including the headpiece, must be approved before any construction takes place. Trims and secondary fabrics must also be approved so only purchase fabric samples in advance. Distinctive trims, may only be worn on one woman's and one men's costume at any time. Secondary fabrics should be individual and differ from those already in use in costumes of the same color. After the committee's initial approval, any changes to the design, colors, fabrics, or trims must be approved again.

Families are encouraged to hire one of the recommended seamstresses on our list. Madrigal costume construction is complex and fitting requires advanced sewing skills. Rebecca Wendlandt will draft all costume pattern pieces. The exception is for Jeanie Nishikawa, who drafts patterns for her clients. If a family chooses to sew the costume themselves, this will be approved on a case-by-case basis. These families may need to consult with one of the seamstresses to walk them through the construction. Expect to spend 40-100 hours constructing a costume if a seamstress is not hired. Costumes are due by the first performance in the fall or the group photo date. A final check on all garments will occur on or before the due date. Garments need to fit but not restrict the singer's ability to breath, sing, hear or move.

Financial Assistance

Families who wish to seek financial assistance may contact Dr. Gardias. Costume Scholarships are offered to ensure that every student will have a costume for the school year and all performances. Scholarships are offered to assist families who will be renting costumes from the Costume Closet.

Women's Costume Guidelines

Women have 3 basic garment designs to choose from:

1. Underdress and Doublet (Jacket): this costume option consists of an underdress with a sleeveless cotton bodice attached to a velveteen skirt and a separate long sleeve doublet (jacket) made of velveteen & secondary fabric. The doublet is worn over the underdress during performances. This two-piece costume allows the singer to remove the jacket to cool off during hot weather when backstage or in transit. The bodice of the underdress must be sleeveless and made of a sturdy and opaque fabric as it will be visible backstage.

2. Full Underdress and Sur-Coat: the full underdress may be designed with or without sleeves. This is worn under a sur-coat which is a full-length overdress that opens and clasps in the front below the bust. The underdress is made of secondary fabric and the sur-coat is velveteen. This is a good choice for the Empire waistline style.

3. One-Piece Dress: the one-piece dress is velveteen and may have an insert of secondary fabric in the front. suitable styles are Empire waist or drop waist line. Picadils and peplums are suitable additions to this design choice.

Headpiece

Headpieces are required. Women may choose a flat or padded fabric roll headband style that ties in the back, or a fabric crown. The headpiece is made from the primary velveteen color with trims that match the dress. Historical headpiece styles are modified so that they do not cover the ears. Pearls and similar beading styles are appropriate and will be approved. Hair clips that show, or other non-period specific head adornments are not acceptable. The headpiece is required for all performances. No flower wreaths and no metal tiaras are allowed.

A veil may be added to the headpiece. Veils must be long enough to touch the shoulder but hit no lower than below the scapula. Silk chiffon or similar fabric is the best fabric choice for veils which must be the color of the velveteen, a darker secondary fabric color, gold or silver hue. Veil colors must be approved.

Hair

Long hair should be braided but buns in the back are acceptable. Top knot buns are not acceptable. Braiding is the preferred hairstyle of the choir. Long hair must be pulled off the face. Short or unusual haircuts may be hidden under veils. Straight-bangs across the face and above the eyes are acceptable. All other bangs must be pulled back and clipped out of sight straight back or to the side. Use of "snap clips" to pull hair up is recommended. Clips must not show.

Hair color must be in a "normal" shade, no bright colors or unusual designs. Brightly colored hair must be completely covered by the headpiece and veil as hair should never be a focal point or distraction.

Jewelry & Beading & Purses

Small pearl or small dangle earrings may be worn. Pearl or chain necklaces may be worn or necklaces with crosses. No facial piercings. No metal belts over the dresses.

Some pearls or limited period appropriate beading may be added to the costume. Nothing in excess and only if approved. No sparkle beads, bugle beads, sequins or any type of modern beading. No large faceted beads or jewels because they catch and reflect light back at the audience.

A matching purse is optional and must be made of primary velveteen, with a long cord and fit into a pocket. Few purses have been made in the last several years.

Additional Guidelines for Trims and Secondary Fabrics

Any distinctive trim design, may only be worn on one woman's and one men's costume at any time. Most of the jacquard trims are considered distinctive or unique. More than one trim may be grouped together to create a trim set.

Trim or cording may not be added in "free form style" to any part of the skirt or bodice other than the sleeve. "Free form" means that the cord is looped or organic in form and not a border. A small amount of "free form" trim or cord may be used in lieu of a trim set if it is contained within a defined border and used to edge the neck area or secondary fabric insert. Please discuss with the Costume Coordinator for further clarifications.

The sleeve may be most embellished part of the women's costume. A central insert in the front bodice and skirt is a place for secondary fabric and bordered by trim or a trim set. A small central section of the back bodice may incorporate an insert of secondary fabric and trim or trim set at the back neck.

Costumes will need to last. Embroidery and lace fabrics are not good embellishment choices as these are too delicate and will not last.

Secondary fabrics should be individual and differ from those already in use in costumes of the same color. These fabrics are meant to create variations between costumes.

The skirt on the women's costume must be solid velveteen starting from one edge of the central insert and continuing around back until it meets the opposite edge of the central insert. If a hem must be raised or lowered then an addition of a straight line of discrete trim to hide any sewing line is permissible.

No Corsets, No Hoopskirts, No Partlets and No Ruffs

Some of the historically accurate costume components are not permitted in the choir. There are to be no hoop skirts or unnecessary padding to unnaturally extend the skirt circumference. No corsets and no boning are allowed in the bodice. No ruffs and no partlets may be worn.

Women's Capes

Capes are optional. They add considerable expense to the cost of the costume as they are full length with a hood. However, capes provide an added layer of warmth for winter events. The velveteen must be purchased at the same time as your costume because dye lots (fabric color) can change from year to year and within a short amount of time. Capes designs must be approved as well.

Women's shoes

Shoes must be closed-toed, flat or low heels and comfortable. No high heels. Be sure to buy your shoes before you have your costume hemmed. No sandals, opened toed shoes, tennis shoes or boots are allowed.

Shoes should be plain and no laces. Many clogs are acceptable. Shoes need to be sturdy, appropriate in appearance, and comfortable for long periods of time for standing and walking. Buy your shoes during the summer and break them in slowly to prevent blisters. Women will need them before the final fitting to mark the hem.

Men's Costume Guidelines

Breeches (pants): men's breeches should reach just below the knee with the leg band just below the knee cap. All breeches must have panes unless worn with a long jerkin.

Jerkin (vest) or Doublet (jacket style): these have broad shoulders and a small waist. The Doublet may have removable sleeves. Jerkins or Doublets have picadils or a peplum below the waist.

Shirts must have full long sleeves. They may have a simple collar band or collar band with pleated ruffle. No ruffs. Two shirts are recommended, one cotton, and one polyester or silk. No pure white. Colors and off white or cream are acceptable. Silk and linen are acceptable but might require dry cleaning and linen requires lots of ironing.

Tights or long socks must be worn. Capezio dance tights are best and long lasting. Acceptable colors are solid navy, brown, or black and must coordinate with velveteen color. Sox colors must be approved. Sock colors: Burgundy Velveteen – black, Navy Velveteen – navy, Green Velveteen – black, Brown Velveteen – black or brown.

Hats are a significant component of the costume and period appropriate. They are constructed from the primary velveteen color and may be trimmed matching the costume. No top hats or hats with large brims. Hats must be sized so the singer's face is clearly visible on stage. Hats should have small brims or stiff brims or both to stay out of the face. Feathers are optional and must be neutral and blend with the costume.

Hair must be well groomed. Put hair in a pony tail if a student has long hair. Hair must be a "normal" shade. No bright colors or unusual designs. If you have a unique hair style, you may be required completely cover your hair with your hat and this will be tricky. During performances hair should not be a focal point or a distraction.

Jewelry: no facial piercings for men and no large rings or long, heavy chains. Small pearl, plain gem stud earrings or tiny hoops may be worn. No modern style jewelry that distracts.

Men's Capes

Capes are optional. Men's capes may be either finger-tip length or $\frac{3}{4}$ length that reaches just to the bottom of the pants. The cape design must be approved by the committee as well.

Shoes

Shoes must be closed-toed, flat or low heels and comfortable. Men's shoes should be brown or black to match their costume. Shoes should be plain with no laces.

Madrigal Costumes & Historical Interpretations: Optional Reading

Davis Madrigals costumes are an interpretation of the Renaissance styles worn in the English court in the sixteenth century but some Madrigal dress silhouettes hark back to an earlier time. Styles in the English court were influenced by the courtly fashions of France, Spain, and Italy and many of the most sumptuous fabrics were imported including velvet, silk, satin and brocade. Few actual garments exist from the Renaissance so most of the history is documented in paintings. Portrait paintings of royalty who were wearing the most sumptuous garments, dripping with jewels and finery, represent the extreme in fashion and expense.

Our choir will be dressed much less lavishly than the portraits of Henry VIII or Elizabeth I of England, Madrigals will not be wearing any of the sixteenth century fashion extremes including: neck ruffs, corsets, bum rolls, or wheel farthingales. Madrigal women will wear alternatives to the English gabled headpieces and modified versions of the French Hood so that their ears are not covered. Additional costume modifications have been incorporated to increase the practicality and ease of movement for our singers.

During the Renaissance, sumptuary laws were written to limit excesses in clothing and embellishment. Colors, fabric types, and even fabric lengths were restricted by class. Some of these laws protected the English wool industry and others kept courtiers from spending beyond their means. Henry VIII and Elizabeth, I both wrote sumptuary laws in great detail that were punishable but difficult to enforce. Public humiliation was the best deterrent. Your student will not be publicly humiliated; however, they may be dismissed from a performance for not wearing their complete and approved costume.