

FINDING MY VOICE

By Stephen Houston

AKA The Goat



A Place Where Voices Meet

The room fills with voices, some loud and some soft, all blending.... At first, it might look like just a group of students singing, but Loyola Concert Choir is much more than that. There's an inviting energy as each singer finds their part, and even in the quiet moments, you can feel the excitement. I still remember my first day. I walked in feeling nervous and curious, not sure if I would fit into my section. But I was accepted and felt very welcome, like I belonged there. Hearing our voices come together while Dr. Price led us with so much energy and passion was both exciting and unforgettable.

Every rehearsal is a place where creativity, learning, and teamwork come to life. The choir sings all kinds of music, from classical pieces to songs from around the world. This gives us the chance to try new styles and learn about different traditions and histories. I was amazed at how music could bring so many people together, with each person adding something unique yet blending into a single sound. Concert Choir extends beyond the music itself. It's a place where students from all backgrounds build community and learn about other cultures through music.



Connection

The Concert Choir offers more than just rehearsals and performances; it is a vibrant community united by a shared goal. As Dr. Price explains, a musical ensemble forms a community by bringing people together to pursue one purpose. Students like Miller Gruen (Class of 2027) and Moulai Njie (Class of 2026) agree that the choir's power comes from the bonds they create as they work together. Their experiences highlight the choir's role in fostering connection and unity through music.

As a result, the choir becomes a place where students feel supported and connected, especially when starting college. Social events like game nights and group dinners help everyone learn names and get comfortable. At my first event, I met many new people, and we built lasting friendships. With every voice playing an important role, I felt welcome from the first rehearsal, and have made friendships that go beyond choir, feeling valued by those around me.

In a choir, learning to collaborate is essential. In rehearsals, we rely on each other to keep rhythms, harmonies, and cues aligned. [My first concert](#), when our voices merged in harmony, left me feeling proud, connected, and truly included. Singing was more than music; it was sharing something meaningful. Choir, to me, is about building bonds that last beyond the final note.

Culture

The choir has helped me explore music from many cultures. Singing songs from around the world connects us with their histories. As Dr. Price notes, choir repertoire spans hundreds of years and diverse traditions. Gruen mentioned that singing pieces from different societies shows how each expresses itself. Moulai Njie added that music is how cultures share their relationships with the world, and performing these pieces offers new perspectives. Through rehearsals and performances, I've learned not just the music but the stories behind the songs, deepening my appreciation for our diversity. Hearing other styles of music opens your mind to different and new THINGS.



This focus on cultural understanding became clear when we learned [Daemon Irrepiit Callidus](#). Singing is not just about notes but about connecting with culture. Hearing the stories behind the songs inspired me to dig deeper. For example, learning an American folk song was both challenging and exciting, and it was rewarding to sing together in many languages. Through these choir experiences, I have seen firsthand how music brings us closer to understanding one another and the world by listening and singing it—you FEEL like you're there.

Every new piece challenged me musically and culturally, from learning unusual rhythms to singing in different languages. Dr. Price encourages students to explore these challenges to grow both musically and personally. Taking on these challenges not only improved my skills but also helped me better understand the world.



Advice to Future Choir Members

After my experiences in the choir, I have a few pieces of advice for anyone thinking about joining. Miller suggests just giving it a try, saying there's no barrier to entry, and everyone is welcoming. I completely agree. When I first joined, I was nervous and unsure of myself but jumping in helped me rediscover my love for singing and meeting so many amazing people. Mouali emphasizes the importance of community, noting that working toward a common goal and relying on one another are at the heart of the choir. Dr. Price also emphasizes that the choir thrives on collaboration, with each singer contributing to the group's success. I've found this to be true in every rehearsal and performance. Listening to each other, helping with tough passages, and celebrating successes together made me feel valued and supported.

Finally, enjoy the experience. Choir isn't just about perfect notes or flawless performances. It's about connection, creativity, and growth. The friendships, teamwork, and cultural discoveries I've had in the Loyola Concert Choir have made every rehearsal and concert meaningful. For anyone thinking about joining, my advice is simple: be willing to try, learn, and share the joy of music. Dr. Price always encourages new members to [reach out](#)—talk to him (cprice1@loyola.edu) or someone already in the choir.

Choir leaves you with more than just memories; it shapes you, and its impact lasts long after the final note.